

Hydro-politics in the Niger Basin Authority and Nigeria's National Interest

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Abstract

This study examined Nigeria's national interest and hydro-politics, explicitly focusing on the Niger Basin Authority. The study's specific objectives are to (1) identify the obstacles to Nigeria's national interest under the Niger Basin Authority and (2) determine whether the lack of policy implementation on climate change has affected the human security of the Nigerian population within the institutional policy framework of the Niger Basin Authority. In explaining the study, the regime theory was utilised while employing content analysis as the method of data analysis. The study's findings suggest that Nigeria should realise her national interest in international water organizations by promoting her economic growth and national development through her participation in the efficient management of the Niger Basin Authority. The country can achieve effective transboundary water resources management that promotes integrated water resources management and sustainable development, including social equity, economic growth, and environmental and ecological protection in good governance and public participation. In addition, Nigeria should be pragmatic in its implementation of climate change policies under the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. Specifically, Goal 13 addresses climate action. This will go a long way toward mitigating human security threats in the Niger Basin, such as drought in the upper Niger and flooding in the lower Niger Basin.

Keywords: *Multilateral Water Organizations, National Interest, Niger Basin Authority, Foreign Policy, And National Development*

Introduction

Africa's abundant freshwater resources are a testament to the continent's natural blessings. However, the management of these resources has become a significant issue, causing potential disputes and regional tensions. Westing (1986) asserts that intense rivalries over ownership and control of portable water sources can fuel conflicts if not managed properly. Addressing this issue is crucial, especially considering the arguments made by Serageldin (1995) that 21st-century wars might be waged over the control of vital waters for national interests. In this vein, this paper explores the challenges and opportunities of managing Africa's freshwater resources, emphasizing historical and contemporary efforts to prevent conflict through intergovernmental collaboration and multilateral agreements. It highlights the importance of these issues in a changing world and growing demand for these precious (water) resources.

Within the Niger Basin Authority sphere, Nigeria has been engaged in multilateral water cooperation with eight other African member countries spanning three sub-regions, two of which are within West Africa and Central Africa and are hydrologically active. The other subregion is Northern Africa which is hydrologically inactive in addressing issues of transnational waters to protect the country's national interest (Rahaman, 2009).

The country is a significant player in international politics, with many partnerships forged through intergovernmental institutions. For the continued existence of the state's foreign sovereignty, national interests must be promoted within these international bodies (Osita, 2010). Nigeria joining an international group such as multilateral water organisations shows how seriously it takes its responsibilities to promote international harmony. Nigeria has to ensure that the country's approach to water management is consistent with international law governing the cooperation of states (Rahaman, 2009).

In this paper, we examined the Niger Basin Authority as a regional intergovernmental organisation to see how Nigeria has benefited from or stands to profit (in terms of her foreign policy goals) from multilateral water cooperation. Her participation in efficiently managing the Niger Basin Authority will benefit Nigeria through transboundary water cooperation. Under the rule of good governance and with public input, "effective transboundary water resources management promotes the achievement of the three key objectives of integrated water resources management and sustainable development: (1) the social equity; (2) economic growth; and (3) environmental and ecological protection" (Rahaman, 2009:208).

For centuries, the Niger River and its Basin have provided the people within the Niger Basin Authority with thriving economies that have allowed them to survive even in the face of extreme drought. However, there is much room for growth in various sectors within the Niger River Basin system. These include agriculture, fishing, ecotourism, transportation, infrastructure, and energy (Ayuba, 2016:14).

The Niger River is the third longest in Africa at 4,200 kilometres, and its annual flow is the third highest at 180 kilometres. A total of nine countries—Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Niger, and Nigeria—make up its 2,250,000 square kilometre Basin. About 1.5 million km² of the Basin is hydrologically active. In Guinea's Fouta

Djallon Highlands, the Niger River begins its flow, with an average flow of 45 km³, before it reaches Mali's Inner Delta. The Benue River, its most important tributary, begins in Cameroon and ends in Nigeria (UNDP & World Bank, 2004:30).

The Inner Niger Delta, for example, is one of the largest Ramsar areas in the world and is a biodiversity hotspot; it is a prime example of the potential biodiversity found in the Niger River system. Two of Africa's largest breeding colonies of herons and cormorants make their home there. In addition, up to 3–4 million waterbirds—both permanent inhabitants and seasonal migratory birds from across Europe and neighbouring Asia—rely on this delta for survival (Ayuba, 2016:15). The country's national interest drives Nigeria's approach to international affairs.

Accordingly, Nigeria considers its national interests while formulating and implementing policies towards the external environment and uses those policies to further those goals. Anything that endangers the Nigerian state is off-limits, as its survival is paramount. Therefore, the nation's primary concerns are safeguarding its citizens and ensuring their continued physical and economic safety and political stability (Osita, 2010).

Water remains a critical aspect of Nigeria's national interest, especially multilateral water management. To maintain domestic use of fresh water and agricultural survival for food security, Nigeria has a vital interest in water as a natural resource. Water conservation, which enables hydroelectric power generation, is also necessary. Water is a transnational resource in most cases since its flow and tributaries originate in one country or region but then cross into others. As a result, international water law recognises water as a precious resource, mandating its careful administration at the multilateral level, where governmental institutions meet to deliberate on matters that could spark transboundary water wars (Rahaman, 2009).

The Niger Basin Authority is spread across three subregions in Africa. We have Benin Republic, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Niger, and Nigeria from the West African sub-region. At the same time, Cameroon and Chad represent the Central Africa subregion among the nine hydrological member countries. Northern Africa's inactive hydrographic region is represented by Algeria (Ayuba, 2016). The area draining into the Niger River is equivalent to 7.5% of Africa. Out of a total basin area of 2.2 million km², roughly 1.5 million km² is the hydrologically active area. The Sahara Desert and Algeria make up the northern part of the Basin, which is hydrologically dormant (Ayuba, 2016:9). As a result of the Niger Basin Authority's efforts, the nine-member countries have been able to protect this international water resource. While Nigeria remains an active member of the Niger Basin Authority, her national interest does not match the hydro-politics of the multilateral water organization.

Historicising the Formation of the Niger Basin Authority.

A group of countries from (2) Central and (6) West Africa met to discuss ways to improve their cooperation to share the Niger River. Hence, the Niger River Commission (NRC) was formed as a result of this collaboration in 1963. The Commission's primary function was that of an advisory group providing access to a shared fund for national projects that could affect any member country (Bande, 2010).

Moreso, NRC "sought to ensure that a national project of any country sharing the river and its basin did not negatively affect the territory of another member state," as stated by Niasse (2008) as cited by Bande (2010:203). The Niger Basin "has a mandate that geographically covers an area of 2,200,000 square kilometres" (Bande 2010:202).

Bande (2010) explains that on November 21, 1980, the Niger River Commission was re-founded under the name Niger Basin Authority (NBA), a change from its previous name the Niger Basin Commission (NBC). When the Niger Basin Authority was reestablished, its nine member countries met in Franah, Guinea, and committed to using the river's resources in a way that benefited all of them. According to Adenle (2004) in Bande (2010:203), " Chapter II, Articles 3 and 4 of the 1980 NBA Convention specify that the NBA aims to promote cooperation among member states and to ensure an integrated development of the Niger Basin in all fields by developing all of its necessary resources including water." There will be progress among the NBA's member states, and food security will be guaranteed due to increased economic activity.

Article 4.1 stipulates that the NBA shall be responsible for six issues, one of which deals with surface and groundwater resources, reflecting the member countries' desire for joint development. The NBA's responsibilities include developing and overseeing a coherent regional strategy for exploiting the Basin's surface and subsurface water resources. According to Article 4.1a, the NBA ensures "an equitable policy as regards sharing of the water resources among member states through the harmonisation and coordination of national development policies." Article 4.2a-g of the Convention states that seven activities (statistics and planning, infrastructure, water control, and utilisation, environment control and preservation, navigation control and regulation, land and agro-pastoral development, and financing projects) will be carried out in order to achieve the six goals outlined in Article 4 of the Convention (Bande, 2010:203).

Article 4c of the NBA Convention mandates water regulation and utilisation to facilitate effective management of the Niger Basin. This is crucial because it will pave the way for member countries to work together and end their decades-long water wars. According to Bande (2010:203), Article 4c includes six different actions as sub-items: (a) controlling the flow and drainage of the main waterway; (b) preventing flooding; (c) building and maintaining dikes; (d) halting the spread of desertification and drought; (e) halting the decomposition of topsoil; (f) establishing structures and works for development, including salt water and drainage control. Yet Article 4.2d identifies three environmental activities: (a) environmental protection, including the establishment of norms and measures applicable to the States in alternative uses of waters in the Basin; (b) water pollution prevention and reduction; and (c) human health and genetic resources preservation (fauna and flora).

The purpose of the NBA Convention was to make sure that no member country "undertook any work on the portion of the river, its tributaries, and sub-tributaries under their territorial jurisdiction that polluted the waters or modified the biological features of the fauna and flora." Because it guarantees that "one of its important rivers and a tributary to the Niger - Benue would not be negatively affected," this clause in the Convention is of crucial and meaningful interest to Nigeria (Adenle 2004; Ayibotele 2010 cited in Bande, 2010: 203).

The Issues within the Niger Basin Authority

There are sixty-eight transboundary river basins and thirty-eight transboundary aquifers in Africa. These are covered by different types of regional integration involving water cooperation. Some examples of such organisations with a disjointed system of basin-specific and bilateral agreements are the South African Development Cooperation (SADC) with its Revised Protocol, West Africa, and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in developing regional water policies (Rieu-Clarke, 2015).

International cooperation on transboundary water resources presents one of the most significant challenges in managing large-scale resources. Hydro-politics, also known as the politics of water, shape this international cooperation by attempting to entangle the states that share a river basin in a web of interdependence from which they cannot free themselves. States within the Niger Basin Authority may pursue hydro projects unilaterally without the coordination or consent of neighbours, leading to severe environmental impacts and potential conflict of interest if no common goals are established (Rieu-Clarke, 2015).

The transboundary flow of toxic effluents emptied from upstream industrial sites and human settlements on the tributaries of the Upper Niger without trespassing across international borders is a primary concern in managing the River Niger. This has significant regional implications as the Niger Basin Authority (NBA) attempts to define the strategy around the cooperating states' shared vision regarding the sustainable use of international water (Rieu-Clarke, 2015). Due to the prevalence of health risks and water-borne diseases, the Niger Basin is facing a public health disaster. This, in turn, will inevitably lead to water pollution.

The diverse ecosystem of the Niger River basin is under increasing threat from human development. Dam Building and Water Extraction Tree cutting, landfilling, and sedimentation Depletion of wetland biodiversity due to Perplexing degradation Problems with Conservation Provocative issues in management Poor progress in building infrastructure Danger to the Environment (Ayuba, 2016:23).

The Niger Basin is feeling the effects of climate change, which will affect the local populace. The Niger Basin's already strained resources are expected to be further depleted by a 5% annual increase in water abstraction from agriculture, fisheries, and livestock. This reflects climate models (Kerres, 2010:5). River flows will decrease due to the effects of climate change brought on by human activities because of the world's growing population. For the fifty years beginning in 1999 and ending in 2049, the river's flow would have decreased by 20%, putting it on par with the 1970–1998 low average and resulting in a decrease of roughly 6.5 kilometres (Kerres, 2010:5).

Climate variability, as evidenced by fluctuations in seasonal and annual changes in rainfall and runoff, is presenting the Niger Basin with the harsh realities of climate change, according to historical trends. Because of this, people have had to learn to cope with erratic weather patterns year-round, including the Sahel region's harsh and more prolonged dry season that causes drought.

Drought is getting worse as rainfall decreases in the southern Sahara Desert, which is becoming increasingly desertified. Desertification influences land-use dynamics, increasing human activities and contributing to global warming (Kerres, 2010; Abrate, Hubert, and Sighomnou) (2013). Other climate change-related problems in the Niger Basin include drying wetlands, water quality deterioration, groundwater depletion, and rising temperatures (Kerres, 2010).

The Niger Basin Authority faces significant difficulties due to a lack of policy implementation through institutional frameworks. The Niger Basin Authority's member countries' ministries or departments of water resources and environment have not yet coordinated at the international level to harmonise their shared responsibility for the Basin's growth. According to Kerres (2010:21), the Niger Basin Authority's input is negatively impacted when "national responsibilities often remain unclear due to unstable governments."

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), in its 2001 conference, introduced policies and strategies for the National Adaptation Programs of Action (NAPAs). This is to tailor the Action Plans of national governments on the environment with a focus on issues related to climate change. The National Adaptation Program of Action (NAPA) was developed as the primary first step in planning adaptation at the country level by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). A national adaptation plan (NAPA) is a document that describes in depth how a country plans to adapt to the effects of climate change and what those effects might be. The NAPAs, once finalised, are submitted to the United Nations to qualify for multilateral climate change funds. (Sayn, 2011:13).

Less-developed nations hope to use NAPAs to pinpoint specific areas where they need to take swift action in response to climate change adaptation issues. The goal of NAPAs is to prevent unnecessary setbacks in addressing high-risk, high-cost areas that may become critical if not addressed on time. However, NAPAs are geared more toward identifying urgent activities than carrying them out. They do not offer a plan for long-term adaptation and have no mechanisms for carrying it out. On the other hand, developing NAPAs has a significant outcome: increasing knowledge and building capabilities within the target countries. It is still being determined whether any NAPAs were incorporated into domestic policy or international development aid (Kerres, 2010).

Nevertheless, despite Nigeria's Ministry of Environment assurances, no National Action Plan for the Environment (NAPA) has been implemented. Although the prolonged delay raises doubts about official dedication, it is questionable whether it is worthwhile to create a NAPA before the foundational policy infrastructure and knowledge are in place. Although many other countries' NAPAs have made the same mistake, Nigeria should not. (Sayn, 2011:13).

As the largest economy within the multilateral cooperation of nine countries, Nigeria must effectively project her salient interest and protect her core interest, making Nigeria's national interest sacred in the Niger Basin Commission. "Nigeria has traditionally taken a defensive stance as the regional hegemon located downstream from the other core countries, trying to block significant upstream investments that could affect intake at the crossing from Niger into Nigeria. Despite being a significant water producer and having access to a navigable section of the Niger River (a tributary of the Benue), it has never shown much concern for upstream fluctuations. Unless, for instance, the Kandadji project in Niger significantly impacted its seasonal intake (Medinilla 2017:21).

There has been a problem with Niger Basin Authority members prioritising their national programmes over the organization's overall goals. Take Nigeria, for example; it has been developing its hydroelectric infrastructure since the 1960s. It could easily keep doing so even if it were to leave the NBA. For a long time, it has also supplied Niger with cheap electricity, meeting the needs of upstream consumers and offsetting the need for dams. There has always been a Nigerian serving as executive secretary of the NBA. Nigeria is isolated in several ways, including being the only English-speaking country in the Basin (excluding Cameroon, a member state and a bilingual state) (Medinilla 2017:21).

The Nexus between Hydro-politics and Nigeria's National Interest

Scholars in the field of international relations often use the concept of "national interest" to examine the behaviour of states within the global system. They argue that this examination is

most fruitful when considering each state's unique characteristics. Most state actions within the international system have always been interpreted through the lens of national interest, and all independent states within the international system formulate foreign policies that take care of domestic and external imperatives. The execution and implementation of any state's foreign policy are enhanced by including national interest as a condiment. Unprepared for the complexities of international politics, a state with no predetermined national interests is doomed to fail. In this context, "national interest" refers to those fundamental principles that must be upheld if a nation is to remain viable as a political entity within international politics. The term "national interest" is used to describe the goals that are fundamental to a country's continued existence. Therefore, a nation like Nigeria will pursue these goals in international waters (Osita, 2010).

From the immediate post-colonial period to the present day, for instance, Nigeria's national interest within the framework of its foreign policy has undergone different phases of mutation, even as the core elements have remained largely the same. The idea of national interests has heavily influenced the foreign policies of independent states like Nigeria. Protecting Nigeria's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and security has been a top priority for the country's leaders since 1960, even though this has been a source of debate (Osita, 2010:81-85).

The desires and strategies of a nation in its international relations with other nations make up what is called "national interest." In international relations, protecting a country's physical, political, economic, and cultural identity, known as its "national interest," is paramount (Kiyomo, 1969:2-3). Nigeria's foreign policy is led by the promotion and protection of the country's national interests. Consequently, the term "national interest" describes the total interests of all national citizens (Kiyomo, 1969).

Osika (2010) examined the position of national interest in Nigeria's foreign policy and argued that it has been challenging to pinpoint Nigeria's sense of national interest since 1960. This is because over time, the tendencies in Nigeria's foreign policy that indicate the country's national interests have not been especially constant (Osita, 2010: 81).

Since gaining independence, Nigeria's foreign policies have evolved in response to the shifting environment of the nation's basic national interests, which range from security to political demands. Osita (2010:80) takes the realist stance that there are permeances in the national interest of any country and that these must be backed by power in terms of national security, which is defined as the integrity of any country, and in terms of national territory and its institutions (Osita, 2010:80).

Nigeria's Role in Hydro-politics in the Niger Basin Authority

Nigeria seems to have demonstrated its relevance as an African powerhouse in water politics because of its involvement in multilateral water organisations. The country participates actively in the Niger Basin Authority and the Lake Chad Basin Commission. Hence, the country had a crucial role in founding both the NBA and LCBC. Nigeria's ambition for regional cooperation will lead to growth in the West and Central African subregions due to Nigeria's interest in NBA and LCBC as multilateral water organisations. Despite playing a significant role in water politics, the nation has not received the recognition it deserves.

Despite the numerous obstacles it has encountered over its fifty years as an independent nation on both the domestic and international fronts, the nation continues to pursue the shared goal of regional and subregional development. Nigeria's economic position gave her an advantage over

most of the countries in the subregion and, consequently, the continent of Africa. This is one of the reasons why she continues to play a significant role in regional or subregional politics. Nigeria has contributed financially to the NBA and LCBC because it is a prosperous nation. In these multinational water organisations the country participates in, it makes sense that the country attempts to protect its national interest (Bande, 2010).

Nigeria's function as the primary sponsor of both water organisations has significantly impacted the NBA and LCBC's ability to continue operating. Nigeria's contribution to the growth of both organisations that deal with significant water in the subregions of West and Central Africa has been vital. The dedication to Nigeria has a direct bearing on the integration and development of Africa, both of which continue to be important tenets of Nigeria's foreign policy approach (Bande, 2010). Given Nigeria's dominant position in ECOWAS politics, participation in these two crucial water organisations has attracted backing from some of the most potent international institutions worldwide, which is crucial to advancing her interests. The European Union, UNESCO, United Nations Development Programme-UNDP, United Nations Habitat, and Nigeria have all provided financial support for the NBA, according to Bande (2010: 209). Nigeria also had a significant role in winning the ADB financing for the NBA. The nation has contributed to both subregional developments thanks to her talent for ensuring that her interests are protected in both multinational water organisations.

Nigeria's National Interest in the Niger Basin Authority

According to Niasse (2006), cited in Bande (2010), the Niger Basin's complexity makes it challenging to ensure the proper and effective joint management of the River Niger, which spans more than 4,000 km. Nine nations share the Basin with diverse socio-political and cultural characteristics that frequently conflict with their respective national interests.

Nigeria has a stake in maintaining tranquility and security on her soil. Nigeria's neighbours must be assured that no conflicts exist that could spread to Nigeria for peace in the nation. Most of the LCBC and NBA nations are Nigeria's close neighbours. As a result, it is crucial that the secure nation cooperate with its neighbours to advance good neighbourliness, which is one of her foreign policy goals. Within these two subregions, this goal is to support peace and security while promoting development (West Africa and Central Africa).

Bande (2010:208) avers that Nigeria enormously contributes to these two multinational water agencies (LCBC and NBA). However, "Nigeria has consistently remitted its payment and paid the most outstanding required contribution to both bodies. Nigeria saved the NBA in the 1990s when it was facing significant financial difficulties by (i) constructing a dignified home for the Executive Secretary and (ii) covering all outstanding staff salary arrears (Bande, 2010:208)

Nigeria's involvement in the LCBC is so significant that it has earned her the right to the position of Executive Secretary on an ongoing basis. This is different, though, when we look at the official job of NBA Executive Secretary, which Nigeria has always held since the league's foundation in 1980. Nigeria's national interest continues to play a significant role in the sustainability of water politics in the area thanks to these crucial leadership positions in both water organisations (Bande, 2010).

The language barrier is one of the challenges militating against Nigeria's involvement in hydro-politics. This has prevented the country from completing its obligations within the context of national interest, despite its strong commitment to fostering subregional integration in multinational water organisations. This is due to Nigeria being the only nation in the Niger

Basin Authority that speaks English. In the NBA, which is mainly composed of French-speaking Francophones, and Portuguese-speaking Lusophones, there is typically a leaning of ideological attitude toward the primary lingua franca of Central and West African member countries. The Francophone nations dominate both the LCBC and the NBA. Nigeria, the only Anglophone country, faces significant challenges because of the French-speaking nations' predominance in the NBA since they would rather see Nigeria fail than prosper (Folarin, Folarin & Olorunyomi 2015).

Institutional Framework and Nigeria's Role in the Governance of the Niger Basin Authority

The Niger Basin Authority's "institutional framework consists of the Council of Ministers, the Technical Committee of Experts, and the Executive Secretariat responsible for implementing decisions of higher authorities" (Ayuba, 2016:23). It is a common practice that the institutional framework governs the creation and application of policies in all formal organisations. Hence, as a water organisation, the NBA is expected to deal with various environmental difficulties. However, there is the institutional framework's incapacity of the NBA to direct the creation and execution of policies appropriately. This results from member countries' need for more political will (Diamond, 2011).

It is difficult to "harmonise and coordinate national development policies to achieve equitable policy regarding the sharing of water resources among member states," as stated in the NBA Convention. Such a task requires institutional, technical, and financial resources that are not easily accessible. Internal staff rivalry at the Secretariat level impacts how the NBA's policies and programmes are carried out. The NBA is a multilateral organisation made up of citizens from the nine member countries, making the task more difficult. Additionally, international conflicts of interest are typically discussed at Council of Ministers meetings (Tuga 2009 cited in Bande, 2010: 206). Since member states propose essential employees who frequently have more loyalty to their home states than the organisation, there is a problem with recruiting inexperienced people regardless of technical competency. Staff members who are competent and trained are frequently not given jobs that match their education and experience. Due to substantial financial mismanagement of the NBA between 1980 and 1986, the Executive Secretary was fired from his position. Staff salaries were unable to be paid, and credit card debt was accumulated. In fact, by 1994, when the NBA's financial condition had gotten so bad, member states were required to cover the wages of their citizens working at the Secretariat at the 16th Session of the Council of Ministers held in Bamako, Mali. (Bande, 2010).

The diverse ecosystem of the Niger River basin is already under threat from numerous development projects. These consist of Building a dam/Watergrab Deforestation, increased agriculture, and sedimentation Degradation of wetlands and decline in biodiversity obstacles to conservation management difficulties Undeveloped infrastructure environmental deterioration (Ayuba, 2016).

The Basin's wooded regions have primarily disappeared and runoff has risen as a result of deforestation, particularly in upper catchment areas. Solid particles are frequently transported by increased runoff, which causes more sedimentation in the waterways. Sedimentation causes several ecosystems vital to many species to deteriorate. Sedimentation is an issue in many places where crops are grown right up to the brink of rivers, increasing the sediment loads. The main threat to fish and molluscs is sedimentation (Ayuba, 2016). Long thought to be an endless resource, floodplains have recently been drastically reduced, and some sections of the River

Niger have dried up (Niamey in June 1985), raising questions about the River Niger's sustainability. The loss of biodiversity is mostly caused by a reduction in the variety of species, mainly fish and migratory birds. The Niger Basin severely lacks transportation infrastructure, which hinders regional integration and economic progress. Poorly built infrastructure includes inadequate water and sewage systems (Ayuba, 2016).

The Niger Delta region of Nigeria has seen severe environmental degradation, and the issue is still ongoing. Oil is one of the primary pollutants. Environmental deterioration has been caused by development operations related to oil and gas. The consensus is that Nigeria flares more gas than the whole oil-producing world combined. An increasing threat is posed by the continuous discharge of industrial and urban wastewater into river channels. Nigeria is now putting the UNEP Report to clean up Ogoni Land into practice (Ayuba, 2016)

The Niger Basin's rainfall has changed because of the problem of climate change. "Mean annual precipitation levels range from 250 mm (Timbuktu) to 4,100 mm in the delta area," claims Ayuba (2016:33). The Niger passes through nearly all of West Africa's ecological zones along its journey, from the Sahel to mangrove swamps. Rainfall anomalies, however, are a result of climatic change. Akinnubi and Babatlu (2014). Lokoja, part of the Upper and Lower Niger River Basin Development Authority region, has a proxy for rainfall anomalies in the Niger River. Because of these unusual rainfall patterns, homes are flooding, people are being forced to flee, and crops are being destroyed. The Basin's high geographical and temporal rainfall variability substantially impacts the Basin's water supplies (Oyebande and Odunuga 2010, cited in Oyerinde, Hountondji, and Wisser, 2015:1628).

Growing urbanisation results from environmental degradation and poverty as rural inhabitants relocate to protect their way of life. The AIDS pandemic and already low life spans are contributing to the loss of the economically active population. As a result, there are enormous economic consequences for the development of the Basin (UNDP & World Bank, 2004).

Most of the Niger River Basin dams are located in Nigeria, a country known for its massive hydropower dams and expanding industrial output. The Kainji and Jebba dams, which generate 68 percent of Nigeria's hydroelectric and 22 percent of the country's overall power supply, are the primary sources of energy production. Nigeria's power consumption currently exceeds its supply, which may worsen. Since Nigeria is a downstream riparian nation with a stake in maximising downstream flows for hydroelectric power generation, mainly during dry season flows, it is evident that increasing upstream water consumption for any purpose will be of interest to Nigeria (World Bank and UNDP, 2004).

About 80% of the energy needs of the Basin are met by firewood and charcoal. However, meeting the demand for home fuel and commercial logging has led to deforestation and erosion throughout the Basin, particularly in the drier regions of Mali and Niger. Even if power is primarily available in metropolitan areas, there is still a sizable household fuel demand in these areas, which contributes to the ongoing deforestation process. "The hydropower potential of the Niger River Basin is very significant. There is currently some infrastructure in place to take advantage of this potential, most notably in Nigeria, where hydroelectricity produced by the Kainji and Jebba dams accounts for 22% of the country's electrical needs. Oil exploration is endangering mangroves in Nigeria's Lower Niger Delta. In the Basin, alternative energy sources need to get more attention (UNDP & World Bank, 2004:33).

Theoretical Explanation

The regime theory of international relations was adopted as the theory for this study. The perspective on the regime theory is founded on the liberal tradition, which holds that cooperation among governments promotes peace and security. According to the regime theory, cooperation between states and non-state entities can be influenced by international institutions and regimes. This theory's central premise is that collaboration is possible under an anarchic international system.

According to the theory, the distribution of power in the international system is between states and non-State entities, and collaboration on particular issues is based on some international regimes. In this view, regimes are the outward signs of inter-actor cooperation in the global system. International relations expert Stephen Krasner is the leading proponent of this view. In line with this, Krasner (1983:2), cited in Mahlakeng & Solomon (2017), defines regime theory as the guiding principles, norms, guidelines, and processes for making decisions that participants in the international system anticipate resolving in each domain. Robert Keohane is a well-known advocate of the regime theory. According to Keohane (1989), referenced by Mahlakeng & Solomon (2017), nations cooperate under international regimes under rules that set out how they should behave in order to advance the national interests reflected in their foreign policy goals.

In addition, Mahlakeng and Solomon (2017:180) contend that the regime theory explains how "treaties on international rivers that hold fundamental norms and encourage rule-based collaboration to politically address difficulties and conflict in the field of international river basin management." There are several approaches to the regime theory, including the power-based approach, the knowledge-based approach, and the interest-based method.

By examining how the Niger Basin Authority was established in 1980 with the fast-track of cooperation among the nine states of the Niger Basin Authority as its emphasis or mandate, we may apply the regime theory to this situation. The explanation of regime theory in this instance is the utilization of an international organisation that will guarantee their cooperation to hasten the development of the Niger Basin's resources for the benefit of the countries, including water development, transportation or water navigation, energy, and agricultural development under the Niger Basin Authority. "Basin states may only gain through the development of a comprehensive commission serving as an institutional vehicle for collaboration" (Godana (1985:264 cited in Mahlakeng & Solomon, 2017:184). Considering that nine States had a shared interest in administering the Niger Basin, Bande (2010) points out that the 1980 Niger Basin Convention guaranteed they would collaborate within an institutional regime. By preventing any conflicts that might have resulted from water politics, the Convention that governs the Niger Basin Authority has contributed to guarantee the proper administration of the Niger Basin.

Furthermore, the international institutional framework of the Niger Basin Authority has been able to arbitrate between transboundary basin organisations within its nine-member States in a way that prevents serious interest conflicts that would have arisen between individual nations. "The idea of regimes and institutions are analogous because they conceive the idea of common cooperation that generates rules guiding the activities or behaviours of States," according to Godana (1985:264); (Raadgever 2005:3) referenced in Mahlakeng & Solomon (2017:184). Here, we can infer that the regime theory is appropriate for illuminating the activities taken by

the nine nations who banded together to protect their shared interest in transboundary waters inside the Niger Basin.

The Niger Basin Authority and Nigeria's National Development: Prospects and Issues

The Niger Basin Authority's stated objective is to foster member-nation cooperation to ensure integrated resource development. In its original mission statement, the group said its goal was to advance cooperative management of water resources, focusing on the Niger River but not solely. The NBA nations use the organisation to coordinate the growth of the member states' energy, agricultural, forestry, transport, and industrial resources, with a particular emphasis on their water and hydroelectric resources (Lycklama *et al.*, 2001; Pan African Press, 2008). The NBA has created an "Integrated Development Plan of the Basin" focusing on cross-boundary efforts. Since the NBA has not been given any sovereign authority over management or resource allocation, all laws must be passed by individual sovereign states. Although it was not the NBA's primary goal, protecting the environment from the threats of desertification, deforestation, and river pollution by industry and agriculture has been a significant focus of their activity (Lycklama, et al 2001; Pan African Press, 2008).

Discussing or understanding Nigeria's interest in the Niger Basin Authority is impossible without economic development. Economic development refers to a country's ability to produce and sustain annual increases in its Gross National Product (GNP) at rates of perhaps 5-7 percent after its initial economic position has mainly been stationary for a long time (Danladi & Naankiel, 2019). Economic development is characterised as having the autonomy, self-respect, and capacity to fulfill basic demands on a national scale. As well as the growth or availability of fundamental human choices, or the process that widens the distribution of incomes and necessities like food, shelter, health, and protection, it is also concerned with expanding the variety of economic and social options available to people and nations. Economic expansion has entailed a deliberate alteration of the production structure, particularly with an increase in the share of industrial and manufacturing outputs. A new strategy for development, however, aims to combat the rising unemployment rate, widespread absolute poverty, and unbalanced income distributions directly. By the 1970s, the definition of economic development in the context of a developing economy had changed to include longer life expectancies (longevity), more excellent literacy rates (access to education), food security, the abolition of poverty and inequality, and the abolition of unemployment (Danladi & Naankiel, 2019).

Nigeria's economic troubles result from five issues that have hindered RBDA's performance there. Typically, none of the essential decision-making phases of project design, execution, management, and evaluation involve the local community. The loss of homes, productive areas, fishing, and fishing-related items are just a few of the social impacts that the development has on the neighbourhood. In addition, insufficient funding due to diminishing tax receipts, a lack of awareness and attention to the government's fundamental duties, and contradictions in policy (Danladi & Naankiel, 2019).

Economic Growth

The Niger Basin Authority's economic survival is in the interest of Nigeria. It was anticipated that developing an integrated river basin would increase agricultural output through irrigation agriculture (all-year farming). This is to ensure food security, hydropower production, flood control, and the provision of water for rural and urban use (Fasona & Omojola, 2005). However, several years before the 1976 establishment of nine River Basins and the subsequent

addition of three more to make a total of twelve (12) River Basins had a measurably positive impact on Nigeria's economic development. Nigeria's economy remains mostly monoculture, which disaggregates agriculture's GDP contribution and is plagued by high unemployment and social unrest. GDP is now down to 2.7%. According to data, 24.4 Nigerians are malnourished, and the nation spends 1.3 trillion Naira (\$8.1 billion) a year importing food (Fasona & Omojola, 2005).

The river basin development authorities have not sought out the industry that is so sorely needed. The River Basin Development Authorities were founded for Nigerian and multinational manufacturing companies to plant year-round food and cash crops. The manufacturing sector in Nigeria is currently nonexistent. Nearly all of Nigeria's agro-related industries depend on importing necessary raw materials. The River Basin Development Authorities' mandate to build dams has prohibited them from utilising all-season farming to produce year-round food resources. Because the government could not adequately monitor and maintain them, the construction of large-scale dams with high capital and managerial needs produced unforeseen consequences that challenged their sustainability. Additionally, money being syphoned from crucial public projects to private accounts and frequent policy reversals brought on by recurrent administration changes are examples of corruption and bribery (Danladi & Naankiel, 2019).

International Water Politics and Domestic Policy Implementations

Political manipulation and the politicisation of river basins have stymied Nigeria's economic progress from the 1970s until 2017. For instance, after Shehu Shagari's administration was toppled in the military coup of 1983, the Basin government was denied funding and attention since the new military government gave little attention. Because of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) adoption, a sizable irrigation subsidy was discontinued in 1992. The government could not pay development costs due to dwindling income and rising international debt obligations. The core economic principles of SAP were predicated on the assumption that agriculture was a mediocre private-sector business. The political environment and the actions of political actors who have been incompatible with managerial and organisational goals are largely to blame for the failure of various agricultural programmes. This includes Operation Feed the Nation (OFR), the Green Revolution, RBDAs, and the Directorate of Food, Roads, and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI). The RBDAs have not done much to improve the reliability and effectiveness of the water supply. This results from many Nigerian rural and urban populations lacking access to clean drinking water. The majority of the dams constructed in Nigeria by RBDAs lack security. Security problems at the dam impede efficiency and appear to be related to technological problems. Ineffective storage due to an excessive intake of silt, seepage through the foundation works, a lack of spillways, flood capacity, value damages, and other issues are only a few of the issues that many current dams face.

Energy Generation for Food Security and Sustainable Development

The River Basin Development Authorities of Nigeria, which oversees dam-building and use them to irrigate farms vital to food security, have not done well. Building dams to produce food and energy is still a fantasy. This has had adverse effects on Nigeria's economic growth in several ways. The poor condition of the dams built by RBDAs in Nigeria is to blame for the nation's ongoing energy issues, which prevent industrialization. Nigeria's electricity production continues to be a mystery. Due to high production costs brought on by inadequate or inconsistent energy supply, many domestic and foreign manufacturing enterprises have

abandoned Nigeria. The many hydropower (electrical) dams, including the Shiroro, Kainji, and Kashimbila dams, are in disrepair. Due to this, it is not easy to produce electricity, which impacts economic growth—adverse effects of industrialization. Nigeria now produces fewer than 5,000 megawatts (MW) of power, compared to Brazil, which has 200 million people, and South Africa, which has a population of 50 million. The several hydropower dams in Nigeria have water level oscillations brought on by seasonal changes in rainfall patterns and volumes, a lack of maintenance, government apathy, and corruption. The acute electrical supply badly impacts Nigeria's economic development. In addition to deterring foreign investors from investing in Nigeria, this factor raises the price of essentials, which impacts the country's citizenry.

Threats against Security

Due to Boko Haram's terrorism, which resulted in the deaths of active farmers in Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe, several RBDA staff members were forced to leave the north. Boko Haram took over the Niger Chad basin authority at the beginning of 2015, which led to the suspension of corporate activities there. There are about 2.1 million internally displaced individuals who are suffering in camps. The Niger Delta River Basin Authority faces severe challenges from militant Niger Delta groups like the Niger Delta Volunteer Force (NDVF) and the Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Deltas (MEND) have resulted in oil pipeline vandalism and consequent spills. This has affected the RBDA's capacity to support Nigeria's swift economic development and promote agriculture.

The Niger Basin Authority and Nigeria's Commitments towards Climate Change Policies

The government's inability to quickly implement climate change mitigation measures and the escalating effects of climate change, particularly in Northern Nigeria, continue to pose severe threats to human security. Due to this, the water level has decreased and, in some instances, has continuously overflowed, destroying the dams that these basins' control (Eyre, 1990). Nigeria is currently very concerned about hunger, which poses a huge threat to the country's security. In Nigeria, where there are over 170 million people and a 2.8% annual population growth rate, flooding is a significant problem for RBDAs. Flooding has become so common that the RBDAs, which were established by statute to deal with it, are now overburdened with it. Flooding is described as a state in which ordinarily dry ground is submerged with water from a flowing river, dam, or severe rain. Nigeria's flooding is a result of both national and global issues. For instance, the 2012 floods that wreaked devastation in many areas of Nigeria were caused by flooding in Cameroon. This followed the Cameroonian government's decision to permit the Lagdom dam to be opened. The 2012 floods, which inflicted havoc in many areas of Nigeria, were caused by the downpour that characterised this and the Nigerian government's lack of preparation. The purpose of the RBDAs is to construct dams that will shield Nigerian farmers from flooding. Farmers and villagers were protected from flooding by these dams, which also acted as reservoirs in times of flooding. For instance, the water release from the Lagdom dam in neighbouring Cameroon caused significant flooding in the states of Kogi, Benue, Taraba, and Bauchi, as well as several other coastal states like Lagos, Bayelsa, and Delta. Most of these floods cause property damage and fatalities, which forces populations to relocate. Flooding at Sokoto in July 2001 resulted in the eviction of 16,000 persons. Over 200,000 individuals in Nigeria were affected in April 2001, compared to 12,398 persons in Zamfara in the same month. In 32 states of Nigeria, flooding affected around 7,700,000 people between August and September 2012.

Herders/Framers Conflicts and the Effects of Climate Change on Human Security

In the Niger Basin Authority, under Nigeria, the Sahel savannah and Sudan are significant grazing areas with specialised grain and vegetable farming. The Guinea-savannah region is the country's leading source of food. Cereals, various arable crops, and intensive and substantial root and tuber crops are all farmed here. Food items such as yams, cassava, potatoes, Guinea corn, and millet are net exported from this area to other regions of Nigeria. The rainforest belt is the only place commercial tree crops, especially cocoa and oil palm, are grown. A few root and tuber crops are also encouraged to grow for subsistence. Over time, a decrease in rainfall and an increase in surface temperature have put stress on the Guinea Savannah region and the rainforest belt. Most of these stresses were brought on by the long-distance transhumance of the Fulani cattle rearers from the Sahel and Sudan savannah to the Guinea savannah and now the rainforest belt. There are currently many Fulanis and their herds living in the Guinea savannah and the rainforest belt. They are either permanently dwelling there or roaming the area, unlike the 1960s and 1970s, when they only traveled down south when the Sudan and Sahel's grasses were no longer "green" and made the return migration with the beginning of the wet season in the north (Desanker, Frost, Justice, & Scholes, 1997).

Nigeria's Guinea savannah and rainforest belt is experiencing increased conflict over diminishing land resources due to uncertainties and climate uncertainties, which have already had terrible adverse effects on farmers (particularly cattle rearers) of the Sahel and upper Sudan zones. The pattern (pace and direction) of land use and cover changes has also strongly suggested the opening of new virgin forest lands and the disappearance of good arable lands, especially in the Guinea savannahs and adjacent forested areas. These are vital signs of the regional impacts of climate change. (Eyre, 1990). Of course, the farmer in the Guinea Savannah who is already growing crops close to the edge of the production zone will strive to thwart the "northern invasion." As a result, conflicts between indigenous and immigrant populations arise as both groups attempt to protect the interests of their relatively small land. This offers an illustration of how communities in Nigeria are being impacted by climate change. In the Niger delta mangrove habitat, disputes have emerged between various ethnic groups and villages as well as over who gets to oversee the exploitation of minerals. As a result, these regions are critical hotspots for Nigeria's human insecurity caused by climate change (Eyre, 1990).

Nigeria's cash crop output has significantly fallen since the 1980s up till the present. The groundnut pyramid has disappeared from the northern Sudano-Sahelian zone. Since the 1980s, cocoa production in the rainforest belt has been steadily declining because the bulk of the original cocoa fields is now fallow lands. Climate change has prompted massive rural-urban migration and conflicts over limited land resources, which are the root causes of agricultural loss. The carrying capacity of these cities is being pushed to the limit by widespread rural-urban migration. The extensive destruction of urban infrastructure, the rise in crime, and the resulting development of urban slums, ghettos, and squatter settlements serve as examples of the social effects of climate change (Gould & Zobrist, 1989).

Conclusion

This paper shows that Nigeria still needs to fully capitalise on its advantageous economic and political position in the region to exercise influence and achieve all of its foreign policy goals,

particularly in multilateral water organisations. The home front is impacting the nation's attention on the world stage. Therefore, it is past due for Nigerians to acknowledge that she falls short of her goals in the Niger Basin Authority. The immense economic potentials have yet to be completely realised. Nigeria, one of the continent's most powerful economies, must employ a group like the Niger Basin Authority to further its goals and promote its cause, resulting in economic growth and progress.

Recommendations

1. Nigeria should make sure she realises her national interest in multilateral water organisations, particularly the Niger Basin Authority and the Lake Chad Basin Commission, where she continues to be one of the chief contributors to their maintenance. Opportunity beckons through these international water organisations for Nigeria to leverage these organisations and progress her economic growth and national development, considering the electricity crisis and food security challenges affecting the African continent.
2. Nigeria should be serious about implementing climate change policy under the UN Sustainable Development Goal 13 with practicality. This will significantly reduce human security problems in the Niger Basin, such as the upper Niger's drought and the lower Niger's floods that continue to displace people and wash away farmlands.

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