
MUSTAPHA, AYODELE HARUNA
Department of Social Sciences, Rufus Giwa Polytechnic, Owo, Ondo State, Nigeria

Abstract
The African continental integration came into existence as a result of the agitation by the African leaders to unite for political, economic, cultural and social unity. Shortly after those countries started gaining independence from their colonial masters to formed independence state with or without any economic/ political cooperation or affinities. The global reality of international dynamism warranted the necessity for states to integrate towards the continental Africa as observed and obtainable in the European Union (EU) platform. This involved pooling of all economic forces (trade, monetary

INTRODUCTION
The idea of a Union Government for Africa is not new in thought and aspiration. As far back as before 1963, Africa leaders have agreed for Africa’s economic, social and political Union Government, while they differed on the mood of attaining the integration, the creation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) was therefore to heralded greater African Unity among African states to collectively deal with the challenges of political liberation, economic development and security (Wapmuk, 2009:645). The late Kwame Nkrumah advocated the political unity of Africa and formation of Africa as an immediate project,
etc.) and political union tendency to serve all states. The study interrogates the role of Nigeria in the past, present and future of the African Union member states towards continental economic and political integration. It x-rays the support Nigeria has tendered to the continent, its perception with regards to African Continental Free Trade Area (AFCFTA) their challenges and prospects towards integration like lack of political will in the part of African leaders to surrender their sovereignties for supernatural governments, ownership questions and leadership vacuum. The study posits to provide possible solutions like economic gains behind integration and show of political will. The interference in the internal affairs of member states allowable in the African Union's article provides for transparency and accountability. The paper makes use of both primary and secondary sources to elucidate data while it adopts integration theory to midwife the study.

while the benefits of regional integration and globalization remain an immense and critical part of Africa's workable development strategy (Biswaro, 2011:419).

The African Union succeeded phenomenally in the area of liberation struggles especially South Africa and the enthronement of democracy in the country as the African Union was not successful in the areas of continental development, poverty eradication, ending numerous conflict and human right abuses. The ineffectiveness of African Union in those areas demands a fast-changing world spurred the forces of globalization which necessitated its transformation to the African Union (Wapmuk, 2009: 646). Nigeria’'s foreign policy in all its ramification revolves around the promotion and protection of the country's National interest, the desire to ensure national survival and territorial integrity, follow by other variables like the articulation of the concern of African people in the socio-cultural and political milieu (Umara, 2014:18).

States seek to attain different goals and objectives in the process of governing their sovereign entities, while some goals can be attained by the state on their own, that is, without references to any other entity, others can only be attained with the cooperation or active support of other similar entities.
beyond their borders. All decisions in form of actions and reaction, dealing with such matters requiring cooperation and or active support of others across borders of a given state for their attainment, fall within the purview of foreign policy (Nwankwo, 2013:1). A country’s foreign policy consists of self-interest and strategies chosen by the state to actualized and safeguard its National interest and to achieve its goals within the international communities. It is the aggregation of a country’s National interest which results from the interaction of internal and external forces as perceive by the foreign policy decision makers (Wogu, Adeniyi&Chidzie, 2015:6).

After two years of Nigeria’s independence, the country became a force to be reckoned with in the African continent, playing a vital role in the process of the formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). In that regard, three African groups emerged, namely: the Casablanca Group which stood for immediate political union of all African countries, with a radical approach to Africa’s international relations; the moderate Monrovia Group, which advocated functional cooperation, equality of all states, non-interference in the internal affairs of other states as well as opposition to forced political union of the continent; and the conservative Brazzaville Group, which was made up exclusively of French colonies adamant on maintaining their ties and influence with France. It was against this background of political fragmentation that these groups came together at the conference held in Addis Ababa in May 1963 to form a single organization that would embrace all African states (Akinterinwa, 2005:10, Nweke 2010:15, Obikeze and Anthony, 2003:303).

Over more than 50 years of independence, Nigeria’s foreign policy had focused principally on Africa. Successive Nigerian leaders have professed Africa as the center piece of its foreign policy. Nigeria sees itself and is widely seen as a leader of Africa, and this has profoundly influenced the perception of its role, both on the continent and globally. It played a pivotal role in the formation of the OAU and its transformation to African Union (AU) corresponding to its African foreign policy through the conservative phase, the radical phase and the realist phase (Ibeanu, 2010:17). Since Nigeria’s independence in 1960, Africa has been the center piece as manifested in its commitment to the total liberation of Africa from colonialism, racial discrimination and apartheid. By that, as a result, Nigeria was on center stage.
in the clamor to intensify embargoes, boycotts and economic sanctions against apartheid South Africa (Abegunrin, 2009:2). Nigeria’s impressive commitment in huge diplomatic and financial resources towards the total liberation of Africa significantly saw to it that both apartheid and colonialism were engaged, confronted and liquidated on the continent. Diplomatic, moral and financial resources were consistently placed at the disposal of the liberation movements across Africa (Saliu, 2012:48). The need to form an African unity-oriented organization came as a result of the quest to create a collective anti-colonial struggle on a continental level. This quest brought about a manifestation of the age-long search for an institutionalized body which led to the formation of the African Union in 1963 (Saliu, 2012:49).

On 9th September, 1999, the Heads of states and governments of the African Union at their fourth extraordinary summit held in Sirte, Libya, deliberated extensively on the ways and means to strengthen the continental organization. The aim was to make it more effective so as to keep pace with the political, economic and social developments that were taking place within and outside Africa. The primary goal was to accelerate the process of implementing the Abuja Treaty. Nigeria played a leading role in the process that transformed the OAU to the African Union (AU) (Akinsanya, 2005:106). According to President Olusegun Obasanjo:

The nature of African union should be understood to mean the pursuit of socio-economic integration of the continent as a first and necessary step towards the achievement of a political union. This arrangement may not necessarily be in the form of a federation or even confederation at this stage, but could be the ultimate goal to be aspired to in the future (Akinsanya, 2005:107).

The end of the Cold War, the accelerating pace of globalization, and the end of apartheid have combined to give momentum to the revival of regional and pan-African initiatives. The African Union was created at the start of the new millennium and equipped with a new constitutive Act and institutions, giving fresh impetus to African integration and unity. The African Union is a pan-African institution envisioned to enable Africa to better confront multiple global and continental challenges. Given the complexity of this task, the African Union has a heavy and ambitious agenda that includes, amongst
others, peace and security, trade liberalization, food security, sustainable use of natural resources and energy, adaptation to climate change, migration and promotion of good governance (Laporte and Mackie 2010:12).

The African Union is a continuation of the major discourse that started in the days of colonialism in the continent of Africa and which focused on both the nature and character of future relations among the newly independent African states and in the context of the prevailing international system at the time (Sesay, 2008:11). The new Africa initiatives, namely, the African Union and NEPAD have significantly unique elements that put the continent on a new trajectory of development. Markedly different from the charter of the African Union, the bedrock of the Constitutive Act of the African Union consists in democracy, good governance and security, and borders within Africa are no longer sacrosanct in case of impunity in the treatment of citizens of any country by their government (Akinterinwa, 2013:48). And in the efforts to form the union on such a solid philosophical foundation, the role of Nigeria’s foreign policy was central, driven largely by its commitment and support for regionalism, multilateralism and collective self-reliance among African states (Oche, 2005:158).

Statement of the Problem.
While there have been scholarly studies that address Nigeria’s role in the African Union, many of them have failed to explore how the general framework of its role (foreign policy goals and strategies) in Africa has served both its national interest and the overall integration process of the continent and its people.

Another area of concern is the ownership question and leadership vacuum. Questions are regularly asked as to whether the new African Union integration process is really owned by most Africans. Opinions differ on the deepening of African integration. Rather than unite, the current drive towards African integration has divided the continent between the ‘maximalists’ (people who favour a radical and immediate approach to the achievement of a set of goals or the completion of a programme) and the ‘minimalists’ (people who favour a moderate approach to the achievement of a set of goals or who hold minimal expectations for the success of a programme). There is currently no credible leadership guiding Africa’s integration. There seems to be a dearth of driving forces for regional integration. Nigeria and South Africa have not
played their role either adequately or consistently in recent years. This is in spite of their efforts in establishing the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) and the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). Another problem relates to the distribution of the benefits of integration. There exist unequal partners and benefits of the arrangement (Oche, 2005:153).

The problematic nature of Nigeria in the realm of foreign policy. It is Nigeria’s status more than that of any other black African country that most determines Africa’s collective future. Nigeria is determined not just to play its leadership role in Africa, but to also build upon it. It is against this background that Nigeria’s problem of capability comes into play. A country that is associated with institutional failings and where social upheavals threatens the polity, inept and corrupt leadership, which cast huge doubt if Africa will entrust its destiny to the crippled state of Nigeria and how has its aspiration for continental dominance influenced its foreign policy decisions towards the rest of Africa (CESRAN, 2017:5).

The challenges of accusation of hegemonic aspiration as Nigeria has been accused of such under the auspices of Economic Community of West African states Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) to maintain peace and security in regional and sub-region which serves as an instrument of its hegemonic influence in Africa and West Africa. It is perceived that she pursues a policy of arrogant unilateralism. Again, the challenges of declining capacity for funding peace-keeping missions abroad (Kolapo, 2013: 198-200).

Finally, there is the problem of cultural differences among the Anglophone, Francophone, Lusophone and Arabic-speaking African people. There seems to be an underlying spirit of competition for ascendancy among these linguistic groups in Africa, as these differences affect their methods of administration and economic management (Agubuzu, 2010:374).

However, most compelling is the observation that not yet explored is the role of Nigeria in the political and socio-economic integrative forces like common defence, common government, single currency, continental airline, common market and trade, common anticorruption drive, harmonized migration policies, shared policies on refugees crises, coordinated climate change drive and free trade areas. This study intends to fill the gap by providing appropriate insights.
Research Questions
i. What progress has been made and what lessons have been learnt from the establishment and institutionalization of the African Union in the quest for continental integration in the level or degree of integration?
ii. Is there any apparent disconnect between Nigeria’s foreign policy and the African Union’s key objectives?
iii. What are the key challenges and prospects of the African Union in a rapidly changing Africa, continental and global context?

Objectives of the Study
The main objective of this study is to assess the impact of Nigeria’s foreign policy on the African Union as well as regional integration. Other objectives of the study are:

i. To examine the role of Nigeria in the support of African Union’s effectiveness and efficiency in the quest for continental integration in areas of failure or success.
ii. To determine the impact of Nigeria’s National interest and foreign policy on achieving the objectives of African Union in the quest for continental integration.
iii. To find out the progress made and lessons learnt from the establishment and institutionalization of the African Union in the quest for continental integration.
iv. To investigate if there is a disconnect between Nigeria’s policy and the African Union’s key objectives in the level or degree of integration.
v. To interrogate the key challenges and prospects of the African Union in a rapidly changing continental Africa and global world.

Statement of Assumptions
The study is guided by the following basic assumptions:
1. That the high level of economic and political crises in Africa tends to slow down the pace of continental integration in Africa.
2. That leaders’ degree of commitment and political will can determine the level of continental integration through the African Union.
3. That the asymmetrical relationship among African countries tends to inhibit effective continental integration.
5. That the high rate of corruption among African leaders tends to undermine integrative efforts/mechanisms in Africa.

6. That a pragmatic and strategic conduct of Nigeria’s foreign policy can improve the institutional framework of both continental integration and the African Union’s sustainable objectives.

Justification of the Study
This study is a critical appraisal of Nigeria’s role and the African Union in the context of continental integration. The study is expected to be beneficial to Africa’s quest for political stability, enhanced intra-regional trade, greater security, reduced poverty, overcoming drought and its adverse effects, eliminating human and arms trafficking, as well as better standards of living. It should also verify Nigeria’s vaunted leadership role in African affairs, straddling peacekeeping missions, peace building, conflict resolution, the promotion of democratic governance, and African integration in particular. It will as well show how well or otherwise such engagements have promoted Nigeria’s national interest. Importantly, the study should clearly demonstrate the status of African integration as well as highlight the attendant challenges and the future prospects of the on-going process.

Definition of Terms

Foreign Policy:
Foreign policy is the overall orientation and intentions of a particular country towards another. It is the objective that a country seeks to achieve in her relations or dealings with other countries. It is the means for achieving particular goals or objectives. It is reflected in the interaction of nation-states within the international system (Adeniran 1983:231)

Diplomacy
Diplomacy is the management of international relations, involving various techniques and mechanisms such as communication, consultations, consensus building, negotiations, bargaining and agreements. It is the process or art of communication among states and their statesmen (Viotti and Kauppi, 2012:216).

National Interest
National interest is the sum of the objectives and goals of a nation-state. It is the basic motivation for foreign policy formulation and execution as a guide
for policy makers. It is considered as the simplest means of understanding or explaining how and why nations do what they do when they engage in international action (Eminue, 2013:67-68).

**National Security**

Security is relative freedom from war, coupled with a high expectation that defeat will not be a consequence of any war that may occur. It measures the absence of threats to acquired values. It is the freedom of the people, individuals and groups from physical and human constraints on carrying out what they would freely choose to do (Alan, 2006; 2). Security implies freedom from fear, anxiety or danger. It is that part of government policy aimed at creating relevant national and international political conditions that are favourable to the protection or extension of vital national values against existing and potential adversaries. It implies the capability of a nation to contain and ward off such threats and vulnerabilities that are acute enough to cripple or weaken its national values (Okereke and Arres, 2009: 37).

**Integration**

Integration is the process of bringing different institutions or organizations together on one platform or the process of bringing together various peoples, regardless of creed, race and origin, with the intention of forming a unified civil society (Chaturvedi, 2006:148). Integration is the act of bringing together smaller components into a single system that functions as one. It refers to the end-result of a process that aims to stitch together different, often disparate, subsystems, so that the unit contained in each becomes part of a larger and more comprehensive system (Rouse and Ehrens, 2015:1).

**Theoretical Framework**

**Integration Theory**

The Integration theory attempts to explain why states choose supranationalism which challenges once again the foundations of realism (state sovereignty and territorial integrity). It refers to the process by which supranational institutions replace national ones, depicting the gradual shifting upward of sovereignty from state to regional or global structures. The ultimate expression of integration would be the merger of several (or many) states into a single state - or ultimately into a single world government. Such
a shift in sovereignty to the supranational level would probably entail some version of federalism, in which states or other political units recognize the sovereignty of a central government while retaining certain powers for themselves (Goldstein and Pevehouse, 2012:356).

Ernst Haas (1958), David Mitrany (1944) and Leon Lindberg (1963) viewed neofunctionalism as a concept of political integration process whereby political actors in several distinct national settings are persuaded to shift their loyalties, expectations and political activities towards a new center, whose institutions possess or demand jurisdiction over preexisting nation-states. It is primarily concerned with creating an inevitable gradual functional integration process. It assumes that states are not the only actors internationally, that regional integration starts in well-defined and less controversial sectors but inevitably spills over into more complex ways (Haas, 1961: 5).

Haas was primarily interested in international integration. He realized that traditional European politics could be dramatically changed by liberalizing movements of goods, capital and persons. Haas, the founder of neo-functionalism, recognizes the importance of nation states, but also stresses the roles of regional interest groups and the bureaucracy of regional organizations. The purpose of neo-functionalism is to utilize the pioneering European experience of integration to generate hypothesis for testing in other contexts. Neofunctionalism describes and explains the process of regional integration with reference to how three casual factors interact:

i. Growing economic interdependence among nations.

ii. Organizational capacity to resolve disputes and build international legal regimes.

iii. Supranational market rules that replace national regulatory regimes (Rosamond, 2003):

Haas theorized the mechanisms that he thought would drive the integration forward:

i. Positive spill-over effect is the notion that integration among states in one economic sector will create strong incentives for integration in other sectors, in order to fully capture the perks of integration in the sectors.

ii. Increased transactions and intensity of negotiations then take place hand in hand with increasing regional integration.
iii. The mechanism of a transfer of domestic allegiances can be best understood by first noting that an important assumption within neofunctionalists thinking is of a pluralist society comprising the relevant nation-states.

iv. Greater regulatory complexity is then needed, and other institutions at the regional level are usually required, for the integration to attain higher levels of decision-making processes.

v. Technocratic automaticity describing the way in which integration proceeds, with supranational institutions set up to ensure that the integration process will itself take the lead in sponsoring further integration as the supra-national contrivance becomes more powerful and more autonomous of the member-states (Rosamond, 2003:7).

Integration theory looks to the creation of new states by integrating existing states, generally on a regional basis and, possibly in the long run, a single world state (Brown and Ainely, 2005:122). It was only in the past half-century that international integration became the subject of research by social scientists. Economics and political science really began to deal seriously with the question only after World War II. International integration is defined as focused on the achievement of security within a region or among a group of states. The definition of security community was bound up with the conception of integration (Domonkos, 2010).

The great thinkers and proponents of integration theory include Joseph Nye, Karl Deutsch, Morton Kaplan, Georg Ritzer, Immanuel Kant, Roger Masters, David Mitrany, etc. The main characteristic of integration theory is that it originated in the Western tradition of pluralists, interest groups politics and in the theoretical assumptions about the political impact of intensified economic interdependence based on liberal capitalist international policies and practices. By the mid-1960's, the application of the pluralist, neofunctionalist model was expanded to non-European experiences such as the Latin American Free Trade Association (LAFTA), the Central American Community and the East European Commission (Kent and Nielsson, (eds) 1980:128).

Consequently, the merger of the French and German steel (iron) and coal industries into a single framework considered important to European recovery and growth. It eventually gave birth to the European Coal and Steel
Community (ECSC) which merged France and Germany with Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg. Those states worked through the ECSC to reduce trade barriers in coal and steel policies with the establishment of an authority to deal with companies, labour unions, and individuals, and to some extent, it could bypass governments (Goldstein and Pevehouse, 2012:358).

The linkage and relevance of the theory to this study is to provide a framework for understanding the new impetus behind African Integration and unity. Its key organs, including the Assembly of the Union, the Executive council and the Economic Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC), were granted defined mandates that aimed to create a more coherent and coordinated institutional structures, with a particular focus on the integration, mobilization of the input of African civil society, states and governments into the integration process of the African Union.

Nevertheless, the theory has its shortcoming in these ways:

(i) Integration reduces states’ ability to shield themselves and their citizens from the world’s many problems and conflicts;

(ii) integration can mean greater centralization at a time when individuals, local groups and national populations demand more say in their own affairs;

(iii) the centralization of political authority, information and culture as a result of integration can threaten both individual and group freedom; and

(iv) tension between nationalism and supranational loyalties usually occurs. (Neilsson, 1980:129).

Findings

The findings of the study revealed across the key informants’ interviews that Nigeria has to review its role in Africa to reflect the domestic politics and reality. It requires the country having been a frontline state in the past for countries struggling to attain their independence to consider its national interest. Again, the dynamism to international integration concept especially in EU and ASEAN demands robust and appropriate move for African states to integrate economically and politically which Nigeria is best expected to take the driver’s seat. However, that should not make the country dumping site for dumping goods. Again, it revealed that the political will to integrate in order to enjoy the fruits of economic and financial gains collectively is not exercised
and as the institutions are weak, it makes the observance practically impossible. Again, it requires the full commitment of government and institutions to ensure appropriate measures to safeguard smooth path for economic and political integration devoid of war, climate change, migration, corruption, sit tight syndrome, hunger, famine, weak institution, nationalism etc. which are antithetical to continental integration.

Interrogating the Key Challenges of the African Union
Talking of integration in an environment of distrust and division is a big challenge, yet it must be embraced that integration is not static at all.

- The recognition of continental diversity in culture, economics, and politics has posed a challenge to the African Union in devising a system that would take account of both a deep desire for continental unity and competing national goals. Global interaction can only be productive if governed by bonds of common communication and a shared commitment (Kumusa & Jones, 2014:16).

- The problem of overlapping membership of the RECs arises from the failure of all the regional groupings to focus on Africa's continental integration as a final objective of all regional/sub-regional efforts. The institutional weakness in the RECs and in AEC particularly with regard to the capacity to formulate and monitor programmes (Olaniyan, 2008:7)

- There are also various types of political problems arising from the real or imagine fears of some members about domination, external interference and armed conflicts. The break-up of integration groupings or the regression to smaller groupings is often a direct result of these problems usually linked to government attitude regarding integration.

- The regional integration process in Africa is being slowed by the perception that there is a conflict between the national development objectives of the member states, the cooperation and integration objectives of the RECs as it breeds the tendency for REC member states to overlook their financial obligations and other commitments to the sub-regional and regional organization.

- A further challenge to the African Union has to do with the strong attachment of African leaders to the issue of sovereignty. There is a
wide spread corruption, mismanagement of the economy, inefficiency, lack of probity and accountability in governments as well as the pervasive practice of sit-tight leadership (Azaigba, 2010:122), lack of industrial capacity and high cost of doing business within the continent (Tanyanyiwa & Hakuna, 2014:10).

- For a common market to function, its members at least need to be at peace. The wars and conflicts in a number of African regions which have devastated transport networks, communication and other basic infrastructure need to be peacefully resolved.

Prospects of the AFRICAN UNION in a Rapidly Changing Global World

Africa’s greatness in the international system has long built and rested on the fulcrum of Pan-Africanism. The idea is hinged on the understanding that confronting the challenges of globalization requires a coordinated/continental interaction and unity of interest.

- The regionalization of economic activities will enable national economies to build capacities in all critical areas from the absorption and generation of new technologies to production and marketing as a springboard for more meaningful participation in the world economy.

- While the foundation for regional economic cooperation and integration in Africa has been well laid through the establishment of the AEC, the RECs should continue to build their capacities, harmonize and coordinate their, institutions, improve performance and avoid wasteful duplication of effort. This will include the harmonization of national reconstruction programmes of the member states with those of the RECs, in such a way that one can complement the other. It applies to relationship among the RECs, the AEC, countries, the multinational organizations and the African Union.

- The African Union together with the RECs and their various member states should invest more energy and resources in promoting the integrity of electoral processes as a strategy to prevent electoral violence and support peaceful post-election transitions. Joint activities between the African Union and the RECs and other international actors offer important opportunities to build trust and strengthen collaboration, highlighting the synergies and complementariness of their mandates.
The African Union must realize that Africa’s enemies such as disease, illiteracy, poverty, wars, famine, conflicts, economic recessions, sit-tight leadership, corruption, refugees/migration crisis can only be eradicated through common action and joint efforts of African Union government and parliament as it must struggle to achieve universal human dignity and racial equality across the continent and the world at large. Africa’s political and economic integration are interlinked involving democratization of African regional organizations, free movement of goods and people among countries and actions to address such cross-border issues as AIDS, child labour, and trafficking in women to be noted.

- Rationalizing Africa’s many different regional institutions, to reduce overlap and inefficiency.
- Pursuing a pace of integration that is simultaneously ambitions and realistic. Reconciling conflicting interests of countries with diverse sizes, natural resources and economic performance.
- There must be legal reform in African states to address issues of corruption, money laundering, human trafficking and other deterrents to foreign investment.
- External aid is incentive to African states to signal their supports for the programmes and policies of regional integration.
- The African Union now pays more attention to international development cooperation and relationship with international partners than before, especially as the China’s ever-growing influence and presence in Africa. African Union would have to adopt an appropriate strategy to manage international cooperation in an era of globalization and in a changing world to come out with relevant and practical conceptualization of innovative and transformation partnership which its member states will need to complement national development efforts (Lisk, 2012:2).
- African Union needs to be more firm in its use of force. The organization’s conflict management strategy lack effective coercive measures to ensure compliance of its members and implement forceful intervention as provided under Article 4(h) of its constitutive Act and as proposed under the responsibility to protect (R2P) concept where and when consensual interventions and peaceful negotiations are in
appropriate or inadequate. Delay in reaching political agreement among African leaders on collective security, norms and practices should be reduced or absolutely eradicated (Joshua & Olanrewaju, 2017:12).

- The building of social capita through spreading of information, which would enhance trade and reduce the probability of conflicts as well as building a strong social infrastructure in addressing other constraints.

- It has already been pointed out that primary factors of success for regional integration in Africa would require firstly political liberalization and sound macro-economic reforms. This would underpin by infrastructure development, attracting and nurturing private economic activities, supporting socially and economically viable indigenous practices, and creating the right climate for the expression of a plural and divergent political voice in civil society as these factors together would contribute significantly to the vitality of Africa’s integration process.

ECOWAS has adopted a single currency called ECO for the West African region which African Union show learn from it to adopt a single currency, defence and political platforms for the continent in the fulfillment of African Union agenda 2063-SDGs.

- Monetary integration can also provide the basis for more efficient coordination and monitoring of the social and regional impact of structural adjustment policies. Improved regional coordination and commitment of donors to such policies are equally decisive for the success of the creation of stable monetary areas (Bach, 1999:8).

Summary & Conclusion
The study justified the role of Nigeria in the quest for continental integration in terms of economic and political agitation for union/unity. Its roles be it hegemonic, solidarity affirmative, selfless and assertive to either cater for her national interest and foreign policy realization or the attributed affection of the continent as its centerpiece, all worked for the actualization of continental integration of the desires of the founding fathers of African Nations to be economically relevant, prosperous and self-sufficient countries. The study justified the role of Nigeria in providing the lead amongst countries in Africa by ensuring that its vacuum cannot be easily filled as observed in the
Africa continental Free Trade Area (AFCFTA) where its admission into it was initially delayed as African Union felt it badly.

References


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