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## Pre-Colonial And Post-Colonial African Diplomacy and The Influence of The African Union in Africa's Diplomatic History<sup>☆</sup>

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### ABSTRACT

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The paper intends to show case the pre-colonial and post-colonial systematic and elaborate strides in African Diplomatic history. The paper would outline the practices from various African States and discusses copiously, some of the outstanding diplomatic feats achieved by the pre-colonial and post-colonial African diplomats.

## I. Introduction

The European scramble and colonial administration of African states did not have its scholars attempting to study and understand or build on the historical traditions in Africa. Instead, the European colonialists sought to challenge and supplant existing African traditions. Several research works centered on African history have deconstructed the view that pre-colonial Africans were incapable of engaging in any systematic and sophisticated art of diplomacy. The history of European traders, missionaries, explorers, conquerors, and rulers constituted, in their own view, the sum total of African history is invalid.

The paper will showcase the pre-colonial and post-colonial systematic and elaborate strides in African Diplomatic history. The paper will outline the practices of various African States and copiously discuss some of the outstanding diplomatic feats achieved by pre-colonial and post-colonial African diplomats.

## II. African Pre-Colonial Diplomatic History

It is noteworthy to state that the origin of diplomacy is hard to trace. Instead, according to most scholars, the principal subject of concern in the field of diplomacy has been its practice rather than its origins.<sup>1</sup> Diplomacy has been described as the best means devised by civilization for preventing international relations from being governed by force alone. There is no lack of evidence that sending emissaries to open negotiations was a common practice among relatively primitive peoples and that, in many cases, their reception and treatment were regulated, even if only in a rudimentary way, by custom or taboo.<sup>2</sup>

For instance, Envoys to the Tartar Khans (A 1259-1268 century Governor of Sonargaon, a maritime center in Bengal close to Bangladesh) were said to pass through

fire before they could be allowed into his presence, and even the gifts which they had brought with them similarly sterilized. Furthermore, as late as the fifteenth century, the Republic of Venice threatened with banishment or even death those Venetians who held intercourse with any member of a foreign legation.<sup>3</sup>

Africa was not excluded, as it is worthy of note that while all these were happening in Europe and other parts of the world, diplomacy was being carried on in Africa in a very decent and dignifying manner. Foreigners to Yoruba land (people from the western part of Nigeria, West Africa) were welcomed and treated decently and given land on which to farm. Furthermore, in Dahomey (an African kingdom located in the area of the present-day country of Benin, which lasted from about 1600 until 1894), 'the king and all his subjects received strangers with the most remarkable courtesy.'<sup>4</sup> However, what is clear is that there is not enough evidence for us to form other than a shadowy view of what genuinely ancient diplomacy was like globally but specifically in Africa. Indeed, it was intermittent and generated no permanent institutions, and how far rulers recorded transactions or negotiations and to what degree they differed in their practices, we can know only patchily. With rare exceptions, it is likely that the lack of evidence does not hide the sophisticated diplomatic structures that have been lost. This is because most of the state structures took the form of primarily loosely formed empires, with porous boundaries, slow communication, and little need to deal on any continuous basis with any other entity that had to be treated as an equal. Such conditions did not give rise to the development of complicated diplomacy or the devices required to pursue it.

## III. State Formation in Africa via Diplomacy

Pre-colonial state formation has been argued through studies and research to entail the art of persuasion or

<sup>1</sup> DER-REIAM, J., (1987). *On Diplomacy: A Genealogy of Western Estrangement*, p.2, Oxford, Balckwell.

<sup>2</sup> Satow, E., & Gore-Booth, D. (1979). *Sir Ernest (Mason) Satow's guide to diplomatic practice*. P.3, London [usw.]: Longman.

<sup>3</sup> Nicolson, H. (1963). *Diplomacy*. London, New York: Oxford University Press.

<sup>4</sup> Dalzel, A. (1793). *The History of Dahomey, an Inland Kingdom of Africa*. London: The Author.

coordination of interest groups and disparate units. Ritual relationships are used to explain away conquest. The rise of a state like "Asante" is an epic example, requiring the welding together of separate Akan communities and states into a single political unit. According to Ajayi, the evolution of the Asante constitution called for high diplomatic skills, as is credited to the genius of the statesman warrior King Osei Tutu and the magical powers of his divine counselor, Okomfo Anokye. It called for the use of inherited ideas in creating new institutions of inter-state coordination, such as the confederal army, elaborating the idea of the Golden Stool and ritual usages and traditions of common origin.<sup>5</sup>

Numerous other examples of pre-colonial state formations exist, but not all have been put together in such detail as the Asante case. However, most state systems in West Africa, as in other parts of Africa, meant the bringing together of disparate groups.

Moving northwards in the Sudan belt of West Africa was an environment where relations became quite complex, and studies of trans-continental contacts became feasible. In the wake of the trans-Saharan trade in gold, salt, and other commodities, the empires of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai maintained relations with North Africa, while Bornu and the Hausa states similarly made contact with the Maghreb. The factor of Islam brought other dimensions of contact. Rulers like Mansa Kankan Musa (1307 -1332) sent diplomatic missions to the Middle East, and his famous pilgrimage was itself a major diplomatic expedition.

In Sudan, the introduction of Arabic writing (Martin, 1962) arguably enabled Songhai to exchange diplomatic letters with Morocco and Kanem Bornu with Tunis, Tripoli, and even with the Turkish Emperor at Istanbul. This diplomatic innovation was extended south into the forest belt when some states employed Muslim

scribes to establish what may be called chancery. Besides, there are reports from late nineteenth-century visitors concerning the exchange of diplomatic notes in Arabic between the rulers of Ibadan and Nupe.

The pre-colonial periods of state formation of African states and empires have not always been studied in depth. Attributable to this problem is the difficulty of recovering the essential details of diplomatic maneuvers and procedures from oral traditions. Moreover, as we come closer to the nineteenth century, the detail becomes more accessible and recoverable.

#### IV. Pre-Colonial Diplomatic Activities

There was evidence of diplomatic activity in the correspondence of some of the earliest Christian missionaries who visited the region. As early as the sixteenth century, three Portuguese friars at Benin had, in a letter to their King, King John III, stated that 'the Oba (King) there had the habit of ill-treating and imprisoning all ambassadors of kings who send messages to him. The envoys of the two coastal states of Adra and Labeledde are said to have been accorded this treatment.<sup>6</sup>

Another report by some Italian missionaries states how in 1691, relations between Benin and the Itsekiri Kingdom of Warri became so strained that 'they (were) not exchanging ambassadors, a presupposition that they usually exchanged ambassadors.<sup>7</sup> In the works of Dapper, Bosman, Snelgrave, Norris, and Dalzel, who all wrote in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, diplomatic activities widely reported on the ambassadors of Oyo and Dahomey, who were the most powerful kingdoms they featured prominently. In one account, Agaja of Dahomey was said to be in the habit of sending an ambassador to Whydah with a request for 'an open Traffic to his side.<sup>8</sup> This same source elsewhere

<sup>5</sup> AJAYI, J. F. A., (1976). "Recent Studies in West African Diplomatic History", Nigerian Journal of International Affairs, p.78, 1/1

<sup>6</sup> Two of the Missionaries were Franciscans and the third a member of the Order of Christ. The Letter is translated in full in A.F.C. Ryder, "The Benin Mission" J.H.S.N. 11/2, 1961.

<sup>7</sup> RYDER, A.F.C., (1961). "The Benin Missions", J.H.S.N. , 11/2

<sup>8</sup> Law, R., & Snelgrave, W. (1990). The Original Manuscript Version

relates how in the 1730s, Agaja 'sent Ambassadors with large presents' of coral, 'together with one of his most beautiful daughters' (Snelgrave) to the Alafin (King) of Oyo. In return, the Alafin sent one of his daughters as a wife for Agaja. Such diplomatic marriages as these were common phenomena among pre-colonial West Africans.

However, another indigenous diplomatic activity taking place in nineteenth-century Africa could be seen in the Yoruba country of Ekiti and Ijesa kings in Nigeria. In these areas, kings sent embassies to other monarchs to form the anti-Ibadan coalition of 1878 known as the Ekiti-parapo.<sup>9</sup> A reasonable conclusion is that since most of the examples above concern political issues, they illustrate the maintenance of foreign relations among West African States and the evolution and implementation of foreign policies.

Also, pre-colonial African states were in the practice of maintaining resident representatives abroad. As early as the sixteenth century, Askia (King) of Songhai was said to have some of his courtiers perpetually residing at Kano for the receipt of the tribute due to him from the kingdom.<sup>10</sup> Daaku stated that at the end of the seventeenth century, the King of Denkyira appointed an official named Ampim as his resident trade representative on the coast. On his death at Cape Coast in 1698, the English company sent consolatory gifts to the King.<sup>11</sup>

The Oyo government also stationed agents (Ilari) in Egbaland while it was tributary to them, a relationship which was probably broken towards the end of the eighteenth century. Likewise, the Oba of Benin placed agents in such peripheral parts of his territory as the Yoruba towns of Akure and Igbara-Oke, where they were known as Balekale or Abilekale. Perhaps these had

to change their nomenclature over time. Ibadan, which succeeded Oyo, had its residents called Ajele.<sup>12</sup>

Commerce and politics played a significant part in Africa's pre-colonial foreign relations and internal affairs. Commercial relations played a part in developing ad hoc diplomacy and expanding foreign relations into a deliberate and long-term foreign policy and in the tentative steps taken in pre-colonial West Africa toward permanent or continuous diplomacy.

## V. Pre-colonial Status, Symbols and Credentials of Diplomats

The status of diplomats in African States varied. In some States, they were among those close to the rulers of the country, often members of the royal household. In Oyo state (Nigeria), a person called 'Ilari' who ran a diplomatic errand for the Oba had a servile origin and were mainly enslaved people from neighboring countries.<sup>13</sup> In some states, they were great men of the land, and sometimes, princes from the royal family were sent on missions abroad. In the sixteenth century, the Congolese embassy was sent to Rome. In the seventeenth century, the Ashante representative was sent to the coast. Toward the end of the seventeenth century, the kings of Denkyira and Ashanti were said to have sent some of their wives as ambassadors to each other.

Among the Ibo, priests were appointed as ambassadors in negotiations to end the small-scale intercommunal wars.<sup>14</sup>

Notably, some of the diplomats were of humble but free

of William Snelgrave's "New Account of Some Parts of Guinea".  
History In Africa, 17, 367. doi:10.2307/3171826

<sup>9</sup> Akintoye, S. (1971). Revolution and power politics in Yorubaland, 1840-1893. P.146, London: Longman.

<sup>10</sup> AJAYI, J. F. A. & M. Crowder, (1971). History of West Africa, p. 214-215, Vol. 1.

<sup>11</sup> DAAKU, K. Y., (1970). Trade and Politics on the Gold Coast 1600-1720, Oxford.

<sup>12</sup> AWE, B., (1964). The Rise of Ibadan Imperialism in the 19th Century, Ph.D. Thesis, Oxford University.

<sup>13</sup> See; ADEGBULU, F. (2011). PRE-COLONIAL WEST AFRICAN DIPLOMACY: IT'S NATURE AND IMPACT. The Journal Of International Social Research, Volume: 4(Issue: 18). Retrieved from [http://www.sosyalarastirmalar.com/cilt4/sayi18\\_pdf/2\\_tarih\\_u\\_luslararasiliskiler/adegbulu\\_femix.pdf](http://www.sosyalarastirmalar.com/cilt4/sayi18_pdf/2_tarih_u_luslararasiliskiler/adegbulu_femix.pdf); (Personal investigation and interviews in Oyo and other states in Yorubaland show that the Ilari and Ajele were essentially slaves from Nupe and Borgu; interviews with H.R.H. Oba Lamidi Olayiwola Adeyemi III, (60+), Alafin's Palace, 23<sup>rd</sup> December, 1999; Chief Gabriel Olalere (76), Bada of Saki, Bada Compound, Saki, 20th December, 1999).

<sup>14</sup> MEEK, C. K., (1937). A Sudanese Kingdom, p.224, London.

birth who had achieved distinction by their talents. Agyei, for example, was said to be a salt carrier on the Volta, who later rose to be the second linguist of the Ashantehene in the early nineteenth century. Agyei was the 'foreign Minister' of Ashanti. Matheo Lopez, who led an embassy from Allada to Louis XIV of France, was described by Sieur d'Elbee as performing functions akin to that of Secretary of State, having served several times as ambassador to Benin and Oyo.<sup>15</sup>

There were also interpreters whose offices, according to Sieur d'Elbee, are very considerable, but the slightest mistake is as much as their lives are worth.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, the linguists at Kumasi were required to 'take fetish oaths to be truthful to each other and to report faithfully!

Pre-colonial African diplomats often carried credentials or badges of office. These credentials could be in the form of a fan, a cane, a baton, a whistle, or a sword. The Ashante and

Dahomean ambassadors were noted for their unique credentials. They were often covered in gold silver leaf and decorated with symbolic emblems. The staff of the chief linguist of the Ashantehere was called 'Asempatia'.<sup>17</sup> It is believed that such objects in extending the ruler's power beyond his normal reach were intended to ensure the safe passage of his envoys through alien territory. According to Bosman, some wore specially made diplomatic uniforms, such as black caps, which ensured 'an effectual free pass everywhere.' The Dan people in modern Liberia wore unique peace-making masks with animal-like features and a moveable jaw.<sup>18</sup>

Another essential aspect of African diplomacy was the diplomats' immunity during their duties. Arguably, immunity appears to have been part and parcel of West African diplomacy and was well recognized. This was

mainly so when the diplomats carried credentials that identified them as state officials representing their sovereigns. Diplomatic immunity in Yorubaland (western Nigeria) is permissible in native law and assures the ambassador's safety, but he must not act as a spy or in a hostile way.<sup>19</sup> Apart from hospitality to strangers, the Yoruba of pre-colonial times had a way of accommodating those who otherwise would have been persona-non-grata in the society. For instance, criminals and others who incurred the wrath of the authorities sought refuge in recognized sanctuaries, including the King's palace.<sup>20</sup>

## VI. Pre-colonial Diplomatic Tools

Notably, from earlier revelations, one major obstacle that would have hindered the flourishing of African diplomacy was communication. Therefore, negotiators skilled in foreign tongues were employed to tackle this issue.<sup>21</sup>

Another diplomatic tool the pre-colonial African States used in their international intercourse was espionage. King Agaja's secret agents, known as '*Agbajigbeto*' were good examples. King Agaja was a 'politick Prince who, through his spies, was able to discover how much the great men and people of Whydah were divided and that the King was only a Cipher in the Government's formation, which decided his invasion of that country in 1727.<sup>22</sup> The King's agent, the *Agbajigbeto*, apart from gathering intelligence, was also sent abroad, usually in the guise of Merchants, and were also required to create the impression that Dahomean intentions were peaceful and then, on their return home, to manufacture suitable pretexts for aggression.

<sup>19</sup> AJISAFE, A. K., (1924). *The Laws and Customs of the Yoruba People*, London.

<sup>20</sup> See; ADEGBULU, F. (2011). PRE-COLONIAL WEST AFRICAN DIPLOMACY: IT'S NATURE AND IMPACT. *The Journal Of International Social Research*, p.7, Volume: 4(Issue: 18). Retrieved from [http://www.sosyalarastirmalar.com/cilt4/sayi18\\_pdf/2\\_tarih\\_ulu\\_slararasiiliskiler/adegbulu\\_femix.pdf](http://www.sosyalarastirmalar.com/cilt4/sayi18_pdf/2_tarih_ulu_slararasiiliskiler/adegbulu_femix.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. p.8

<sup>22</sup> AKINJOGBIN, A., (1967). *Dahomey and Its Neighbours*, p.124, 1708-1818, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>15</sup> SMITH, R. S., (1976). *Warfare and Diplomacy in Pre-Colonial West Africa*, London: Mathuen and Company Limited.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. p.23

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

In certain African societies, espionage seemed to play dual roles. Still, in what today is known as Benin, it was the custom of the court of Ardra (Allada) to make strangers wait a long time for an answer.<sup>23</sup> Some of these delays are attributed to their religious observances, which, according to Dupuis, restrict activities to specific days. There were, for instance, only 150 to 160 days in the Ashanti year that were considered propitious for diplomatic business. In his reports, Dupuis asserts that 'the Ashantees were slow and cautious in the cabinet; they were even slower, however, in war-like movement.'<sup>24</sup>

Beyond those mentioned above, pre-colonial African diplomatic tools also include the use of treaty agreements. Treaties were designed to end hostilities between states. A treaty, for instance, brought to an end a long series of wars between the Hausa states of Kano and Katsina. A boundary agreement in the late sixteenth century intended to end Idris Alooma's Kanem Wars – an agreement that has been described as the first written border agreement in the history of Central Sudan.

One crucial feature of treaties in mostly West Africa was their sacrosanct nature. African customary law shares similar customary international law principle of '*Pacta Sunt Servanda*' as the basis for assurance of a valid world order.<sup>25</sup> To make the treaties have a binding force, oaths, which were often formidable undertakings, were sworn. The nature of oaths taken did vary from society to society. Solemnization of treaties among the 'Tiv,' for example, entailed killing an elephant and an enslaved person, followed by the preparation of sacred emblems and portions and the mingling and consumption of the blood of the parties.

## VII. Post-Colonial Africa: From the O.A.U. to the

<sup>23</sup> ASTLEY, J., (1746). *Voyages and Travels*, London.

<sup>24</sup> Smith, R. (1973). *Peace and Palaver: International Relations in Pre-Colonial West Africa*. *The Journal of African History*, 14(4), 599–621.

<sup>25</sup> ELIAS, T. O., (1956). *The Nature of African Customary Law*, Manchester

## A.U.

The African Union (A.U.), established on May 26, 2001, came into existence with the need to unify foreign policy and diplomacy, which would amplify political coordination in the areas of defense and economic development.<sup>26</sup> The advent of this institution was of great magnitude in the institutional evolution of the Continent.<sup>27</sup> The African Union replaced the Organization of African Unity, which it was formerly called. The Organization of African Unity (O.A.U.) was established on May 25, 1963, in Addis Ababa, on the signature of the O.A.U. Charter by representatives of 32 governments. The O.A.U. began the process of African unity and laid down the foundation upon which the African Union is being built.<sup>28</sup>

Decades past the territorial scramble and struggle for Africa by European powers that began at the end of the nineteenth century, there came the Pan-Africanist movement in the late 1950s.<sup>29</sup> The pan-African movement was the independent movement of Sub-Saharan African states that struggled and fought to break through the barrier of European rule. The leaders who won the liberation of the newly independent countries sought to unite to purge the Continent of all colonial rulers and bind their collective power into an organization that would represent the new Africa to the world.<sup>30</sup> Thus, the O.A.U. was the initiative through which Africa would be bounded and unified for its progress. Furthermore, on September 9, 1999, the Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity issued a Declaration (known as *The Sirte Declaration*) calling for the establishment of an African Union, with a view, inter alia, to accelerating the

<sup>26</sup> Lavery, A. (2013). *The Norms of African Diplomatic Culture: Implications for African Integration*. *The African File*. Retrieved 2 June 2015, from <http://theafricanfile.com/public-diplomacy/international-relations/the-norms-of-african-diplomatic-culture-implications-for-african-integration/>

<sup>27</sup> Au.int., (2015). *AU in a Nutshell | African Union*. Retrieved 2 June 2015, from <http://www.au.int/en/about/nutshell>

<sup>28</sup> Dfa.gov.za., (2004). *Organization of African Unity (OAU) / African Union (AU)*. Retrieved 2 June 2015, from <http://www.dfa.gov.za/foreign/Multilateral/africa/oau.htm>

<sup>29</sup> Meredith, M. (2005). *The state of Africa*. London: Free.

<sup>30</sup> Lavery, A. (2013), op.cit. p.2

process of integration in the Continent to enable it to play its rightful role in the global economy while addressing multifaceted social, economic and political problems compounded as they are by certain negative aspects of globalization.<sup>31</sup>

The main objectives of the Union of African States were, among other things, to rid the Continent of the remaining vestiges of colonization and apartheid; to promote unity and solidarity among African States; to coordinate and intensify cooperation for development; to safeguard the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Member States and to promote international cooperation within the framework of the United Nations. Indeed, as a Continental organization, the A.U. provided an effective forum that enabled all Member States to adopt coordinated positions on matters of common concern to the Continent in international fora and effectively defend the interests of Africa. Through the O.A.U. Coordinating Committee for the Liberation of Africa, the Continent worked and spoke as one with undivided determination in forging an international consensus supporting the liberation struggle and the fight against apartheid.

### **VIII. Post-Colonial Quest for Unity**

It becomes pivotal here to buttress the argument that diplomatic norms have taken hold on the Continent, which has connections to the Pan-Africanist movement, which now resides in the African Union. These norms have significantly impacted the integration movement on the Continent from the Organization for African Unity to the African Union. These diplomatic norms will be outlined and explained on how they impact the push for continental integration.

It is noteworthy that African countries, in their quest for unity and economic and social development under the banner of the O.A.U., have taken various initiatives and made substantial progress in many areas, which paved

the way for the establishment of the next of African integration under the auspices of the A.U.

### **IX. Vision and Objectives of the African Union**

The vision of the African Union is that of 'an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa driven by its citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena.' This vision of a new, forward-looking, dynamic, and integrated Africa will be fully realized through a relentless struggle on several fronts and as a long-term endeavor. The African Union has shifted focus from supporting liberation movements in the erstwhile African territories under colonialism and apartheid to an organization spear-heading African development and integration.

#### **The objectives of the A.U. are:**

- To achieve greater unity and solidarity between the African countries and the peoples of Africa;
- To defend the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence of its Member States;
- To accelerate the political and socio-economic integration of the Continent;
- To promote and defend African common positions on issues of interest to the Continent and its peoples;
- To encourage international cooperation, taking due account of the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- To promote peace, security, and stability on the Continent;
- To promote democratic principles and institutions, popular participation, and good governance;
- To promote and protect human and peoples' rights in accordance with the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and other relevant human rights instruments;

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<sup>31</sup> Au.int., (2015). Op.cit.

- To establish the necessary conditions that enable the Continent to play its rightful role in the global economy and in international negotiations;
- To promote sustainable development at the economic, social and cultural levels as well as the integration of African economies;
- To promote cooperation in all fields of human activity to raise the living standards of African peoples;
- To coordinate and harmonize the policies between the existing and future Regional Economic Communities for the gradual attainment of the objectives of the Union;
- To advance the development of the Continent by promoting research in all fields, in particular in science and technology;
- To work with relevant international partners to eradicate preventable diseases and promote good health on the Continent.<sup>32</sup>

#### X. The African Union as a Pan-Africanist Union

As earlier highlighted, the 1957 independence movement of Sub-Saharan Africa to finally break through the barrier of European rule saw liberation leaders of the newly independent countries seeking to join together to bind their collective power into an organization that would represent the new Africa to the world and also purge the Continent of all colonial rulers. Notable figures such as Nkrumah, Sékou Touré, and Senghor are regarded as the fathers of the Pan-African movement who led this movement but later had major disagreements about how to integrate liberated African countries. The debate on integration has remained unresolved until today. Regardless, the African Union (A.U.) continually plays a central and crucial role in the Pan-Africanist movement. The A.U. formation copies that of the European Union (E.U.), which was formed following the '*Peace Treaty of Westphalia*' of 1648. The Westphalian principle of territorial sovereignty and

equality were also norms passed unto African states at independence and enshrined by the African Union. Notably, the maintenance of the borders of colonial states has become a hallmark of intra-African relations, primarily motivated by leaders seeking to consolidate their sovereignty to compensate for their weak power or legitimacy within their country. At the time of independence, African leaders sought to 'thwart any move towards *Supranationality* on/for the continent.'<sup>33</sup>

The idea for collective action on a continental level dates back to the first Pan-African Congress convened in Paris in 1919. This idea was crisscrossed with political freedom, economic development, and social welfare themes that remain foremost in African Union discourse today. Nevertheless, with the defeat of ideas of such persons like Nkrumah, who saw the need for continental economic planning, a unified defense and military strategy, and the ability to unify foreign policy and diplomacy, leaders who sought a more incremental approach to integration emerged.<sup>34</sup> Such leaders led the significant evolution from the O.A.U. to the A.U. in 2001, that signaled a shift in goals for the organization. While the O.A.U. was seen as a 'dictator's club', the A.U. is meant to shift the goals of the regional body from total liberation of the Continent to a regional agenda that focuses on "institutionalizing norms and standards of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law" while also increasing the speed of economic development. The above reformations served as a significant shift for the study of African diplomacy because the 'norm' agenda allows for an enhanced role of diplomats on the Continent. 'Afromats' (a nomenclature for African

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Tiekou, Thomas Kwasi. 2011. "The Evolution of the African Union Commission and Africrats: Drivers of African Regionalism." In *The Ashgate Research Companion to Regionalisms*, edited by Timothy M. Shaw, J. Andrew Grant, and Scarlett Cornelissen, 193-212. Great Britain: Ashgate.

<sup>34</sup> Nkrumah the leading voice for a continent government, his reasoning's hold particular interest because of their applicability to present day Africa. First, Nkrumah saw the need for continental economic planning that would maximize the benefits of African resources for African people. Second, a unified defense and military strategy was necessary to protect the micro-states that had emerged during the independence era who could not resist the neo-colonial advances of external powers. Third, the ability to unify foreign policy and diplomacy would amplify political coordination in the areas of defense and economic development.



diplomats) have the potential to be entrepreneurs in this new regional body to advocate for this new agenda of African integration.<sup>35</sup>

#### XI. African Post-Colonial Diplomatic Norms/Roles

State sovereignty in mid-century Africa was a contested issue due to the historical experiences with colonialism and neo-colonialism during the Cold War. African states thus developed diplomatic norms and principles connected to their low standing in world politics and international relations. Although the space to examine these norms in much detail is limited, it is vital to understand them in relation to regional integration.

The first African diplomatic role and norm aimed at anti-imperialism. The role was a movement by the African States to rid the Continent of external and foreign forces that sought to exploit the African population. It is important to note that even though anti-European liberation movements ended with the political independence of Zimbabwe in 1980, the rhetoric of African leaders and diplomats continued to advocate for economic autonomy in the decades after self-rule began. Anti-imperial rhetoric continues today, and while often used to cover domestic failings of autocratic or corrupt leaders, this usage and resonance with African constituencies prove the norm's longevity and pervasiveness. Furthermore, for instance, a resulting challenge to integrationists is that small states may perceive the transfer of sovereignty to Addis Ababa as a neo-imperialist threat if they perceive that the more powerful African states are forcing integration.<sup>36</sup>

The second norm that African integrationists at the A.U. confront and oppose is the vehement adherence to the political borders left by the colonial powers. The O.A.U.

enshrined this norm of '*uti possidetis*' in its charter and subsequent meeting, which has substantially impacted the Continent for nearly 50 years. This meant the lines drawn on the Continent by European powers in Berlin in 1884 and 1885 remained in place despite the irrationality of the borders. The consequences have been the inability of secession movements to gain support among other African states. The O.A.U. supported the state's national sovereignty by working towards compromises and retaining the integrity of the colonial borders. African integrationists will confront the African public that sees the lasting reputation of the regional body as stifling self-determination and political rights. The norm had the chance to evolve with the successful independence of South Sudan, but the AU-backed military invasion into northern Mali likely reinforced this norm.<sup>37</sup>

The third norm of African diplomacy is the solidarity of African states on the world stage. The power of the region's voting bloc at multi-national organizations, numerically the largest in the world, remains a crucial feature of the Pan-Africanist movement. Nkrumah's belief in the need to speak with one voice was in an effort to make up for the diplomatic, economic, and political weakness of individual African states present at independence and remains today. Though a common refrain at regional meetings, this norm is best seen in action at the United Nations, where the bloc of African countries makes up 28% of the U.N. membership. The solidarity in voting at the U.N. began very soon after independence and extended to issues beyond those on the African agenda.<sup>38</sup>

The last norm/role promises well for a potential A.U. foreign service. If all African countries are committed to coordinating their foreign policies, then current Addis-based Africanists would be permitted to shape more of

<sup>35</sup> Ibid. See also; Adejumo, Said and Adebayo Olukoshi, eds. *The African Union and New Strategies for Development in Africa*. New York, Cambria Press; 2008. See also; Laverty, A. (2013). *The Norms of African Diplomatic Culture: Implications for African Integration*. *The African File*. Retrieved 2 June 2015, from <http://theafricanfile.com/public-diplomacy/international-relations/the-norms-of-african-diplomatic-culture-implications-for-african-integration/>

<sup>36</sup> Laverty, A. (2013). *Op.cit.* pp.4

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Chamberlin, W., Hovet, T., & Hovet, E. (1970). *A chronology and fact book of the United Nations, 1941-1969*. Dobbs Ferry, N.Y.: Oceana Publications.

the diplomatic agenda on the supra-national level, allowing them to put more comprehensive integration on the agenda.<sup>39</sup>

## XII. Conclusion

Sadly, research shows that Africa had a better-interesting pre-colonial diplomatic history than its post-colonial ongoing diplomatic history. Pre-colonial African diplomats performed not only diplomatic actions that were contemporaneous with other parts of the world but also portrayed and performed civilized diplomatic acts that were more human and decent than what was practiced in certain parts of the world during the same era.

For post-colonial African diplomacy and the influence of the African Union in Africa's diplomatic history, the O.A.U., laying the foundation from its inception, was granted minimal supra-national power at its formation. The organization struggled to become a meaningful regional body because of the resistance to deep integration by those countries in the Monrovia Group. There has been notable resistance from African leaders to norms/roles that would threaten sovereign prerogatives and territorial integrity since independence. Therefore, this resistance by certain African leaders has become a significant obstacle to integrating African states in its diplomatic history and a deterrent to the two norms mentioned above of anti-imperialism and ignoring colonial borders.

Although this paper makes little or no reference to the A.U. diplomacy of the diaspora, this vital function and rationale provide leverage to the African diaspora and is a cornerstone for achieving African integration and development.

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<sup>39</sup> Laverty, A. (2013). Op.cit. pp.4

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