HETEROGENEITY IN THE HOMOGENOUS AFRICA, POLICY GAP AND THE CHALLENGE OF PAN-AFRICANISM

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Abstract

The dream by some Pan-Africanists to achieve supra-statehood at the continental level has been a mirage despite the efforts in playing down on the heterogeneous factors, and therefore emphasizing on homogenous traits that could make Africans see themselves as one indigenous people from one stock, same historic experience, culture and traditions. These efforts have only resulted to a mere union currently known as African Union (AU) which struggles through policies to encourage and strengthen bonds of solidarity between and amongst member states. This study investigated the implications of Africa's heterogeneity on the efficacy of Pan-African policies, and examined how the existing policy gaps undermine the objectives of Pan-afrinicanism. The study employed incremental model for conceptual analysis. Qualitative methodology is adopted as data were gathered through secondary means. Documentary content study was used for analysis. The study reveals that the heterogeneity which is manifested in the quest of African states for the protection and preservation of their political sovereignty, and the "overzealous policies" of African Union have led to the impediment of Pan-Africanism. It recommended amongst others that Pan-Africanism should be realized through an incremental rather than radical approach.

Keywords: Heterogeneity, Homogeneity, Policy, Pan-Africanism, and Incremental model.

Introduction

Despite Africa's tremendous complexity, it is frequently viewed through a homogeneous perspective. Ethnicities, languages, cultures, political systems, and economic circumstances are just a few of the ways that this diversity shows up. Although the idea of pan-Africanism encourages cooperation and togetherness among African countries, the actual situation frequently shows a complicated web of identities and interests that makes such objectives difficult to achieve. Colonialism's historical background has permanently altered Africa by drawing arbitrary borders that separate ethnic and cultural groupings, leaving a patchwork of countries that may be close to one another geographically but differ greatly in terms of social cohesiveness and political systems.

The historical injustices that Africans had to endure gave rise to pan-Africanism, which promoted group movements for independence, unification, and socioeconomic advancement. However, the diverse fabric of the continent often results in glaring policy gaps that impede the goals of Pan-Africanism. For example, regional organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU) strive to integrate and harmonize policies, but execution frequently encounters major obstacles. Different levels of institutional capacity, political will, and budget allocation among member states result in inconsistent application and efficacy of policies.

Furthermore, the quest for unified policy is made more difficult by the socioeconomic differences among African countries. Nations with abundant natural resources could set different goals than countries that are mostly agrarian or experiencing unstable economies. The social sphere also exhibits this economic heterogeneity, with various regional approaches to topics like gender equality, health, and education. As a result, measures intended to promote growth and unity frequently fall short of addressing the local realities of varied communities, which causes disenchantment and resistance among the populace.

The problem of pan-Africanism also arises in leadership and governance, as contrasting political philosophies and approaches to government widen the chasm. Coexisting authoritarian governments, democratic institutions, and hybrid governance approaches frequently cause conflicts that impede regional collaboration. Additionally, the political environment has been muddied by the history of foreign influence and intrusions, making it challenging to build a cohesive strategy for tackling shared issues like economic development, security, and climate change.

Given these intricacies, the purpose of this research is to examine how Africa's diversity affects the effectiveness of pan-African policy. In addition to undermining Pan-Africanism's goals, it looked at how the current policy gaps undermined the objectives of Pan-Africanism By addressing these important topics, the study hopes to advance a more sophisticated knowledge of how Africa might use its diversity to promote harmony and collaboration in the quest for sustainable development and group advancement.

Statement of Problem

Because of the inherent heterogeneity on the continent, the idea of Pan-Africanism—which aims to unite African states and foster solidarity among peoples of African descent—faces several obstacles. The diverse range of political systems, ethnic groups, cultures, and languages that make up Africa can make it difficult to implement policies that are meant to promote regional cooperation and integration. Although this diversity is a strength, it frequently leads to different objectives and interests across member states, which causes a disjointed approach to Pan-African activities.

Furthermore, there is a significant policy divide in regional institutions like the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU). Due in large part to uneven political will, different governance models, and economic differences among member nations, these organizations usually have difficulty converting their lofty ideas into practical activities on the ground. Many policies consequently fall short of local residents' realities, which

exacerbates their sense of alienation and disenfranchisement. Socioeconomic disparities that affect how the general public views pan-Africanism further exacerbate the problem. The ideals of Pan-African unification may seem far-fetched or unimportant in countries that struggle with unemployment, poverty, and poor educational opportunities. As a result, participation in Pan-African projects frequently stays shallow or selective, which hinders the movement's ability to foster a true sense of shared identity and purpose.

The implementation of Pan-Africanism faces a number of challenges due to the intricate interactions between heterogeneity, policy gaps, and socioeconomic inequality. Although the idea of a unified Africa has great promise for economic growth, political stability, and cross-cultural interaction, the actual situation shows a clear gap between ambition and reality. The development of a cohesive policy framework that can successfully meet the multiple demands of the continent is hampered by the divided

political will of many nations as well as differing degrees of dedication to shared goals.

Research Questions
The study poses the following questions;
1) How has Africa's heterogeneity impacted on the Pan-African policies of integration and corporation?
2) In what ways have the existing policy gaps undermined the objectives of Pan-Africanism?

Research Objectives
The following constitute the research objectives:
1) To ascertain how Africa's heterogeneity has impacted on the pan-african policies of integration and corporation
2) To identify ways the existing policy gaps undermined the objectives of pan-africanism.

Methodology
The study adopted a qualitative research design and relied on secondary courses of data collection. Official documents and empirical studies provided the needed information for analysis. Data obtained were analyzed using documentary content analysis approach.

Conceptual Review
Pan-Africanism
Pan-africanism is a popular concept that has continued to reverberate among Africans and African scholars. It was conceptualized in the quest to confront racial injustice, inequality and total elimination of colonialism in every part of Africa. Idowu (2023) argues that pan-africanism was seen as the necessary philosophy around which all the people of African descent should unite to develop strategies against inequalities, racial discrimination and ending colonialism in Africa. For him, pan-africanism is with the understanding that all African descended peoples are one nation, therefore should unite and form a common front to achieve their aspiration. Anyanwu (2024) corroborates this position that pan-africanism is the belief by Africans at home and in diaspora that African people, both within the continent and beyond share not only a common history and experience but a common destiny. This reflects the common understanding that the pan-african intellectual, cultural, and political movements seem to view all Africans and descendants of Africa as belonging to a single race and therefore are homogeneous irrespective of the independent states and other heterogeneous factors. Anyanwu (2024) argues that what could be cited as heterogeneous factors among Africans are exogenous in nature, they are artificially created by both Africans and the Europeans – beginning from the partitioning of African territories

to the creation of independent states, protective policies, xenophobic attitudes among others.

Since 1945 after the second world war when pan-africanism gained popularity, it has yielded some aspirations which include librating and uniting African people around the world leading to the establishment of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963, now known as African Union (AU) in 2002. This is captured in the address by Kwame Nkrumah at Addiss Ababa, that "we must uinite in order to achieve the full liberation of our continent" (cited in Bamidele, 2019). In no doubt, decolonization has been realized giving rise to various independent states, but the need for African unity which consists of integration and corporation continues to be utopic even in the contemporary time.

Having achieved the first philosophical focus of pan-africanism, the post-independent Africa remain confronted by challenge of political integration which it proposes. Adetula, Redie, Laaksa and Levin (2020) observe that at the center of this debate was the need to establish a political organization of post-colonial Africa, and the united states of Africa as a concrete political project. Oguh (2010) faulted the move made by some post-colonial African state leaders and proponents of pan-africanism led by Kwame Nkrumah in canvassing for supra-state continental structure where independent states will collapse their sovereignty. Such radical approach will only be realized unless the supra-state rises on the grave of the independent states.

Policy

The concept of policy has no generally accepted definition as regards to what constitutes policy among policy analysts and practitioners alike. This is usually the case in concepts and phenomena that are mostly domiciled in social sciences. This has therefore resulted to numerous perspectives in viewing the concept of policy by various policy analysts. Among these however, are many "attempted" or "unsatisfactory" definitions and explanations of policy.

Policy can basically be viewed as a scientific approach by government in solving a social problem. The scientifism is what many policy analysts have attempted to explain in the course of defining a policy. Dye (1975) sees policy as whatever governments choose to do or not to do, while Eyestone (1971) defines it as the relationship of a government unit to its environment. However, Anderson (1979) succinctly pointed out Dye's definition of public policy as whatever governments choose to do or not to do. Though the two may be oblivious of the fact that there could be a divergence between what governments decide to do and what they actually do, and at the same while quite a number of things governments do may have no policy significance.

Anderson (1979) and Ikelegbe (1969) gave what we could consider as our operational definition of policy as – for Anderson, it is purposive course of action followed by an actor or a set of actors in dealing with a problem or matter of social concern, while for Ikelegbe, it is an integrated programme of actions which an actor or a group of actors is accustomed to or intends to undertake in response to given problems or situations with which he is confronted. The definitions viewed policy as purposive and integrated course of action in the sense that it is consciously and deliberately brought about with a holistic view that put into consideration the related factors, alternatives, implications and consequences, with a clearly designed and delineated methods for implementations. A gap occurs in policy process if it does not reflect the above definitions.

Theoretical Framework

This work adopted incrementalism as a model for better explanation of this study. It was postulated by Robert Dahl and Charles Lindblown as a responds to the weaknesses of the rational model. The major assumption of the model is that decision makers consider limited values, limited goals, limited alternatives and only realistic solutions to the desired goal(s). Here, the goal is not a one-time, radical, bold and major solution to the societal problems but marginal or incremental policies or changes especially in a sensitive environment or situation. For Lindblown, incremental policy making proceeds in a chronological series, that is – made and remade, building out of the current situations, step by stem and in a small degree (cited in Ikelegbe, (1969).

This is the policy model needed in the pan-african policies geared towards achieving the objectives of pan-africanism which is beyond eradication of colonialism and racial discrimination but the integration and corporation of African states and peoples. The zealous and radical approach (which is antithetical to this model) applied by Kwameh Nkrumah and other supporters in the quest of achieving the goal of African integration was rejected by most African political leaders who just as at that time secured their independence, thus, awakening the consciousness of safeguarding their nascent political independence.

Considering the sensitive nature of the issue and environment of the time, the policy actors failed to take a step by step measure which allows for the

enlightenment and buy-in of every stakeholder in seeing the reasons for the need to achieve the goals of pan-africanism especially on the area of integration and corporation at the level where necessary. Undensi (2022) observes that the early push by Kwameh Nkrumah to establish supra-state was considered by other heads of states as a poisonous chalice that undermined their independence, and this has explained while it has been difficult for the continent to achieve any level of integration.

How Africa's Heterogeneity Has Impacted on the Pan-African Policies of Integration And Corporation

The understanding of pan-africanism from the lens of a homogeneous Africa with a supra-state has been an illusion due to the heterogeneous fabrics that exist in the African continent. The pan-african policies to realize integration and cooperation which has for the sake of implementability been structured into three tiers level of governance – national, regional and continental (AU) have suffered setbacks due to the manifestation of heterogeneous realities. Uba (2022) argues that the three tiers governance structure through which the policies are to be implemented has in itself suffered major constraints because of the friction that exist between it and the sovereign member states. This is because the structure cannot operate smoothly without confronting the sovereignty of member states. This is re-echoed in the argument by Salisu, (2023) and Anyanwu (2023) that the mandates of Regional Economic Communities (REC) in Africa which include – peace, security, development and economic integration has been impaired by the lack of supra-national accountability and sanctions to ensure compliance by member states. They are impeded by the general challenge of global governance and multilateralism. In addition, the operation of these RECs is dependent on the willingness of member states and international funding agencies to provide the necessary funds needed for policy implementation.

One of the most recent pan-african policies is the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AFCFTA) which all the RECs are expected to have established and the Customs Union in 2017 is yet to be completed by RECs and some member states. Amadi (2023) observes that the AFCFTA policy is yet to fully commence due to the fact that it does not have a binding power on member states but survives at their mercies of approval and implementation. He further holds that the economic inequality between and within countries has contributed to the frustration of the pan-african integration policies.

The pan-african parliament is another product of African Union policies in pursuance to the objectives of pan-africanism. The pan-african parliament dates back to the Abuja treaty, which was signed by African leaders in Abuja, Nigeria in June 1991, and came into force in may 1994 while the inaugural session took place at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa Conference Center in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 18th March 2004 (Demeke, 2004). One of the primary objectives of the institution is the – "familiarization of the people of Africa with the objectives and policies aimed at integrating the African continent within the framework of the establishment of the African Union, strengthen continental solidarity and build a sense of common destiny among the people of Africa.

Working towards its objectives, the institution has recorded some achievements which include – resolution on signing the adherence to the African Peer Review Mechanism, the development of a continental code of conduct on the use and exploitation of National Resources and Environmental protection, and so on. However, the institution has been impeded by the heterogeneous traits that exist amongst member states and individual parliamentarians. Amadi (2016) points out that in spite of the achievements recorded by the Pan-African Parliament (PAP), a flip of the other side shows that PAP still grapples with numerous challenges, part of which include – political inequality where some members countries have been pressured and invaded to ensure democratic change of government while there are not less than 10member states that have issue of "sit-tight-syndrome" of their Head of States or president, spending more than 15 years on sit which is against the principle and objectives the institution stand for.

Dokwu (2020) argues that the PAP has been incapacitated by the independence and sovereignty of member states in carrying out its objectives of ensuring good governance, transpency, and accountability among its members. A report published by Transparency International in its 2015 edition of Corruption Perception Index identified more African countries in the 10 most corrupt nations – including Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Libya and Eritrea. It is unconceivable that while some of these nations fail to meet their obligation of financial subscription to the organization, the political leaders are catering away their nations' limited resources.

With regards to the heterogeneous element of member nations' independence and sovereignty, the pan-african parliament has continued to find it difficult to implement most of its resolutions, policies and programmes, and noting the non-commitment of member states especially in giving the necessary support needed for the institution to fulfill its mandate. This is pointed out in the Pan-African Parliament

Performance Report of 2024 by His Excellency, Hon. Chief Fortune Charumbira, as he called for enhanced parliamentary support and infrastructure to bolster efficiency and institutional credibility.

Policy Gap and the Undermining of Pan-Africanism Objectives of Integration and Corporation

The objectives of pan-africanism have today grown beyond struggle against colonialism, fight for freedom and independence, but rather consider the relevance of the situations in the contemporary Africa, the objectives are tailored towards ensuring Africa's unity, solidarity, economic integration and the development of Africa and Africans as a continent. Okwudili (2023) points out that the concept of pan-africanism has shifted from movement and fight against European colonialist, subjugation and oppression of Africa to a focus on the integration and economic development of African states.

Agunwa (2021) argues that efforts have been made by the African Union and its various organs to achieve the objectives of pan-africanism which centers on political and economic integration through various policies, but the integration processes in the continent are hampered by not just the effects of the political and socio-economic hangovers from colonial past but also from the shortfalls of various policies, especially in the failure to adequately give cognizance to the political, economic, social, administrative and cultural systems of African countries. Most African countries are beclouded by the concept of sovereignty, and for them it is associated with the preservation of national identity, and therefore, adherence to sovereignty is very strong given to the fact that most countries were very young at independence when the 'radical' move was made to create a supra-national authority. Odimfe (2022) states that the radical approach towards the political, economic and geographical integration of Africa through the creation of a supra-state re-awakened the consciousness of member states to protect and preserve their sovereignty and become apprehensive of every regional and sub-regional policies that geared towards integration.

On the area of regional institutions and organs, Osiluameh (2023) observes that the institutions of most regional economic integration arrangements are weak, and human resources and financial capacity are inadequate for effective running of the institutions. This shows the deficiency and gap in the policies that establish the institutions and organs, especially considering the failure in taking into cognizance the need and how to build capacity to the institutions for better policy implementation.

African integration policies and protocols failed to address the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Charter of Article (1) which constitutes an impediment to the African integration efforts. Jiboku (2022) maintains that other theoretical contradictions in the integration plan are the principle of the OAU Charter in the Article (1) which upholds the territorial integrity of African states and the declaration on non-interference in the domestic affairs of member states. This principles recognize and uphold the sovereignty of member states, and have constrained the efforts of the AU and its organs in achieving its objectives (Ekot and Anyanwu, 2024). It is therefore expected that policies towards achieving integration and corporation should have addressed the provision in the Article one (1) of the Charter to ensure implementability of the policies and objectives.

Discussion of Research Findings
The study in line with the research questions and objectives finds out the following:
1) The overzealous and radical move by some proponents of pan-africanism in 1960s created 'sovereignty protective consciousnesses' among newly independent African states that were yet to have the conviction on the need for African political and socio-economic integration and the extent of the integration.
2) There was existence of diverse understanding of the philosophy of Pan-Africanism. Some African leaders view it only as a movement for African emancipation against the Europeans, while some view it as a socio-cultural African identity as a homogeneous continent
3) Failures of the pan-African policies to give cognizance to the heterogeneous realities of African states and identify ways to accommodate them

Conclusion
The study examined to a large extent the policy gap that impedes the realization of the objectives of Pan-Africanism, identifying the African heterogeneous and homogeneous realities. The policy gap is identified in the failure of the Pan-African policies to take into cognizance the sensitiveness of the socio-economic and political disparity among African states, and their sovereign status which has made African political and economic integration an illusion.

Recommendation
The study in reflection of the set out objectives recommends the following:
1) Pan-African policies should adopt incremental model rather than radical approach to be able to

address the heterogeneous realities that constrain the efforts of African integration

2) The political actors and stakeholders should have a clear and consensual understanding of the philosophy of Pan-Africanism, this will allow for concerted effort in realizing its objectives

3) The Article one (1) of the OAU Charter should be addressed to reflect the objective of Pan-Africanism

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