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Globalization and Regionalism: Assessing Nigeria's Unfeigned Role for Peacebuilding in the West African Region

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Abstract

In the last three decades, globalization has demystified the notion of exclusive sovereignty of nations where imaginary and physical barriers which hitherto prevent free movement of persons, goods and services have been dismantled. A new water shade debate on this issue has opened the get way for academics and practitioners to test different propositions as they explore the discourses on globalization. Against the backdrop of the discourse on Nigeria's intervention in some West African countries further interrogation of the process of peacebuilding by the country is discussed. This paper used explanatory approach to reveal Nigeria's peacebuilding practice and objectives. The paper relied on the use of documented sources and the theory of peacebuilding Consensus. It found that Nigeria's benevolent role in the West African region emerged from its concentric circle policy and therefore due to unfolding changes in the international arena constructive engagement and reciprocity policy is suggested as guide to Nigerian regional relations and peacebuilding.

Keywords: Globalization, debate, peacebuilding, unfeigned, West Africa.

Introduction

Undoubtedly Nigeria remains Africa's most populous black nation on earth due to its rapid population growth, and recently its economic progress is described as the fastest growing in Sub-Sahara Africa. It is the sixth largest oil producer in the world and occupying the first position in Africa. It has also enjoyed steady Gross National Product (GNP), its GDP is assessed to be greater than major West African countries almost combined. Its active participation and contribution to global and continental affairs are well known and the records are impeccable. Right from independence till date its foreign policy in the global arena and the West African region has largely been guided by its economic wealth and style of leadership.

The combination of idealist and realist approaches spearheaded by successive regimes in the country had demonstrated Nigeria's commitment to African peace in Congo Kinshasa in 1960s, Mozambique and Angola (1970s), Chad, Morocco and Somalia (1980s), Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Sierra Leone (1990s), Cote 'd Ivoire,

Guinea Bissau and Mali in 2000s. It is also instructive to note that, the fight against racist regime in South Africa and financial assistance rendered to African National Congress (ANC), Zimbabwe and Mozambique liberation movements as well as drought stricken countries of Burkina Faso, Chad, Somalia, Ethiopia in the 1980s and 90s suggest how large Nigeria's magnanimity underscore its drive to sustainable peacebuilding in the continent. Moreover, under the defunct Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and now African Union (AU) it has mediated in inter and intra-state border disputes and have deployed as a matter of fact peacekeeping troops under the United Nations (UN) to restore peace in many war torn regions of the world. Some other notable achievements by successive regimes in Nigeria include ensuring peaceful transition and restoration of democratic rule in Cote d' Ivoire, Mali, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and more recently Gambia which of course suggest the extent to which Nigeria has gone to evolve and develop mechanisms to guarantee peacebuilding in West Africa.

Nigeria has extensively engaged in sustainable peacebuilding in the West African region through the process of bilateral and multilateral engagements and cooperation with stakeholders under the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) since the formation of the organization in 1975. Elaigwu (2005), note with fear that Nigeria's role and broad outlook is facing challenges. The contest over continental leadership and globalization are main challenges that cannot be wished away. But then what is globalization? Briefly, different subjective meaning has been attached to the concept of globalization due to perception over its challenges to states and the growing impacts across the nations of the world. Globalization as we know it today is distinctively marked by revolution in technology-communication, computer, transportation, security, market and administration. It is essentially a process that intend to ease pressure for mankind and unified the world in what is today known as 'Global Village' which Mwesigire (2014) described as 'villagization of the globe'. The context of globalization includes provision of development at one end of the globe and underdevelopment on the other based on the utilization of opportunity and technology. Well at the centre of this argument lies the issue of technology, market and power which represents a new form of imperialism which is sweeping across the continent of the world and giving prominence to dominant superpowers and their form of civilisations-market liberalism. To break it further down we could also add that stronger state actors at regional level are also taking advantage of the opportunity provided by globalization to promote private interests by occupying the economic and political space of smaller ones for their benefits. For example, the collective dominance of European Union (EU) by Britain (before BRIT), Germany and France, the influential role of South Africa in Southern Africa Development Community-SADC, Kenya supremacy over East African Community (EAC) before its demised in the 1960s and Nigeria's tacit role in ECOWAS and the West African region assumed to explain the extent to which countries exploit supranational organization to establish and reinforce their hegemonic rule.

Nigeria is also prompted to believe that some countries in West Africa cannot be left unchaperoned. The argument is based on the fact that any crisis in West African country could have negative effect on Nigeria, wherefore the need to secure the region is so imperative to Nigeria hence the desire to build peace. But how appropriate is Nigeria's concentric policy in the current phase of globalization? And what are the extant ideological reactions to Nigeria's expanded role in the West African region? What are the benefits Nigeria stands to reap from its peacebuilding efforts in the West African region? Against the foregoing background and questions this paper want to interrogate Nigeria's unpretentious motive at promoting sustainable peacebuilding in the West African region against the backdrop of globalization and regional reactions. The paper further provides a critique of Nigeria's unfeigned role in West Africa where it observed that Nigeria is chewing more than it can bite; it has taken huge financial burden in the region which this paper argues it has no commensurate recompense. The manner which some West African countries continue to ignore Nigeria amidst the current Boko Haram crisis except Benin Republic that contributed troops to the Lake Chad military force (Nigeria, Chad, Niger, Cameroon and Benin Republic) is worrisome. This shows that not too many countries are happy with Nigeria's self-imposed role in the region. We also want to find out the adverse effects of globalization in relation to Nigeria's good neighbourliness principle in the region against the backdrop of economic recession despite previous policy directions. In order to allow free flow of discussion we structured the paper into five interrelated sections with the introduction appearing at the apex, peacebuilding theoretical perspective in the second section, Nigeria African policy in section three, a discourse on economic regionalism and securitization is found in section four. Here we will give account on the shift of ECOWAS from its initial goal of economic cooperation to promotion of peace and security in the region through the formation of military force known as ECOWAS monitoring Group (ECOMOG) which Nigeria was instrumental. While the final section explores the benefits of Nigeria's relationship with countries in West Africa and how it affects the country and finally a concluding remark is drawn.

Theoretical perspective on Peacebuilding

Whenever you talk about peacebuilding apparently it has to do with a condition of intervention in political, economic and social life of a community or country. This is usually visible in a situation where a civil war, related conflict or certain major catastrophe has come to an end in a community or state. Smith (2004, 9) tersely wrote that peacebuilding includes:

1. Provision of security,
2. Establishment of the socio-economic foundations of long term peace,
3. Establishment of political framework of long-term peace; and
4. The process to generate reconciliation, a healing of the wounds of war, and justice.

Tar and Mustapha (2016) concurred with Smith when they wrote that peacebuilding refers to a wide range of processes aimed at creating sustainable peace. Peacebuilding is laden with gamut of activities that require sustainability over a long period of time that identify and deal with the root causes of conflict (Cousens, 2000, 20; Doyle and Sambianis, 2000, 779). Lederach (1997, 77) went further to say it may require measures also that will aim at preventing conflict from re-emerging, through the creation of mechanisms that would enhance cooperation and dialogue among different religious, ethnic and socio-cultural groups.

By and large, peacebuilding as post-Cold War phenomenon underscores capacity building and utilization, inclusive political process, economic reform, infrastructural development, civil society rights, amnesty and reconciliation. Richmond (2004) interrogates the liberal peacebuilding industry, asking what it assumes, what it is getting wrong, and how it could be more effective. Indeed, evidence from Iraq and Afghanistan suggests that the liberal assumptions of peacebuilding is inundated with flaws as many Western countries are interested in the oil and manufacturing sectors of developing countries as returns rather than working for peace in war torn countries. This makes it difficult to understand peacebuilding from the liberal perspective. However, in his argument on peacebuilding as he attempted to explain the Bosnia conflict between the Serbs and Croatia, Roland (1995) stressed that post-conflict states would recover sharply if emphasis on peacebuilding could bring ethnic groups together, identify the cause of conflict and encourage institutions to strengthen capacity of stakeholders to work together. In his peacebuilding consensus argument Richmond (2004) asserts that it can be utilize for the benefits of all aggrieved parties. Drawing from Richmond postulation of peacebuilding consensus it is discernible that Nigeria has been concern with its survival and the liberty of African states. We may argue that the peacebuilding consensus theoretical framework critically examine Nigeria's effort at facilitating the process of democratic stability, institution building, guarantee the rights of citizens (justice), provision of humanitarian assistance, pursuance of the course of peaceful transition and transfer of power, good governance among others in the West African region. In another related development, effort at peacebuilding in West Africa by Nigeria includes the display of leadership role in the region which also received the commendation of the international community.

Nigeria-African policy: a humane approach?

Since the British colonial rulers granted Nigeria independence in 1960 like any other African countries that gained independence before her it continues to maintain are solve to break loose the fetters of colonial yoke off the neck of all oppressed people on the earth more especially those of African descent. This was enunciated in the country's foreign policy pursuit in the First Republic which is capture as thus:

- i. The sovereign equality of all African states;
- ii. The respect for independence, sovereign and territorial integrity of all African states;

- iii. Non-interference in internal affairs of other African states;
- iv. Commitment to functional cooperation as a means of promoting African unity; and
- v. Total eradication of racism and colonialism from Africa.

It is worth noting that Nigeria's focus on Africa in its foreign policy in the First Republic was informed by two strong reasons. First, it desires to see Africa as peaceful environment where it can always exercise direct influence to protect its national goals and can rally support to deal with any threats to its national interest. Second, Nigeria believes that Africa's unity could be obtained on the framework of freedom and equality for all nations. Africa's voice of unity at United Nations General Assembly resonate the fight for independence and freedom for oppressed people owing to Nigeria's strong commitment and submission. Nigeria strongly condemned the apartheid racist regime in South Africa in continuation of its role of African liberation. Three years after its independence it was instrumental to the formation of Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and consequently played a major role in the establishment and mobilization of the organisation. Through consistent pressure on the apartheid regime in South Africa by Nigeria several countries were mobilized to boycott South Africa and sanctions were placed on the country which subsequently led to her expulsion from the Commonwealth Games. Nigeria continues to maintain the policy of positive neutrality from the two power blocs as member of non-alignment although this was cautiously done as the country was still tied to the apron of the British colonial power. On the other hand, the expression of positive neutrality has helped the country to remain focus in its African vision. In a similar vein throughout the Second Republic the country insists on promoting African liberation and unity, this was reiterated in the 1979 Federal Constitution, which emphasized that:

The state shall promote African unity as well as the total political, economic, social and cultural liberation of Africa and all other forms of international cooperation conducive to the consolidation of universal peace and mutual respect and friendship among all peoples and states, and shall combat racial discrimination in all its manifestations.

We further find in chapter two, section 19 subsection a-e that Nigeria has been very forceful of its African policy pursuit as it is clearly stated in its foreign policy principle as:

- i. Promotion and protection of national interests;
- ii. Promotion of African integration and support for African unity;
- iii. Promotion of international cooperation for the consolidation of universal peace and mutual respect among all nations, and elimination of discrimination in all its manifestations;

- iv. Respect for international law and treaty obligations as well as the seeking of settlement of international disputes by negotiation, mediation, consolidation, arbitration and adjudication; and
- v. Promotion of a just world order.

The promotion and protection of national interest was located in the promotion and strengthening of African integration which Nigeria pursues with all vigour during the Second Republic and in the military periods. Knowing well that Africa present a suitable market for Nigeria's goods and any threat to African country will reduce Nigeria's influence in the continent; Africa became a centre piece of Nigerian foreign policy. Agbu (2008, p.7) remarked that Nigeria indicates willingness to cooperate with other countries of the developing world purposely to challenge global structures of inequality. We can also add that issues of universal peace and promotion of just world in Nigeria's foreign policy principles as highlighted in the foreign policy posture are outside the milieu of the country's influence. What this means is that in spite of the humane policy reflexes of Nigeria, it is apparently difficult for her to determine what goes around in other parts of the world even though it might have consequences on her national interest. Despite Nigeria's limited influence in Africa however, the West African region remain one of her strongest sphere of influence as it provides market for its finished goods as well as ground for diplomatic rehearsal. Undeniably Nigeria's foreign policy followed the precepts pronounced in the Second National Development Plan (1970-74) which identified the West African region as our "domain of immediate policy relevance" in the belief that 'Nigeria's industrial experience and development potential can provide the focal point in the active pursuit of West African economic integration' (Federal Government Press, 1970 cited in Briggs 2005, p.7).

Furthermore, one of the fundamental questions we earlier raised at the beginning of this paper was what is the efficacy of Nigeria's concentric policy in the current phase of globalization? Over the years, successive regimes in Nigeria have carried out major foreign policy summersault essentially to merge with reality at hand. This has rendered the African concentric policy posture ineffective as globalization has altered the global setting where nations attempt to survive on their own. No nation on earth would want to perpetually maintain a friendship that is not mutually beneficiary to her that is why during the Abacha's era when Nigeria was ostracized from the international community and the Commonwealth the government took a new initiative to identified new friends in Asian countries-China, Korea, Singapore, Malaysia etc which signed different trade agreements with Nigeria in more critical sectors of the economy-oil and transportation sectors (Saliu & Omotola, 2005, 224).Therefore, global events (issues) has greater propensity in shaping a country's foreign policy rather than emotional attachment to race and colour which are subjective and which Nigeria have subscribed to. Any country that failed to focus her foreign relations energy on investment drive and appropriate same for it utilisation will end up working for others without benefit to her citizens.

From economic regionalism to regional securitization

Beginning from the First Republic, Nigeria emphasized commitment to functional cooperation as means of promoting African unity which helped the country in finding a common ground to promote economic activities across other nations. Following the examples of European Union (EU), North Atlantic Free Trade Area (NAFTA), the President of Togo, Nnasingbe Eyedema and Gen. Yakubu Gowon of Nigeria in 1972 worked out modalities that identified economic common grounds which triggered series of negotiations and treaties in the region. The outcome of which was the establishment of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) on 28 May 1975 based on Article 52 of the United Nations Charter. The organization currently has an expanded membership of fifteen countries with a secretariat in Abuja, Nigerian capital. The objective of the organisation was the setting up of a common market in the region through the removal of trade barriers, the encouragement of fiscal harmonization and free movement of persons, services and capital (Briggs 2005, 7).

Owing to the threats of wars, unconstitutional change of government, drug, crime, human trafficking and recently terrorism which reduced the West African region to a theatre of conflicts and uncertainty beginning from the two bloody civil wars in Liberia (1989-97) and Sierra Leone (1993-98) it aroused the sentiment for a paradigm shift in the activities of ECOWAS from economic regionalism to security imperatives which expanded the role of ECOWAS to international peace and security. The civil war in Liberia (1989-97) which resulted into the breakdown of law and order was a lesson to regional leaders of ECOWAS that necessitated collective response from member countries. In 1990 at Banjul they summoned an emergency meeting to approve immediate mediation of the conflict. This was the genesis of ECOWAS deep concern with security matters in establishment. Standing Mediation Committee was set up to ensure the establishment of cessation of hostility between the warring parties in Liberia. Meanwhile under the plan an ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) was established. We must also note that ECOMOG was primarily responsible for peace keeping in Liberia rather than peace enforcement, not until its personnel were attacked by the security forces of Charles Taylor who claimed victory over Samuel Doe's weak forces (Shagaya 2005, p.78). ECOMOG forces made sweeping defence and later got robbed in the war in an attempt to rescue civilians and prisoners of war trapped in the crisis. On the other hand, Charles Taylor accused ECOMOG forces of supporting Samuel Doe when he argued (Taylor) that he was on his way to victory before the arrival of ECOMOG. Some analysts point out that this owe much to Babangida's personal political ambitions, which include attempt to carve a niche for himself in both the national and international political scenes (Asobie and Ibeanu 2005, 73). This was also why Nigerian government spent a considerable large sum of money in financing and sustaining ECOMOG in both Liberia and Sierra Leone for quite some years. Undoubtedly Nigeria remains the major contributor to ECOWAS peace keeping effort as well as highest financial donor in the region.

With great success recorded in Liberia after many lives of Nigerian soldiers and civilians were lost, ECOMOG thereafter transformed from a peace keeping force to a fighting force as witnessed in Sierra Leone war. ECOMOG was not oblivious of its peace keeping role although when war broke out in Sierra Leone, ECOMOG forces were deployed to the country apparently with the support of the United Nations Security Council and the OAU to prevent the war. This was based on the notable achievements in Liberia that installed interim government and multiparty elections in the country.

It is ostensibly clear that ECOWAS intervention in the twin –wars were purposely done to achieved certain motives-first to establish strong and effective political union in the West African region as well as market for domestic goods produced in the region and second, though not exclusively to bring peace to the people of Sierra Leone as well as attract the attention of the international community to the region. Critiques are quick to point out that the sheer prejudice and avarice of military leaders in Nigeria were behind the reason why major support to ECOMOG emerged from Nigeria. Nigeria's full participation in ECOMOG was a proof of its hegemonic tendency that transcend to benevolence in the region.

Moreover, ECOWAS through her Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance signed in Dakar, Senegal in 2001 and ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework which was also signed in 2008 emphasized the need for free, fair, and credible electoral processes; democratic governance; respect for human rights and the rule of law; transparency in government business, and the strengthening of the constitution for sustainable peace and development (Faleti and Odobo 2014, 188). ECOWAS became interested in the political space of member nations and the threats that confront the region. It led forces into Sierra Leone after the civil war to reinstate Tejan Kabbah who was toppled by adventurous military officers in a palace coup. As a stabilizing force, despite adherence to the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of another nation, ECOWAS members appreciated the relationship between, peace, security and development in the region and viewed any unconstitutional change of government and those that loss election and refused to hand over power to the winners and those who aspire to prolong their tenure of office by altering the constitution of their state as threat to the region. In Guinea Bissau, Burkina Faso, Mali and Sierra Leone there were organized military coups that toppled civilian regimes, also there were leaders who expressed unwillingness to relinquish power after losing in election; Laurent Gbagbo of Cote d'Ivoire, and Yahaya Jameh of Gambia while some others attempted to modify the constitution of their country and disregard public opinion; Blaise Compaoré (1987-2014) of Burkina Faso, Mamadou Tandja of Niger (1999–2010) and Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria (1999–2009). ECOWAS though lacked the political muscle to confront some heavy weight political leaders yet it vehemently condemned their actions which were against the ECOWAS protocols.

On the other hand, Nweze (2005, 95) notes that it has become increasingly difficult for national security of African states to effectively deal with the issue of security protection and services against all forms of cross-border economic crimes

and sabotage. The attention of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS has been drawn to the dangers of economic insecurity in the region. That's not all, the changing global system that encouraged cyber-terrorism, drug trafficking, terror attacks on economic interest of nations have mandated ECOWAS to review some of its earlier protocols and accords to take care of the emerging challenges from the global system. Globalisation has remained the bane, it has opened up the region to the infiltration of armed groups more especially the remnants of the Arab spring of 2011 and terrorist groups from the Sahel region that came into the West African region with arms and ammunitions.

Consequently, the aftermath of the Liberia and Sierra Leone's wars led to a radical review of ECOWAS security architecture. Although the 1978 Protocol on Non-Aggression and the 1981 Protocol on Mutual Assistance on Defence Matters among ECOWAS members remain the preliminary instrument for the realization of ECOWAS economic and security objectives. The 1999 Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Resolution, Management, Peacekeeping and Security (known as The Mechanism), the 2001 Protocol on Good Governance and Democracy and the 2008 ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework were valid instruments that deals with security challenges. Faleti and Odoobo (2014, 188) argued that conflict prevention, humanitarian actions and peacebuilding are given prominence in the Mechanism ensuring an environment that is conducive to the implementation of ECOWAS economic programme. ECOWAS went further to adopt a Counter-Terrorism Strategy and Implementation Plan in 2013 to deal with emerging terrorist threat in Mali and Nigeria (Maiangwa 2015). Also, through ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework of 2008 it ensures that conflicts are prevented before they occur, it uses its Early Warning and Response mechanism known as ECOWAS Early Warning and Response Network (ECOWARN) to identify flash points and go in to mitigate.

The prominence of ECOWAS on peace management in the region has gradually increased hence the economic motive has reduced as most states are preoccupied with curbing domestic violence arising from youth restiveness and terror attacks on state institutions. Maiangwa (2015) identified four of these groups in the region as-Al-Qaeda in the Maghreb (AQIM), MUJAO, Ansar al-Dine and Boko Haram in addition to the Tuaregs (the MNLA) in Mali. These groups have been a source of concern to the region and the international community especially now that their nefarious activities have been on the increased as a result of expansion in technology.

Peacebuilding and the politics over regional hegemony

Nigeria has played a crucial role in the West African region both at bilateral and multilateral level. She has tried severally to ensure that significant level of development is achieved through the process of peacebuilding in the region. Yet its hegemonic role is challenged by smaller countries backed by foreign super powers that have striking interest in the African continent.

To apply the theoretical perspective of Smith (2004) to Nigeria's effort at peacebuilding in this regard we have to examine the deliberate attempt made to restore broken social relations and facilitate the process of economic growth and development in the West African region. We must also note that Nigeria's largess have helped many countries to rebuild their ruined political and economic life which has produced stability in the region; government(s) build capacity and deliver public good with less stress as a result of Nigeria's assistance. For example, Burkina Faso, Niger and Chad had experience of drought in the 1980s and 1990s as a result of insufficient rainfall which caused food shortage and drastic drop in GDP.

Over the years Nigeria have been assisting Sahelian countries with grains and farming implements to avert hunger and humanitarian disaster. Also, Republic of Benin and Gambia with low GDP in the 1990s have received financial support and loans from Nigeria to recover their economy. Similarly, some countries in West Africa have remain perpetual beneficiaries of Nigeria's assistance, this include the Technical Aids Corps Scheme (TAC) under which Nigerian experts in different specialized fields are assigned to overseas for a period of two years. Some countries in Africa, the Pacific and the Caribbean have benefited immensely from the TAC.

Culturally, some common linguistic groups around the West African region which include Yoruba, Hausa, Kanuri and Fulani etc especially around the neighbouring countries which also share common borders with Nigeria have been enjoying Nigeria's hospitality and free excise duties as their citizens move around unhindered in and out of Nigeria even without genuine passport or official documents. They enjoy Nigeria's magnanimity which enabled them to transfer wealth extracted from the country to their own countries as some of the small scale business entrepreneurs do not pay taxes while others go to the extent of bribing Custom officials at the borders. Economically, Nigeria is not benefiting from these social relations that are to say the country is deprived revenue as a result of the trans-border informal trading which is flourishing around the border regions. Despite efforts toward good neighbourliness as enunciated in the concentric circle posture, Nigeria is confronted with porous borders and insufficient manpower to police and checked illegal immigrants and the activities of economic saboteurs, like the Niger Delta militants and car smugglers that uses Benin Republic and Niger Republic.

Furthermore, Nigeria have stood firm on the issue of Custom Union and Common Currency during the Babangida's era which is expected to boost trade and economic development in the region. Though these lofty dreams was not realized, but remarkable progress was made in terms of working out modalities toward removal of excise duties, trade liberalization and encouragement of comparative advantage on agricultural produce. In addition, ECOWAS passport was flagged off to facilitate the free movement of people and goods across the region with less restriction which Nigeria have being the strongest advocate; today the scheme is a reality with common passport for all member countries. Yahaya (2005, 54) observed that Nigeria with some member countries have also worked in concert to reactivate the Gulf of Guinea Commission and the Mano River Union. President Obasanjo did not relent on this campaign during his administration to gain the support and endorsement of the

United Nations and some Western countries to realize this dream. The essence is to checkmate the activities of drug dealers who used the Gulf of Guinea as access route for drugs and human trafficking to Europe and the Americas sometimes through Ghana which served as a hub for the illegal business.

Politically, there is no doubt that Nigeria have brought political transformation and stability to some member states in the region in terms of helping them to organize credible elections and smooth and peaceful transfer of power as well as foiled military coups. For example, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Togo, Cote'd' Ivoire, Guinea Bissau, Sao Tome and Principe, Gambia, Senegal among others. They have enjoyed Nigeria's good will which enables them to build their countries. Some of them equally received assistance in manpower and finance to rebuild their weak and grounded institutions and to also reorganize the bureaucratic structures in their countries. In the same way, Nigeria has helped in mediating in political conflicts between Morocco and the Saharawi people since 1980s while in Mali when President Amadou Toumani Touré was toppled in a coup led by one Captain Amadou Sanogo in March 2012 Nigeria was swift in condemning the action and sent troops to reinstate President Touré and stop the incursion of the Tuaregs who formed alliance with Islamic Jihadist group- MNLA. Also in Guinea Bissau when election result led to political turmoil and coup in 2012 Nigeria had to intervene. Quite recently in January 2017 political impasse in Gambia led to Nigeria's intervention alongside Senegal and Liberia (a situation where President Yahaya Jameh refused to hand over political power to Adama Baro after a landslide victory by the later).

Despite the huge benevolence and good will of Nigeria toward countries in West Africa it has been taunted and challenged by smaller countries who claimed Nigeria is trying to impose its will on them. Most of the Francophone countries majorly with the support of France which often viewed Nigeria's expanded role in the West African region with alarm and also feel threatened. Sheehan (1986) discussed that Senegal being afraid of Nigeria in the 1980s as the largest countries in ECOWAS wanted Zaire though not French speaking country to be part of ECOWAS generally to serve as a counter-balance to Nigeria. Chad on the other hand have been supporting irredentist activities around Nigerian borders as well as trade in small arms and light weapons since the uprising in Chad began in the 1970s and 1980s. Following this, various factional rebel groups in Chad used Nigerian territory as hideout. By this Nigerian citizens living around the border towns have been threatened by the nefarious activities of the rebel groups who have turned into criminal gangs raiding communities as well as committing heinous crimes on Nigerian soil especially in the northeast region of the country. Coupled with intermittent skirmishes between Nigerian army and Chadian gendarmerie on different islands the two countries relationship became awful. Hence Chad has been at the receiving end it always explores opportunity to revenge on Nigeria.

At the outbreak of Boko Haram in Nigeria in 2009 Chad deliberately refused to secure her borders with Nigeria simply because it previously had issues with the Nigeria. We must note that Nigeria was one of the foremost countries to condemn Gen. Idris Derby when he took over power from Hissene Habre in a military coup in

1980s which resulted into bloodshed in the country. As such, Chad always feels threatened by Nigeria's increasing role in ECOWAS and in the Lake Chad region. And having realized Nigeria's weakness in countering Boko Haram insurgent group, Chad capitalized on that to hoodwinked Nigeria into believing that she (Chad) was holding negotiation with Boko Haram in 2014 to secure the release of the abducted 276 Chibok girls. However, the tactic was to render Nigeria's power in the region ineffective and to expose the weakness of the Nigerian state and provide space for Boko Haram to rebuild strength. Chad only became interested in the Boko Haram's issue in late 2014 when she realized that her sovereignty was also compromised as the Jihadist were also attacking Chadian citizens. It was as a result of this that Chad agreed with Nigeria 2015 to commonly fight against Boko Haram. Similarly, Cameroon has been an age long rival of Nigeria due to several reasons which apart from continental leadership tussle the issue of natural resources around the Bakassi Peninsular which was finally decided by International Court of Justice in favour of Cameroon was part of the grievances nursed by Cameroon against Nigeria. The invisible hand of France in support of ECOWAS French speaking members and the contest over African resources indicate that France is Nigeria's major contender in the African continent and arch rival in West Africa.

Furthermore, despite ECOWAS Counterterrorism Strategy and Implementation Plan, member states have not shown the cooperation and will power in countering terrorism in the region. Following increasing Boko Haram attacks in Nigeria and the Lake Chad region, ECOWAS' response have been weak. Maiangwa (2015) argue that ECOWAS' efforts in security operations have mainly been demonstrated in the areas of peacekeeping and conflict management. But then, the question remains, why did ECOWAS fail to send peacekeeping troops or seek foreign support on behalf of Nigeria? This brings us to some questions earlier raised in this paper, for instance what are the benefits Nigeria stands to reap from its peacebuilding efforts in the West African region? And what are member states doing at this critical stage of Nigeria's security challenge to improve the security of the region? These are critical questions which Dallaji (2005, 108) suggestion of a paradigm shift in Nigeria's regional relations helps us to understand the context of why Nigeria must not retain permanent friend rather interest in the West African region. According to him a policy can no longer be justified on political economic or even cultural ground. He criticized Nigeria's attitude in West African region and argue that "the search for relevance is not only achieved through benevolence, even if unlimited resources are there" (Dallaji 2005, 108). He went further to say contemporary realities of our world compel an approach that guarantees reciprocity. Against the backdrop of globalization and the confronting challenges of economic recession Nigeria's regional relation should be based on constructive engagement; Nigeria's interest should have overriding influence in her global and regional relations to guarantee sustainable development and avoid the filtering away of her unlimited wealth and human resources.

Remarks and conclusions

Even though the concept of peacebuilding was criticized as Western liberal idea its scope have been widen through multiple activities which include academic discourses, governments' intervention and non-governmental organisations involvement. Peacebuilding as discussed in this paper include conflict mediation/arbitration, rehabilitation and reconstruction of institutions as well as provision of humanitarian assistance. Generally, as conflict increases in the West African region in the same manner its prevention and management are discuss by stakeholders to find amicable solutions. Nigeria as one of the leading figure in the region has played a key role in peacebuilding through financial and human resource support to members in dire need. The Afrocentric principle of Nigeria which was pursued since independence has not been discarded in spite of changes in the global arena. This is why the country readily offers assistant to troubled West African states to bring about peace and rebuilding of decayed infrastructures and strengthened weak institutions in neighbouring countries irrespective of their ideological leaning. Beginning from Liberia to Sierra Leone, Nigeria committed both fiscal and human resources to remedy the countries and ensure stable polity and peaceful transfer of power. Also, through its 2001 protocol, the 1999 Mechanism, and the Mediating and Security Council, ECOWAS has intervened variously to restore constitutional order and democratic governance in countries like Togo, Niger, Guinea Bissau, Guinea, Mali and Burkina Faso (Maiangwa 2015). Nigeria played a prominent role in all the interventions which increased her international reputation and profile.

While the political, economic and social conflicts that characterized the West African region have deep root in the colonial settings the paper found that part of this can be traced to the inherent contradictions of postcoloniality and globalisation. Ideological differences between Nigeria and Francophone countries are so glaring that each time Nigeria attempt to assist any country in the region is misinterpreted and misrepresented by France. More especially France which has huge interests in her erstwhile colonists always assumed that if Nigeria's excesses is not checked she (France) would lose control of her colonial territories and wean her influence over them. The foregoing advances of France and influence in Africa generally and West African region in particular appear to constitute a major threat to West African integration and Nigeria's peacebuilding effort. In addition, the external reliance of ECOWAS on external powers to support some of it activities in the region also constitutes a threat to the organization. External dependence means less power to carry out decision on crucial projects and programmes that are of benefit to member states. For instance, most Francophone countries in West Africa relied so much on France's intervention to fight Al-Qaeda in the Maghreb, Ansar-Din and MUJAO; France military presence is all over her former colony. Likewise, US military support have especially through AFRICOM have not stopped the increasing activities of terrorist groups in the region instead further escalation.

In the final analysis we have realized that Peacebuilding which is a gradual process toward sustainable peace and development have been vigorously pursued by Nigeria in the West African region through increasing benevolence which negate

national interest. We therefore suggest that Nigeria's role in the West African region should be based on constructive engagement and reciprocity so that Nigerian citizens would also benefit and earn the respect of countries in the region and the world at large.

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