

PAX NIGERIANA: ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF NIGERIA'S POWER PROJECTION ON WEST AFRICAN POLITICAL STABILITY

Adiatu A. Abiodun and Olaronke Sabine Sangoniran

Department of International Relations, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria

Corresponding Author's email: adiatu@oauife.edu.ng



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Abstract

Regional stability is usually predicated on the ability of regional hegemons within the geographical area to provide leadership for the entire region. In West Africa, Nigeria by its virtue of population, economic capability and military strength is a hegemon in the West African sub region. Hence, this study investigates Nigeria's regional influence in West Africa, with particular emphasis on its leadership role within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). It explores how Nigeria's economic and military power shapes decision-making processes, influences regional stability, and impacts the development trajectory of West African states. The research is driven by the paradox of Nigeria's dominant contributions ranging from peacekeeping and economic support to diplomatic mediation against the backdrop of internal challenges and growing skepticism among member states about its hegemonic posture. The study adopts a qualitative research design, which include indepth interview to gather empirical data. It also utilizes data from secondary sources. Findings reveal that while Nigeria plays a critical role in stabilizing the region and advancing integration goals, its dominance also breeds resistance and calls for more inclusive governance within ECOWAS. The study concludes that Nigeria's leadership remains essential to ECOWAS's functionality, but achieving sustainable regional integration requires balancing national power with collective interests. The study recommends strategic reforms to enhance equitable decision-making, institutional transparency, and cooperative security frameworks across the sub-region.

Keywords: Pax Nigeriana, Regional Hegemony, ECOWAS, Foreign Policy, Conflict Resolution