Extraneous Considerations to the Personality Variables in Foreign Policy Decision-Making: Evidence from Nigeria

Chukwuemeka Ojione Ojieh

Abstract

The more general approach to assessing personality variables in foreign policy decision-making is to ascribe the motivation of decision makers to their personality traits. By so-doing, certain variables external to the human elements but which act as boosters through which the personality elements influence foreign policy decision-making, are often ignored. Through a historical analysis of idiosyncratic effects on Nigerian leaders' foreign policies, this article establishes that even though personality elements perform well as explanatory variables in foreign policy analysis, they do not solely explain the variance in decision outcomes. They require other factors to activate their expression as foreign policy determinants.

Keywords: *Nigeria, foreign policy, decision-making, personality traits, extraneous considerations, kitchen cabinet*

Introduction

Several factors influence foreign policy decision-making, and among them are the personality traits or idiosyncrasies of the decision makers. The factor of personality-influence on foreign policy decision-making is hinged on the reasoning that, since the state is a reified concept and decisions are only made on its behalf by human beings, such decisions are bound to be coloured by the personality traits of those officials in charge of statecraft. Such traits include the background, motives, cognitive perceptions, beliefs, etc, of the decision maker. It is the influence which the decision makers' personal traits have on foreign policy decision-making that has become the foreign policy analysis model, generally

known as the personality factors or idiosyncratic variables in foreign policy decision-making. This approach to the study of foreign policy decision-making, borrows from political psychology.

The literature on idiosyncratic influences on foreign policy decision-making is rich.[1] Thus, it would belabour the point to establish personality factors that have been dominant in Nigeria's foreign policy decision-making. This is because such an effort would be a mere rehash of the already well-chronicled and established discourses on the influence of the personality variables on the process of Nigeria's foreign policy-making.[2]

The foregoing notwithstanding, personality variables in foreign policy decision-making are so relevant that Dyson, with emphasis on how Tony Blair's personality shaped both the process and outcome of British foreign policy towards Iraq, concludes that personality traits perform well as explanatory variables in the individual level analysis of theories of foreign policy.[3] Boin, McConnell, Preston and t'Hart talk of "more deep-seated" personality structures that play an important role in shaping government's decision-making processes.[4] As espoused in Hermann's leadership trait analysis technique, personality factors in foreign policy analysis are a combination of the effects of several variables from the motive, cognitive belief, and personality trait areas of psychological analysis in the process of foreign policy decision-making.[5] The thrust of the thesis is that personality is a combination of seven traits: belief in ability to control events, conceptual complexity, need for power, distrust of others, in-group bias, self confidence, and task orientation,[6] all of which, one way or the other condition the decision making process.

In most of the literature, the contention is that political leaders' personality taint foreign policy. While this is valid, it is over-sung by scholars. In fact, the hype about the role of personality variables in foreign policy decision-making is such that it has been cautioned that to underestimate them in Nigeria's foreign policy decision-making and foreign policy analysis in general "is seriously misleading."[7] Osuntokun alludes to the primacy of personality variables in foreign policy decision-making by insisting that it "is only natural [that] foreign policy reflects the personality of the individual leader."[8] Personality factors as influence on foreign policy have continued to be presented as if they were automatic and could on their own act without recourse to considerations that are extraneous to

them. But this is not so. Hence Juliet Kaarbo submits that even though leaders' personality and leadership styles have one of the greatest impacts on decision-making, this is rather indirect.[9]

It then follows that personality variables on their own only explain small portions of policy variance. Yet many scholars continue to "reemphasize"[10] the significance of the individual level factors in theories of foreign policy and do so in an obvious neglect in fully understanding and thus neglecting the extraneous elements that often prod the personality traits to manifest. This is the void the present study seeks to fill, drawing evidence from Nigeria. It will show that when personality variables influence foreign policy decision-making, they must have been activated by elements extraneous to them since on their own they cannot act. This is done without prejudice to the fact that Ate deliberately undertook "a systematic analysis or an empirical evaluation [of the influence of the personality traits] with respect to the foreign policy systems of the various Nigerian regimes,"[11] an approach he said was novel. But there remains the issue of explaining the capacity of a single individual's (the leader's) opinion to prevail over the collective opinion in foreign policy decision-making.

This study is not content with just speculating about the crucial importance of the personality of people running the system, and especially the heads of governments. What nudges them to exhibit these traits? What enables them get away with influencing foreign policy, even in the face of more intelligent and/or superior considerations or even in the face of institutionalized mechanisms of checks and balances such as the National Assembly and the Judiciary, and often within a collective decision-making structure such as, the Federal Executive Council even in a democracy? Put bluntly, what emboldens them to insist and do have their way in foreign policy decision-making? An attempt to unravel this knotty issue provides a new study focus. Specifically, this study will demonstrate that even though personality elements remain critical to foreign policy analysis, these traits require extraneous events to give them expression.

Theoretical Considerations

Whether at the levels of bureaucratic, executive, or individual decision-making, the leader exerts considerable influence on foreign

policy, and this has caused Peterson, for instance, to write on why presidents dominate the process of foreign policy making.[12] Leadership in general implies functioning within defined roles. In this context, evaluating role theory in decision-making, with focus on the behaviour of foreign policy formulators, becomes relevant to this study.

Role theory is "a science concerned with the study of behaviors that are characteristic of persons within contexts and with various processes that presumably produce, explain, or are affected by those behaviors."[13] The presumption is that individuals holding certain positions carry with them an expected pattern of behaviour congruent with an assigned role.[14] This is because, while individuals and their innate characteristics may exist, the "psychological pressures under which they operate [require them] to conform to the expectation of a new peer group."[15] In this regard, Ate concludes that "people who are placed in a role will tend to take on or develop attitudes that are congruent with the expectation associated with that role."[16] Thus, if role theory is anything to go by in this discourse, it follows that the political leader or head of state according to Ate "cannot do anything he or she likes and expects general public support".[17] But this runs counter to the personality variables/foreign policy decision-making discourse. This is because in the foreign policy analysis model of personality traits and decision-making, the chief decision maker "has his or her own beliefs and expectations about fulfilling a role"[18] and will not always conform to the role's requirements. This is exemplified by Bolaji Akinyemi (as then Nigeria's Foreign Affairs Minister) when Ate talked of Akinyemi's inability to conform to role requirements because of his personality traits.[19] Thus, role theory does not fit because while the leader may not enjoy general public support in taking unilateral decisions, evidence abounds that personality and leadership styles do shape both the processes and outcomes of foreign policy decisions, particularly when the leader has some latitude for action.

The foregoing actually invalidates role theory, as the issue is that of explaining the capacity of a single individual's opinion to prevail over other considerations in the decision making process. And this can be explained by the fact that the chief decision-maker; the leader, buoyed by the extant rules in the constitution, for instance, and/or with the connivance of his clique,

or what Dyson calls the "inner-inner circle,"[20] could seek to spin the discussion to his favour. This safely takes the issue away from the leaders' personality traits and redirect the focus to elements extraneous to them, but are the activators of the personality traits. Again, while it is true that institutionalized checks and balances exist in the nation's constitution, the same constitution makes exceptions, which this study calls extraneous considerations to the personality traits of the President which could be exploited to shape the foreign policy-making process.

Even as Hermann's leadership trait analysis is dominant in treating idiosyncratic variables in foreign policy analysis and with the personal characteristics defined as "an individual's personal traits, beliefs and attitudes and values,"[21] the fact remains that in personality trait analyses of foreign policy, the question persists, had anyone else been leader would the decision been the same? The obvious answer is no. Given individual differences, policy choices, even under similar circumstances, would differ between leaders. This truism is lost in the question; were there no statutory backing for the leader's action, would such decisions have become policies in the first place? Here too, the answer is, no, and this supports the relevance of a theory of extraneous elements to personality traits in foreign policy analysis because personality variables do not on their own act as influence on foreign policy decisions-making.

Research Method

The more general approach to evaluating idiosyncratic elements in foreign policy decision-making has been to anchor them on the personality traits of the state officials who make such decisions. By so doing, emphasis is completely laid on the variables, idiosyncratic to the leader. Thus variables external to the human elements that include psychological pressures from his environment—for example, the influence of his clique or kitchen cabinet or the situational contexts or events such as the leeway in the constitution—remain hidden. Yet it is through these external elements that the personality elements in explaining foreign policy decision-making find expression. With evidence from Nigeria and using the research method of historical description and analysis, this study will resolve this lack of attention to variables external to

the human elements that is prevalent in the literature on personality and foreign policy decision-making.

This will involve describing the evidence of personality influence of national leaders on foreign policy decision-making as contained in existing literature, followed by an analysis of the issues being appraised so as to reach a conclusion concerning new evidence. This is done, first, by identifying the personality traits in selected foreign policy actions of some Nigerian leaders as already documented (in existing works), and then showing how certain provisions in Nigeria's constitution and other primordial factors provide the leaders with leverage to manipulate their idiosyncratic or personality traits to influence foreign policy.

The method of historical description and analysis was deliberately chosen because of the advantage it offers the researcher to study personality at a distance. This eliminates some of the constraints of interview or questionnaire methods, for instance, where protocol restrictions and other bureaucratic bottlenecks limit access to such high-profile personalities. Moreover, it allows for the analysis of individuals who are dead. This study deliberately identified and selected specific, sometimes, single events in the political and diplomatic history of Nigeria in a regime-by-regime analysis, in an effort to validate the capacity of extraneous elements to cause the manifestation of the idiosyncratic variables in foreign policy decision-making. This method is congruent with Dyson's even though he cautions that "there are limits to the generalizability of the findings" in the study of deliberately selected episodes given the possibility that the researcher had cherry-picked the evidence and left out other considerations. But this he said could be mitigated if explanations of the personality/decision-making nexus are phrased in probabilistic terms and cognisance taken of the situational variables.[22]

Again the danger in this choice of method is mitigated by the fact that sufficient knowledge of the selected events already exists and that the researcher, too, is sufficiently imbued with the capacity to fairly determine what should readily constitute a study sample by using the purposive or judgmental sampling design which is a "sampling method in which the researcher uses his or her own judgment in the selection of sample members."[23] This is done because "it may be appropriate for you [the researcher] to select your sample on the basis of *your own knowledge* of the

population, its elements, and the nature of your research aims (emphasis added)."[24] The present researcher has knowledge of the selected events as exist in scholarly discourses on Nigeria's foreign policy (even on a regime-by-regime basis as shown below).

Personality Traits in some Nigerian Regimes' Foreign Policy

In Nigeria, personality traits are dominant factors in foreign policy decision-making. This fact is well captured by Ogwu, who studied most of the Nigerian leaders between the First and Second Republics (1960 to 1966 and 1979 to 1983, respectively).[25] She observes that Prime Minister Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa (1960-1966) was a "calm and moderate man . . .his personality being more calculated to placate than to provoke."[26] She argues that these traits conditioned his position on foreign policy, which was marked by conservative and moralistic gradualism. For the first ten months of independence, Balewa reserved for himself the post of Minister of External Affairs, maintaining a rigid personal control over foreign policy matters[27] ignoring public opinion on such matters as the clamour for action against the tiny Island of Fernando Po,[28] now Equatorial Guinea, which had meted inhumane treatment, including indiscriminate harassment and killings, on its Nigerian residents. Because of Prime Minister Balewa's personal disposition, he did not yield to public outcry for military action against Fernando Po, the bulk of whose population were Nigerian labourers. This was, in addition to Nigeria's avowed principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of other states, especially those of its immediate neighbours who are considered relatively less powerful, in order not to be accused of hegemonic motives. Otherwise, nothing else according to Olusanya and Akindele "would have delighted African radical nationalists more than Nigeria's annexation of the former Spanish colony. . . ."[29]

Nigeria's foreign policy at Independence was very much Western-oriented because, in addition to the colonial legacy, Prime Minister Balewa preferred to deal with those whom he knew well.[30] Balewa is said to have had this penchant for forging a special relationship with the United Kingdom.[31] Hence, Balewa noted in 1958, even before Nigeria's independence, that after

Nigeria's independence, "Britain will not become a foreign country to us. . . ."[32]

For Gowon (1966-1975), Ogwu talks of Gowon's appeal and charisma, his magnanimity and sense of fairness as well as his benign, Christian nature[33] as factors that probably informed what has been termed his spend-thrift, Father Christmas foreign policy which lavishly spent money on Nigeria's neighbours and other distant black nations as a show of generosity, which, according to Fawole, was "without regard for or recourse to official consultations."[34] Reproduced below as Tables 1, 2 and 3 are quantifications compiled from Ogunsanwo of the various cash gifts Nigeria disbursed to African countries between 1972 and 1975 under Gowon.[35]

Table 1. Aid Offered in Respect of Drought and Other Natural Disasters Between 1972- 1975

Mali	₦431,579
Senegal	₦333,333
Upper Volta	₦407,895
Chad	₦320,176
Mauritania	₦214,912
Niger	₦342,105
Ethiopia	₦200,000
Sierra Leone	₦20,000
Somalia	₦1,107,895

Table 2. Aid Extended to Some Countries on their Independence Between 1972 – 1975

Guinea Bissau	₦500,000
Cape Verde	₦60,775
Mozambique	₦675,890
\Sao Tome and Principe	₦60,775

Table 3. Aid Extended to Some Countries for Various Purposes Between 1972 – 1975

Niger	₦644,000
Zambia	₦500,000
Sudan	₦400,000
Sao Tome and Principe	₦124,000

Note: ₦1 = $1.65 United States36

Also, Nigeria under Gowon awarded scholarships to students from the Gambia, Sudan, Guinea, Uganda, Liberia, and Kenya,[37] and shortly before being removed from office, Gowon made Nigeria forego its right to receive its entitled financial operations of the African Development Bank in favour of giving it to poorer African states.[38] Gowon normalized relations with African states that recognized Biafra during the civil war when, for instance, Nigeria concluded "agreements under which Nigerian crude oil would be supplied to . . . [Ivory Coast] at reduced rates,"[39] even though Ojukwu, the leader of Biafrans remained in Ivory Coast in refuge. Such gifts were also extended to non-Nigerian friends and distant countries outside Africa as Gowon undertook, in May 1975, to pay civil servants salaries in Grenada and Guyana and helping to balance their recurrent budgets following their near bankruptcy and even though "Granada at that time was not on Nigeria's list as a friendly country."[40] Gowon had earlier in 1973, "decided to assist in the development of Papua and New Guinea . . . [because] they are small countries inhabited by black people."[41] Nigeria under Gowon even bailed Britain out of its financial obligations in Jamaica to the tune of £20 million.[42]

Like Balewa, Gowon also sought to protect his dominance of foreign policy. Gowon's near autocratic control of Nigeria's foreign policy[43] showed as he "seemed to have personalized decision making and the conduct of foreign policy in the early 1970s."[44] When Murtala Muhammed (his successor) addressed the nation after Gowon's overthrow and accused him of insensitivity "to . . . responsible opinion . . .,"[45] this may have been due to Gowon's "insatiable quest for personal adoration."[46] It is true that idiosyncratically, Gowon's "strong pan-Africanist" outlook predisposed him to the principle of "functional cooperation . . . [and] defender of the rights of all black peoples in different parts of the world,"[47] but the regime, like others of the immediate post civil war period, had leveraged the increased revenue of the oil boom, occasioned by the Yom Kippur War of October, 1973, to undertake assisting development in Africa and other black nations. Thus, the aggressive pan-Africanist policy of this regime could also be evidenced in the economic clout that the oil boom provided and shows consistency in the nexus between materialism and international relations.[48]

The Murtala and Obasanjo regime from 1975 to 1979 had "a foreign policy which was very popular with the people as well as being the object of respect in the international system."[49] This was because of its aggressive Africa-centeredness, which caused the era to be "highly romanticized in the literature on Nigeria's foreign policy as the most glorious."[50] The fact is that even though most of Nigeria's regimes since independence had proclaimed Africa as centrepiece of its foreign policy, the Murtala and Obasanjo regime elevated this to an assertive and combative stature. Comparatively, Aluko notes that "whereas under Gowon relations were marked by a desire to stave off direct conflicts with any of the major powers . . . General Mohammed and his lieutenants had little regard for diplomatic niceties,"[51] resulting in direct confrontations with the United States and Britain over Angola and Zimbabwe respectively.

In the Murtala and Obasanjo regime there was evidence of presidential pre-eminence in foreign policy decisions. For instance, Murtala's recognition of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) government in Angola in November 1975 was unilateral, as the Supreme Military Council (the highest decision-making body) was not consulted.[52] Even "the Commissioner for External Affairs did not agree with the decision,"[53] which was contrary to the report of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Conciliation Commission on Angola, published in October 1975 and which recommended "that a Government of National Union be . . . formed by the three Liberation Movements for the purpose of leading Angola into Independence . . . the Nigerian press enthusiastically supported it. . . ."[54] Yet, Murtala acted otherwise.

Studies have shown that Murtala's decision, which was heavily weighted in his personal traits, was not a surprise given his well-known idiosyncrasies.[55] Ogwu defines General Murtala Muhammed as "adventurous, activist, pragmatic and realist by conviction."[56] James Oluleye, as quoted by Lakemfa, speaks of General Murtala as:

> . . . kind hearted even as a bully . . . had fixed ideas of things. To him every human organization was a military machine that can be worked to death without question . . . He had very little respect for constituted authority while he will not tolerate disrespect from subordinates. . . .[57]

Obasanjo talks of "Murtala's lack of concern for his personal security" as a component of his being adventurous.[58] Putting it bluntly, Sotunmbi calls General Murtala "stubborn,"[59] a trait which first came to the national limelight when—apparently against well-thought professional advice—he led the Nigerian army adventure toward Onitsha during the Nigerian civil war (1967-1970), which proved so deadly to his battalion that he had to be relieved as troop commander. Alabi-Isama, in *The Tragedy of Victory*, says the Onitsha operation was "one of the blunders of the Nigerian Army during the civil war."[60] Colonel Murtala Mohammed as Commander of 2 Division, during the Nigerian Civil War, insisted on the tactics of a frontal attack on the enemy Biafra at the opposite end of the River Niger. His second-in-command, Lt. Col. Akinrinade, protested against the plan resulting in a falling-out with his commander. Col. Murtala Mohammed was obstinate, the federal troops drowned, and over 50 percent of the troops in that operation died. As if that was not enough, Col. Murtala made another attempt to capture Onitsha frontally and the federal troops were ambushed at Abagana; the battalion suffered many more casualties with all their vehicles, supplies of food and medicines burnt and destroyed.[61]

These stubborn traits which Sotunmbi says were "typical of his [Murtala Mohammed's] attitude to life"[62] played out at the international scene when Murtala unilaterally recognized the MPLA faction in Angola, contrary to the popular position both in Nigeria and OAU. Joe Garba, Nigeria's Foreign Affairs Commissioner under Murtala, records that when he cautioned of how his boss' action could violate diplomatic conduct, General Murtala Mohammed "was intransigent *shouting* (emphasis added) . . . we must recognize the MPLA now. . . ."[63] Murtala was killed in an abortive coup on February 13, 1976 and was succeeded by his second-in-command, General Olusegun Obasanjo, who also allowed personal traits to affect his policies.

As a military vice Head of State to Murtala, Obasanjo showed loyalty to his boss and also did so after Murtala's death, when he pledged to continue with his policies, such as the continuation of the fight against any form of imperialism in Africa, particularly the anti-apartheid crusade. An example was when, in a bid to "arm-twist Britain over the question of independence for Zimbabwe, an issue over which he had *strong personal conviction*

(emphasis added),"[64] he "nationalized the assets of the British Petroleum in 1979 despite strong opposition from some official quarters, especially the Ministry of External Affairs which he reportedly side lined."[65]

On October 1, 1979, after nearly one decade of vacillations by the military, a democratically elected government headed by Alhaji Shehu Shagari was inaugurated in Nigeria. In Shgari's regime (1979-1983), like others before and after it, there was evidence of leaders' personalities affecting foreign policy. Of all Nigeria's immediate neighbours, its relations with Cameroon have been the most controversial on account of conflicting claims over the oil-rich sections of their border. This resulted in skirmishes, some nearly leading to a full-scale war. Cameroon had particularly been more aggressive in this regard and its gendarmerie killed five Nigerian soldiers on patrol duty on the disputed area on May 16, 1981. On this account, segments of the Nigerian society called for war, but President Shagari ignored them. This no-war option may not have been unconnected with Shagari's peaceful mien, which transposed into his general desire for a peaceful Africa. David Williams calls Shagari a "calm and patient leader whom nobody has seen losing his composure"[66] and "not a man to manipulate the levers of power."[67] Shagari sought an amicable resolution of the Nigerian/Cameroon issue and it was according to Williams, his "careful handling of the delicate negotiations with Cameroon, and resistance to Nigerian demand for military action, [that] firmly brought success . . . In January 1982, Ahidjo [President of Cameroon] came to Nigeria as Shehu Shagari's guest."[68]

This apart, a point to also note is that Nigeria was particularly wary of going into a full-scale war with any of its immediate neighbours, all of which are Francophone and have very close relations with France, which will readily come to their aid in any such circumstance; this is an assistance Britain will not readily avail Nigeria or Ghana for instance. That France would readily come to the assistance of its former colonies who are Nigeria's immediate neighbours is exemplified by the fact that France, militarily, came to the aid of Chad in 1978, 1983 and 1986 during its conflicts with Libya between 1978 and 1987. President Jacques Chirac of France, on behalf of Cameroon, its former colony and Nigeria's immediate neighbour, secured an agreement from President Obasanjo of Nigeria to concede the loss of Bakassi should the International

Court of Justice (ICJ) determine that the territory belonged to Cameroon, and Obasanjo agreed.

For the Buhari/Idiagbon regime (1983-1985), there was also evidence of presidential dominance in foreign policy decision-making. Buhari expelled millions of West Africans as illegal aliens in 1985 without consulting the ministry of external affairs.[69] This action, which Fawole says "reflected General Buhari's *personal convictions and strong will* (emphasis added) rather than the country's national interest,"[70] was earlier exhibited in the retaliatory actions which characterized the infamous "Dikko Affair."

Specifically, on July 5, 1984, there was a failed attempt to kidnap former Nigerian Transport Minister and former Chairman of the Presidential Task Force on Rice, Alhaji Umaru Dikko, from London to Nigeria in a crate marked "Diplomatic Baggage" to face corruption charges. The British government accused the military Buhari/Idiagbon regime of the kidnap attempt, and the Nigerian Airways plane involved in the exercise was grounded. The Nigerian High Commissioner to Britain, General Hannaniya, was declared *persona non grata,* and a Nigerian soldier, Major Yusuf, and two Israelis were jailed for their roles in the kidnap bid. In retaliation, the Nigerian government impounded a British-Caledonia aircraft that was on a legitimate mission in Lagos, Nigeria. Two British aeronautic engineers were charged for plane theft and jailed. Fawole talks of this Buhari's "game of diplomatic tit-for-tat with Britain . . . [as] manifestation of his *unyielding personality* (emphasis added)."[71] Thus, when the regime was ousted, General Babangida, the new military Head of State in his maiden address to the nation on August 27, 1985, accused the Buhari regime of conducting the nation's foreign relations "by a policy of retaliatory reactions."[72] These personality traits, such as Buhari's "personal convictions","strong will" and "unyielding personality"[73] are valid in explaining most government foreign policy actions of his regime.

But sight must not be lost of other factors, such as the failing economy occasioned by a recession in oil revenue and the rampant corruption that characterized the immediate past civilian administration of Shehu Shagari. The Buhari regime, inherited a beaten and battered economy, and had used corruption as excuse for the overthrow of the Shagari civilian regime and decided to take, according to Buhari, "tough but necessary measures to

revamp the economy."[74] From this time on, the foreign policy options began to change given the dwindling cycle of affluence and economic diplomacy began to be adopted as the plank of Nigeria's foreign policy.[75]

The Buhari/Idiagbon regime was overthrown in a military coup on August 27, 1985. The successor regime was headed by General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida, who according to Ezeoke, "once described himself as the evil genius."[76] That Babangida, acquiesced in being the "Evil Genius"[77] and "just laughs" at being called "Maradona"[78] is ostensibly in reference to what Alli called his "predilection of tricks and hair splitting schemes."[79] Umoden calls President Babangida a "complex man, a bag of contradictions [who] could do and say things which appeared to be designed merely to court cheap popularity [so that] understanding or predicting the President is difficult because he creates and thrives on uncertainty."[80] Ezeoke also terms Babangida as "a crafty strategist who knows how to work on the conscience of his political victims."[81] Osagie calls Babangida "the quintessential craftsman."[82] Babangida displayed these personality traits in an unbridled candour even on his first day as President. For example, on his first press briefing, much to the consternation of the media men who had gathered to hear him, according to Umoden, he just "gave a big toothed smile to the press . . . and drove off."[83]

Ordinarily, this should have been an early warning, of his unpredictability and the fact that he could not be trusted. But Nigerians were deceived into the IMF Loan Debate and their rejection of the loan based on Babangida's assurance that the people's verdict would count. Babangida did a volte-face and introduced the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), which, according to Maier, was "every bit as austere as the IMF."[84] This was counter to the overwhelming votes by the public to conclude no loan would be taken; however, this was only a subterfuge.[85] Given the personality traits of General Babangida, it was obvious that from the beginning he never intended to change his mind. The loan's rejection became an excuse to railroad his preconceived SAP option into action. Otherwise why did he not put the SAP option to debate?

General Sani Abacha, Nigeria's military president from 1993 to 1998, was famed for single-handedly initiating policies including the promulgation of decrees without consultation with any

level of governance, as he neither consulted the Ruling Council nor the Council of States nor the Caucus.[86] According to Fawole his "characteristic reticent nature" was as obvious as his "heavy-handedness" and "dictatorial" tendencies.[87] This made him very unpopular in the national and international sphere. The international community "slapped" Nigeria with various sanctions due to Abacha's intransigence. The high point was his summary execution of the world-famous writer, poet, playwright and environmentalist, Ken Saro-Wiwa, and eight other Ogoni activists on phantom charges. Even though international organizations and prominent world leaders pleaded for their clemency, Abacha still executed them. Consequently, the Commonwealth suspended Nigeria. Many recalled their diplomats from Nigeria and placed visa bans on Nigerian government officials, etc. Abacha had become "the ultimate custodian of the legal system"[88] and personally dictated government policy actions. Obasanjo noted that government decisions at that time were "officially dictated by Abacha".[89] All of these engendered an acrimonious tenure that attracted international rebuke unheeded by the junta. Consequently, Nigeria assumed a pariah status in the international community.

Obasanjo's term as civilian president (1999-2007) was reminiscent of his first outing as a military Head of State. He was resolute in his words and first demonstrated this when he stepped down and handed the reins to a civil regime. Second, he complied with the International Court of Justice's (ICJ) ruling and resisted the temptation of a war with Cameroon over the Bakassi Peninsula. Before Nigeria and Cameroon appeared at the ICJ, Obasanjo pledged to abide by the court's rulings. At this juncture, President Jacques Chirac of France held a closed-door meeting with Presidents Obasanjo of Nigeria and Paul Biya of Cameroon in Paris, where he secured an agreement from both parties to abide by whatever decision the Court handed down.[90] Thus Obasanjo consented to prejudgement conditions that were not the collective will of Nigerians.[91] Hence, the Nigerian Senate in a resolution on November 22, 2007 denounced Nigeria's withdrawal from Bakassi as illegal and then declared President Obasanjo's action in signing the Green Tree Agreement with Paul Biya on June 12, 2006, which ceded Bakassi to Cameroon, as unilateral and contrary to Section 12 (1) of the 1999 Constitution 125.[92]

These traits earlier played out in the Charles Taylor Asylum project where President Obasanjo went against popular opinion and admitted the embattled Taylor into Nigeria on asylum simply because he had given the international community his word to keep Taylor. He neither consulted the National Assembly nor the Federal Executive Council so that the asylum gesture smacked of "military dictatorship and insulted the sensibilities of democratic norms."[93]

The Extraneous Factors to the Personality Traits

So far, an elaboration of the manifestations of the leaders' personality traits as influence on Nigeria's foreign policy decision-making across regimes was presented. But other stakeholders in the decision-making structure equally had their idiosyncrasies, yet, it was only those of the leader or chief decision maker that prevailed. Why?

In this regard, something caught our attention in the work of Ate where he undertook to specifically evaluate the role of the personality traits of Professor Bolaji Akinyemi as Nigeria's Foreign Minister in relation to foreign policy outcomes during his tenure (1985-1987) under President Babangida (1983-1993). Dominant among these was that Akinyemi was "combative, assertive [and] outwardly savours the trappings of power."[94] Umoden refers to Akinyemi as "a foreign minister driven by this passion for commanding respect. . . ."[95] Consequently, Akinyemi "failed to portray himself as team member in an established institution [the Ministry of External Affairs]."[96] He bypassed or sidetracked the ministry in his "decision-making style [which] conflicted head-on with the established norms and procedures. . . ."[97] These traits were carried over, sometimes, to run counter to the expectations of his boss, the President, such that "it began to appear as if the Boss would prefer the foreign policy conducted in a different style."[98] Finally, in December 1987, he was sacked.

In all, Akinyemi's personality traits were not sufficient to cause a success of his foreign policy projections. This was because the extraneous conditions to bring this about were not statutorily available to him. Personality traits in and of themselves would only partly explain the variance in policy actions. They require other factors to activate their expression as foreign policy determinants.

Akinyemi was not the President. He was only the Foreign Affairs Minister. Statutorily, neither the minister nor any other official except the President makes final foreign policy decision. Subsequently, he was sacked. It would have been a different ball game if the President had acquiesced to the exuberance of a subordinate. More so, the mere fact that a leader's personal traits and views are "significant in the framework of decision-making"[99] does not sufficiently explain the variable "personality traits" as a foreign policy determinant. There yet remains the issue of what nudges the leader to project these traits in the nation's foreign policy decision-making. Put differently, the question is, what empowers or, better still, what emboldens the president to project his/her feelings in foreign policy decision-making?

We find an answer to this question in the statutes that provide some leeway, which more or less constitute exceptions-to-the-rule, giving the president some latitude for his/her personality traits to influence decisions. In Nigeria, instances of such leeway in the provisions of the *1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria* and others since independence will suffice to illustrate this point. For instance, whereas, Section 5 sub-sections 4 (a) and (b) of the *1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria* do not empower the President to mobilize members of the armed forces of Nigeria on combat duty outside the country, except with the approval of the Senate, sub-section 5, allows for limited deployment by the President if he was satisfied that national security is under imminent threat or danger, after which he should seek Senate approval within seven days. Even though it is said that such a limited deployment should occur after consultation with the National Defence Council (NDC), the constitution is silent on the criteria for consent by the NDC. It also does not define what amounts to "a limited combat duty outside Nigeria." What determines the President's being "satisfied that the national security is under imminent threat or danger"? Is it what his security or military chiefs say? What if they told him what he wanted to hear? These can be subjective and give room for the leader's personal character to influence the policy. The foregoing can be exemplified by the controversy that surrounded the circumstance under which the ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) which Nigeria nearly single-handedly founded and funded was deployed into Liberia in 1990. Fawole notes that:

> While some think that Babangida goaded the ECOWAS into the operation to save Samuel Doe [his friend] from impending doom, other less charitable commentators attributed it to pursuit of personal economic and business interest in Liberia cleverly disguised in altruistic garb. Some even see it as a ploy to divert the attention of a restive army away from domestic politics by finding for it a foreign adventure to keep it occupied. . . .[100]

The point to note here is that any one or a combination of the conjectures above could have been Babangida's motive for the ECOMOG; after all, in and out of office, Babangida has not refuted any of these or other allegations bothering on his private interest in the Liberian project via ECOMOG. Again, that the reasons for ECOMOG deployment remain a subject of conjecture show that it was not collectively decided nor freely deliberated upon by members of the Armed Forces Ruling Council, which may just have been presented a "pre-packed decision for their approval, rather than an opening to a discussion."[101] Again the variety in the personal reasons for which Babangida possibly crafted the ECOMOG is indicative of the latitude of freedom within which the President could influence such a crucial foreign policy decision as deployment of the nation's troops outside the country. There are strong evidence that ECOMOG was Nigeria's President Babangida's sole project and that other nations of the sub-region might have joined in because of its altruistic garb and the minimal financial cost they bore given Nigeria's near-sole funding of it. And Nigeria could just have sought the approval of other West African countries in order to give the ECOMOG project a regional outlook.

Again, on the issue of the constitutional seven-day time lag between actual combat engagement and when the President shall "seek the consent of the Senate," and another fourteen days, within which Senate may give or refuse the said consent, a twenty-one day period may lapse. During this period, sufficient lobbying might secure the President's action. Akindele makes a similar observation as he studied the "Nigerian Parliament and Foreign Policy."[102] He noted that in the First Republic, even though the government was a democracy which

> exalts the role of the people's representatives in the control of policy . . .the House of Representatives, the more influential of

> the two legislative chambers, acted more as an ineffective rubber-stamp manipulated at will by the executive than as an active participant in the formulation and criticism of Nigeria's policy.[103]

No wonder that in the First Republic, the proposal to establish a Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs to check the "domineering attitude of the executive" and "the existing practice of leaving matters connected with foreign affairs to one man [the Head of State] to decide," "was punctured when the . . . executive manipulated parliament into rejecting" it.[104]

Regarding the President's power to deploy troops outside Nigeria as provided for in the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, there is no constitutionally specified time frame within which demobilization should be effected if the Senate upturn the President's action. This kind of loophole in the constitution clearly leaves action in this regard to presidential discretion and probable idiosyncrasies. In any case, experience has shown that it is easier and quicker to mobilize than to demobilize, especially if the chief executive is favourably disposed to the course of not demobilizing, and thus, in the words of D'Anieri, seeks to "spin" a decision to his favour.[105] This corresponds with Foyle's view, who notes that the way actions are guided in the public realm and how alterations are made in foreign policy behaviours are affected by beliefs of the decision makers and how such individuals interpret and respond to the political environment. This is particularly so in decisions made at the top of the hierarchy in which the leader is likely to participate and has final authority for the decision such as in foreign policy.[106] This is more the case given that "within the field of foreign policy analysis it has often been suggested that foreign policy crises and wars involve conditions which favor the influence of personality," and the leader's distinctive policy preferences,[107] and Nigeria is no exception.

In all, our submission is that there exists statutory leeway that facilitates the President's dominance of foreign policy decision-making in Nigeria. The President, be it in a democracy or a military government is conscious of such powers and authority as enshrined in the statute that he has final authority for policy decisions and is wont to exert same to the fullest even if personal traits taint such policy decisions. It is true that institutionalized checks and balances exist in the constitution but the same constitution

makes exceptions that in this study amount to extraneous considerations to the personality traits which the president is aware of. Consciousness of this fact was even available to emergent Nigerian leaders; hence, before Nigeria's independence on October 1, 1960 the Prime Minister, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, said on April 1, 1960:

> Though in name and legally we are not independent, the Prime Minister is really responsible for the defence of the country, and (its) . . . foreign relations. No consulate could be opened in this country without my consent and foreign delegations visiting this country must have my blessing.[108]

Apart from the statutory leeway, this study also discerns what it calls the clique factor as another source of nudging which leads to the transposition of leaders' personal traits to the foreign policy domain. Every Nigerian leader maintained for himself a clique some of which surreptitiously took foreign policy decisions for the state. Talking about the making and termination of the Anglo-Nigerian Defence Pact for instance, Ojo says:

> much controversy has surrounded both the making of the Pact and the reasons for its abrogation . . . [Since] no cabinet meeting considered the matter, no parliamentary committee deliberated on it and Parliament itself which has ratified the Pact had no direct say in its abrogation.[109]

Earlier, when the Pact sailed through Parliament, Ojo identified a clique of "a number of the colleagues and trusted friends [of] the critical actor [Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, the Prime Minister who] favoured the ratification of the Pact."[110] They included:

> Alhaji Muhammadu Ribadu the Deputy Prime Minister . . . [who] had worked closely with Balewa for over a decade and had come to be extremely influential with the Prime Minister. . . . Two NPC men Mallam Maitama Sule (Minister of Mines and Power) and Alhaji Waziri Ibrahim (Minister of Economic Development) whose outlook and attitudes coincide with Balewa's. . . . And . . . a close personal friend of Abubakar's from the early 1950s, K. O. Mbadiwe, as well as Chief Festus Okotie-Eboh.[111]

No wonder "it was Ribadu and Okotie-Eboh, the leading advocates, who respectively moved and seconded the motion for the ratification"[112] of the Pact by parliament in November 1960.

Aluko makes reference to a clique that he calls a "cabal within the Federal Executive Council" under General Gowon (1966-1975) that was responsible for the decision to sell Nigeria's oil at concessionary prices to African states.[113] It included Mr. Okoi Arikpo, Commissioner for External Affairs, whose "attitudes are broadly similar to those of General Gowon;"[114] Mr. Philip Asiodu, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Mines and Power, "one of the most enthusiastic supporters of the move . . .[115] and the one who made the first public announcement about the decision on 18 July 1974 at the same time as Mr. J. T. Iyalla, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of External Affairs.[116] Ironically, when this decision was announced, the Commissioner of Mines and Power, Alhaji Shettima Ali Manguno, the sitting minister of the ministry concerned and hence should have primary responsibility for the decision was ignorant of same having been side-lined by the cabal.[117] Hence in a press statement, he refuted the claim that the federal government was selling oil at a concessionary rate even though the government had already gone ahead to implement the decision without his input or knowledge.[118]

Sotunmbi talks of a "committee of five" under General Murtala Muhammed and the role of Mr. M. D. Yusuf, the Inspector General of Police, in Murtala's unilateral recognition of the MPLA regime in Angola.[119] Mr. Yusuf was said to have had "good personal relations with [Murtala] Muhammed [which] made it possible for him to influence policy-issues . . . and . . . Muhammed listened to him."[120] There were also close relations between Generals Babangida and Abacha which influenced the decision of the former not to retire the latter when every other military officer in his category was retired. Former President Babangida, had said that the last minute removal of Abacha's name from the list of "the entire military high command" billed for retirement, before his exit from office[121] was among other things, "being loyal to a friend, that's all."[122] There was no doubt that General J. T. Useni was a very close confidant of the late General Sani Abacha. Alli described Useni as an "undesirable social distraction to the Head of State [and said] it was enough concern to have Alhaji Gwarzo [another Abacha's crony] in key security portfolio," yet the Head of State fraternized with them.[123]

While the foregoing instances will suffice in the argument for the clique factor in nudging leaders to transpose their personal

traits to the foreign policy and of course other decision making domains, the point to be made is that, since the leaders felt secured after obtaining the support of those that matter in the government, their idiosyncrasies went unrestrained. Thus, in addition to the leeway in the statutes, the personality traits are equally nudged by the extraneous clique element or kitchen cabinet.

A corollary to the clique element is the bond element. Within these cliques, we can discern elements of bonding arising from personal friendships, some of which had been consummated long before the individuals came to government. For instance, the Anglo-Nigerian Defence Pact of 1960, which was not discussed by Cabinet, sailed through Parliament with the conspiracy of the Prime Minister's "colleagues" and "trusted friends," some of whom had been his friends or "closely worked with Balewa" for a decade or more.[124] Some of such friendships were struck in school or at other training institutions. For instance, of the fifteen rulers that Nigeria has had since independence, five attended Barewa College, Zaria. They included; Tafawa Balewa (1928-1933); Shehu Shagari (1941-1944); Yakubu Gowon (1947-1953); Murtala Muhammad (1952-1957) and Umaru Musa Yar'Adua (1970-1971 for the Higher School Certificate). Out of these, two of them, Gowon and Murtala were in the school together at a time. The above is apart from some twenty Northern ex-students of the college who became state governors and dozens more who became cabinet ministers, state commissioners, permanent secretaries and heads of extra-ministerial departments, etc. There were also some Nigerian military Heads of State who either trained together or served in the same military formations. Nearly all of them meet at the Old Boys' platforms of their alma mater. Other elements that created such bonds were similarities in the attitudes and aspirations between the leader and the other clique members, as well as ethnic and other primordial issues. At other times, the subordinate may just want to be "his master's voice" in order to belong. Alli calls these voices those that "mimic" the leader's own.[125]

The foregoing fits Dyson's "inner-inner circle" of personal advisers which "was far ahead of the cabinet in terms of war planning" while cabinet was just "presented with a verbal prepacked decision for their approval."[126] Dyson's "inner-inner circle" notion posits an *esprit de corps* among people who were also called the "Close Entourage" or "Hand-picked Team."[127] They

"moved together all the time. They attended the daily war cabinet. That was the in group, that was the group that was in charge of policy"[128] This "inner-inner circle" corresponds to the Nigerian "clique factor" and "bond elements" in the present article which have elsewhere been variously called "Cabal," "Committee of Five," "trusted friends," or "Caucus," all popularly called the "kitchen cabinet."[129]

Conclusion

This study is a departure from scholarly discourses which approach the personality role in foreign policy decision-making from the point of view of reemphasizing the psychology of the decision-maker. While such works generally enrich our knowledgebase of the idiosyncratic elements of this kind of discourse, in isolation, they only explain small portions of variance in policy outcomes. To this study, it was not just sufficient to speculate on the crucial importance of the personality of the people running the government. The study therefore, specifically sought to show how presidents leveraged elements extraneous to their personalities to use the same personality variables to have a dominant voice in foreign policy decisions, even under supposedly collective decision-making structures and in the face of institutionalized checks and balances.

In the Nigerian case-study here-undertaken, we identified such variables to include the leeway, loopholes, escape routes, or, better still, exceptions-to-the-rule inherent in the statutes and legislations, as well as the influence of the leader's clique, cronies, or "inner-inner circle," popularly called the Kitchen Cabinet which are manipulated by the President, whether in a democracy or in military regimes, to bypass the checks and balances in the foreign policy decision-making process.

This being so, the over-arching credence given to personality traits as being of "crucial importance" (as if on their own they could act) is given a nuanced challenge. They need to be activated by extraneous elements. The conclusion is that, the roles of these extraneous elements are so crucial that, even though they do not contradict the personality variables in foreign policy outcomes, it is impossible to exclude them in explaining the potency of the idiosyncrasies of decision makers in tilting a particular decision in

a certain direction. In isolation, personality variables do not fully explain the varieties in policies.

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Abiodun Olufemi Sotunmbi, *Nigeria's Recognition of the MPLA Government of Angola: A Case-Study in Decision-Making and Implementation. NIIA Monograph Series No. 9.* (Lagos: Nigerian Institute of International Affairs 1981), 23; U. Joy Ogwu, *Nigerian Foreign Policy: Alternative Futures* (Lagos: The Nigerian Institute of International Affairs with Macmillan Nigeria Publishers, 1986); Bassey E. Ate, "Personality, the Role Theory, Structural Adjustment Programme, and Policy-Making in Nigerian Foreign Relations, 1985-1987: Focus on the 'Lagos Forum'" in *The Structure and Process of Foreign Policy Making and Implementation in Nigeria, 1960-1990*, eds. Gabriel O. Olusanya and R. A. Akindele (Lagos and Ibadan: Nigerian Institute of International Affairs and Vantage Publishers, 1990); W. Alade Fawole, *Nigeria's External Relations and Foreign Policy under Military Rule 1966-1999* (Ile-Ife: Obafemi Awolowo University Press, 2003); and Jide Osuntokun, "Historical Background Survey of Nigeria's Foreign Policy," in *New Horizons for Nigeria in World Affairs,* ed. U. Joy Ogwu, (Lagos: The Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, 2005), 29-49.

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[4] Arjen Boin, Allen McConnell, Thomas Preston, and Paul t'Hart, "Leadership Style, Crisis Response and Blame Management: The Case of Hurricane Katrina," *Public Administration*, Vol. 83, no. 3 (September 2010): 713.

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[10] Dyson, "Personality and Foreign Policy," 289.

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[26] Ibid.
[27] Olajide Aluko, *Essays in Nigerian Foreign Policy* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1981), 163.
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[30] Ade Adefuye, "Prospects of the African Big Brother," *Tell Magazine* No. 40 (October 11, 2010): 57.
[31] Olusanya and Akindele, "The Fundamentals of Nigeria's Foreign Policy,"2; Aluko, *Essays in Nigerian Foreign Policy*, 44.
[32] Aluko, *Essays in Nigerian Foreign Policy*, 44.
[33] Ogwu, *Nigerian Foreign Policy*, 53.
[34] W. Alade Fawole, *Nigeria's External Relations and Foreign Policy* (Ile-Ife, Nigeria: Obafemi Awolowo University Press, 2003), 13.
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[56] Ogwu, *Nigerian Foreign Policy* 53.

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[62] Sotunmbi, *Nigeria's Recognition of the MPLA*, 16.

[63] Garba, *Diplomatic Soldiering*, 25.

[64] Fawole, *Nigeria's External Relations and Foreign Policy*, 16.

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[69] Fawole, *Nigeria's External Relations and Foreign Policy*, 14.
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[71] Ibid., 16.
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[73] Fawole, *Nigeria's External Relations and Foreign Policy*, 14; 16.
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[95] Umoden, *The Babangida Years*, 188.

[96] Ate, "Personality, the Role Theory," 452.

[97] Ibid.

[98] Umoden, *The Babangida Years*, 191.

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[100] Fawole, *Nigeria's External Relations and Foreign Policy*, 155.

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