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Culture, Security and Foreign Policy: Nigeria and the USA in Saudi Arabia's External Relations

Jamiu Adewumi Oluwatoki*

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria, (Population: 200m; GDP of 560.00 USD Billion [2019 Est.] (Trading Economics, March, 2020)) has a land mass of 923,768 sq. km (356,669 sq. miles), great wealth in solid mineral resources and Petroleum and Gas and with great potential in Agricultural economy. Its crude oil reserve stands at 24.0 billion barrels. Saudi Arabia, (Population: 34.8m; GDP of 785.00 USD Billion [2019 Est.] (Trading Economics, 2019) has the largest crude oil reserve in the world (25%) and total surface area of 2,149,690 sq. km (829,999.94 sq. miles). They are both members of the United Nations Organisation (UNO), the Non-Aligned Movement, Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

This paper aims at examining the role of culture and the security imperative in the behaviour of states; to demonstrate how national culture as well as security needs shape the formulation and implementation of the foreign policies of states, in this case, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia and the USA. The paper sets out to answer the question: How do the national cultures of Nigeria and the USA reflect in their respective Saudi Arabia policies and how does Saudi Arabia's security need reflect in its respective relations with Nigeria and the United States of America? The paper is based on Library search and is divided into three major parts: Introduction; Literature Review; Islam and security needs in Saudi – America relations; Culture in Nigeria – Saudi Arabia relations; and the Conclusion.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Islam exerts great influence on Saudi Arabia's domestic and foreign policies. It confers legitimacy and prestige on the regime, the house of Saud. The multi-ethnic, multi-religious Nigerian state has Muslims constituting about half its population. By the end of WWII, the United States had spawn a relationship with Saudi Arabia that has lasted the time since President Roosevelt's first impressions of the growing strategic importance of the Desert Monarchy (Lippman, 2018). Even if their relations are not immersed in conflicts by any means, cooperation is particularly tangential in Nigeria – Saudi

* ラgos州立大学歴史国際学部 准教授

Arabia relations. According to Oluwatoki (2016b), their bilateral relations revolve around Hajj, illegal aliens, trade, education and oil.

Among the major frameworks that shaped Saudi Arabia's foreign policy are: good neighborliness, non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, strengthening relations with the Gulf States and the countries of the Arabian Peninsula, strengthening relations with Arab and Islamic countries for their mutual benefit and advocacy of issues of common interests to them, adoption of non-alignment policy, establishing cooperative relations with friendly countries and playing effective role in regional and international organizations (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2005, p. 1).

Saudi Arabia's oil wealth (25% of world oil reserve) affords it great influence in Middle East and international affairs. It also burdens it with enormous responsibilities in its external relations. The state and the dynasty, both Saudi, are connected in the security conundrum, which could only be resolved by the survival of both.

The character of the founder, King Abdul Aziz Ibn Abdul Rahman al-Faisal al-Sa'ud (1880–1953) and that of the state (founded 1932) were entwined (Al-Harthi, 2004). According to Goldberg (1986), Abdul Aziz left all options open to ensure him free hand to relate to advantage with any power. This conduct has characterized Saudi Arabia's foreign relations ever since. The King struck an alliance with the Wahhabi dogmatists to get the state consolidated but he adopted a non-Wahhabi foreign policy resting on a domestic Wahhabi spirit, creating, in Goldberg's opinion, the tension of the juxtaposition of domestic traditional Wahhabism with international liberal foreign policy. He married into all the major tribes, encouraged the emergence of the Ikhwan (Brotherhood) movement but checked on the Wahhabis' uncontrolled expansionism; all in the bid to help the state to survive and determine its character (Goldberg, 1986). For regime legitimacy, the monarchy projects itself as protector of Islam, within and outside the Kingdom. Niblock (2006) perceived the link with Wahhabism as the narrow basis for this "service to Islam".

As Niblock points out, the regime has appealed for legitimacy on three grounds: first, to the Qur'an and related Islamic texts as its sources of law and government; second, its adoption of the majalis (the King-in-Council) as tribal form of democracy with perhaps easier accessibility by the grass root; and third, an acknowledgement of the need, albeit gradual transition to a more democratic/structural form of government.

From inception, Saudi Arabia's foreign policy has been opposed to Pan-Arabism and Pan-Islamism: no Arab nationalism, no too strong Arab League, no membership of any integration scheme; Abdul Aziz saw the separate existence of each Arab state as sacrosanct. As Harrison (1995) sees it, the realities of Saudi Arabia's situation necessitated this attitude; the state is remote, its population is small and its military means, limited. It is unlikely that Saudi Arabia could be sure of its leadership of any projected union. In any case, such a unity would not only pose a direct challenge to the political basis of the Saudi dynasty, it would remove Saudi independence.

To the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2005), Saudi Arabia's foreign policy is being 'activated' through circles; the Gulf Circle, the Arab Circle, the Islamic Circle and the International Circle. But according to McLaurin, Peretz and Snider (1982), the foreign policy is "best understood" as a series of defensive circles: first, Saudi Arabia itself; second, the Peninsula and the Southern Gulf; third, the remainder of the Gulf, the Red Sea, the Northern Indian Ocean, and the Middle East. The significance of these three circles for Saudi security cannot be overemphasized.

Quandt (1985) has identified six points of the setting of Saudi foreign policy in the 1980s which significantly he terms as "threats to stability" : Saudi Arabia's unique position involves it as in a web with the world; inter-Arab politics, involvement in the Palestinian question and the Arab-Israeli conflict, maintaining its reputation as a champion of Islam, its wariness of communism and Marxist regimes, generally, its "special relationship" with and its taking side with the United States in its global rivalry with the Soviet Union throughout the Cold War, and its being at constant dilemma concerning oil policy. Plus minus elaboration on geographical and economic import of the circles, Quandt's points will ordinarily correspond with McLaurin, Peretz and Snider's circles.

Three consistent themes have dominated Saudi foreign policy since the late 1950s; regional security, Arab nationalism and Islam. As Oluwatoki (2016, p. 136) pointed out, "The Saudi state and the regime, which created it, were founded on Islam." Post-1979 Iran, another state founded on Islam, shares mutual acrimony with Saudi Arabia on version of the faith and quality of leadership. Perhaps the fourth theme that preoccupies Saudi foreign policy makers, even if not out-rightly acknowledged, is its relations with the United States. The two states are diametrically opposed in culture and national behavior; their relations always portend contradictions in what each of the states ostensibly stands for.

Saudi Arabia is preoccupied with regional security issues; this gets it concerned about regime stability and the safety of Petroleum exports. The Gulf and the whole Peninsula enters into Saudi Arabia's sphere of influence concerning these issues. According to Harrison (1995), threat to the Arabian Peninsula unnerves Saudi Arabia and it uses its power to contain the threat (Support for North Yemen against Marxist South Yemen, interference in Yemeni politics, struggle against the Marxist Dhofari rebels in Oman (1970s), the Iran – Iraq war and the Gulf wars). All these show Saudi's anxiety about threats to the stability of the Peninsula, which is closely linked to Saudi security. Saudi Arabia's intervention in Yemen in the 2000s is a validation of this claim (Darwich, 2018).

Saudi Arabia's Global South policy is not specific; it comes to the fore to the extent that it falls within the 'appropriate' Circle, mostly having lost steam through the immediate Circles. This is however the case as far as its relations with most states of the Global South are concerned!

Nigeria is a federation; its domestic politics is characterized by a North-South debacle almost parallel to a Muslim-Christian divide. This explains the federal-regional pull of its Middle East policy in the First Republic, which has continued to characterize its relations with the Middle East ever since (Phillips, 1964; Idang, 1973; Akinyemi, 1974; Gambari, 1980 and Oluwatoki, 2016a). Saudi Arabia is a monarchy and wholly Muslim. Nigeria is a federal republic. While Islam plays a centripetal role in the former's polity, it serves a centrifugal role in the latter's and this is reflected in their respective foreign policies (Al-Harthi, 2004).

Foreign policies consist of the decisions and actions by which means states project important goals to the external environment which are geared towards protecting the states' national interest. To Frankel (1963), foreign policy involves issues of fundamental importance; they are decisions made in consideration of national interest and in pursuit of the state's survival and security. Deutsch (1989) has located national interest in "national security", and "economic interest" of states. Policy is a form of action which involves (i) selection of objectives, (ii) mobilization of means for achieving those objectives, and (iii) implementation, or the actual expenditure of efforts and resources in pursuit of the

selected objectives. It lies at the intersection of the domestic and international aspects of a country's life (Lentner, 1974). To all states, foreign policy refers to all that is beyond their frontiers; with emphasis on the distinction between the state and its environment and how it copes with the environment.

The environment of a state consists of the international system, the pattern of interaction among states and the situation, patterns of interaction, that do not encompass the entire international system. Frankel has emphasized that given the increasing interdependence of the world even domestic issues that are insignificant in themselves can rarely be divorced from foreign policy.

A country's life is no other than the life of its people. Culture therefore comes within the purview of foreign policy since it (culture) is the sum total of a people's way of life. According to Adefuye (1992), culture consists of values, beliefs and perceptions of the world that underlie a people's behaviour and which are shared by members of a particular society. Culture is however one of the most elusive as well as most easily understood concepts in the Social Sciences. Ironically, its elusiveness derives from its simple comprehension.

As Hudson (1997) explained, culture is easily understood because it distinguishes us, one from another, as a people. Its consequences are very real, even to lay observers. Its elusiveness however becomes apparent when one attempts to define it in a theoretical sense. The problem is with what to exclude and what not to in the definition. Hudson sees definitions of culture as so unwieldy that culture readily became "the explanation of last resort" for a field such as international relations, which was heavily influenced by behaviouralism. In her words, "all human activity – including foreign policy – becomes both a product of and a component of culture".

To Frankel, the centrality of legal power in the decision-making apparatus is paramount; influence being its peripheral part. If the legally determined authorities make the actual decisions, a commonly-held assumption that is not even wholly correct, analytical searchlight must be turned on the decision-makers to determine the extent of the influence on them of the domestic environment especially in respect of commonly held values.

It is also important to note that foreign policy officials are attempting to modify the behaviour of people beyond their frontiers. As Rosenau (1971) pointed out, they cannot appeal to the common ties of culture and history to secure the compliance of their targets, nor can they rely on the structures from which their authority is derived, i.e. Frankel's legal power. These are two areas of comparative advantage for the domestic officials. But just like in domestic politics, the international system consists of many values and ethical norms. States hold values that are antithetical to other states (Thompson and Macridis, 1976) contend. And since the decision-makers share the same values with their public, the foreign policy official, according to Rosenau, "is the only politician whose actions are directed toward persons and situations that are normally responsive to cultural standards, historical aspirations, and sources of authority that are different from his own". The resistance to be encountered in the effort to achieve the goals of policy is to be evaluated in the relationship between the means and ends.

As Frankel (1963) pointed out, the decision-makers in foreign policy are part and parcel of the domestic environment, through partaking in the national culture and characteristics and through being constantly exposed to influences and pressures in the play of domestic politics. In particular reference to values, Frankel referred to the inner element (called many other names) with which the

decision makers' assessment of the environment is fused to get to making decisions and then take political actions. Yet, as Rosenau explained, foreign policy undertakings perform an adaptive function for national systems which willy-nilly must cope with their environments and find accommodation with them, just like any organism. In other words, for states to survive not only do they have to cope with the domestic environment with all its intricacies but on which they exercise some control, they also must cope with and find accommodation with the external environment, especially other states, which have distinct cultural standards and national values. It is this resistance-eliciting situation in its environment that makes Rosenau conclude; "... the foreign policy undertaking is the most delicate of political actions and the most fragile of political relationships". One thing is certain though, foreign policy actions derive from decisions and the decision-making apparatus reflects the types of foreign policies of states.

ISLAM AND THE RAMIFICATIONS OF SAUDI ARABIA – USA RELATIONS

The Kingdom's relations with the United States are a product of regional security needs but they constitute a sore point in its efforts to maintain solidarity with other Arab states. Riyadh-Washington relations lie on the pedestal of Saudis' foreign policy dovetailing into its regional security policy. These relations dated to World War II when the administration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt declared in 1943 that the defence of Saudi Arabia was a vital interest to the United States – a concession to American companies involved in Saudi Arabia's oil exploration and exploitation. It must be noted that it took the US government some time before it came to grip with relating with the 'strange' state.

In spite of its non-alignment policy, there is a historical background to Saudi Arabia's pro-West and pro-America foreign policy; it does not share the deep-seated anti-Western sentiments prevalent in other Arab states as it was not a victim of the West's double dealing towards the Arab States in the course of and after WWI. Saudi Arabia has no legacy of Western occupation. As Goldberg (1986) put it, the absence of an anti-Western legacy is one reason why Saudi Arabia finds it easier to develop relations with the USA than other Arab states do. Put in another way, in Lippman's (2018) opinion, "... the US – Saudi marriage of convenience ... suits the needs of both countries". But this unique relationship with the USA has always been a source of tension in Saudi Arabia's domestic setting. According to Nonneman, (2005, p. 333), the domestic challenge presented by the global environment comes in three parts; the dangerous perception of political dependence on the United States, the perceived damage to local interests from economic globalization, the cultural penetration that many feel accompanies the Kingdom's insertion in the global economy and the presence of foreign workers.

The close relationship with the United States intensifies the security challenges facing the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and deepens its political vulnerability. It exposes the Kingdom to violence from Islamists who refuse to follow the rules of *ijtihad* that allow for new interpretation of precepts in line with contemporary realities; it has for sometimes made Saudi Arabia a target of Iranian and Iraqi antagonism, two states in rivalry with the Kingdom and with population at variance with Saudi conservatism; and it has largely undermined the credibility of Saudi attempts to resolve the Palestinian problem, being friend with the staunch backer of Israel when Israel remains the very reason Palestinians remain without a state.

The triad of Arab unity, the Palestinian problem and the conflict with Israel dominate Saudi foreign policy on Arab nationalism. The Kingdom goes for Arab solidarity, supports the Palestinians' cause and subscribes fully to Israel withdrawing from Arab occupied territories since 1967. More than any other issue in its foreign policy, Saudi – US relations, in Niblock's opinion, put the Kingdom on the horn of a dilemma; claim to religious legitimacy compromised by the pursuit of US-centered policies necessary for the country's security. To avoid compromising their religious claims, the Saudis would undermine the security of the state.

Saudi Arabia spearheaded the 1973 imposition of political constraints on oil supplies. From then on, Harrison (1995) contended, the US recognized that the issue of the Arab – Israel dispute was inseparable from relations with Arab countries. As Mackey (1990) pointed out, to save the Kingdom the hostility of its Arab neighbours, Saudi Arabia maintains a stance against Israel; cast the US in an active role in Middle East peace process in which Saudis have since played a vital role.

Islam is seen as the third factor that influenced Saudi foreign policy. The first two being regional security and Arab nationalism. Its solidarity with Muslim countries in Asia and Africa, its commitment to defending the just causes of the Arab and the Islamic world, serving the interest of Islam and Muslims throughout the world, are pivotal to its international image (Ministry of Information, n.d., p. 2). Islam motivated Saudi Arabia's staunch anti-Communist position through the Cold War era. Yet, according to Goldberg, Ibn Saud, for dynastic and political goals sacrificed Islam and subjected it to playing less than the role it ordinarily would have been playing (Rouleau, 2002). Dynastic and political goals drove Ibn Saud's foreign policy, hence, the decline, first, of the importance of Wahhabism and second, the gradual weakening of Islam in general as a determinant of Saudi foreign policy (Goldberg, 1986). Kings Faisal, Khalid and Fahd's consistent arguments that the first principle of Saudi foreign policy is Islamic solidarity, with Arab unity trailing second were nothing more than official pronouncements; there is a gulf of difference between these and actual performance. This is an interesting point since the Saudi regime is adroitly preoccupied with flying the Islamist Kite. The point should however not be missed that while the Saudi regime needs to emphasize Islamic solidarity etc. as the first principle of its foreign policy (with hard works shown to that effect), to gain and sustain its legitimacy both at the domestic and the global environments, Islam equally serves the regime's interests especially in sustaining the mutual needs/benefits of Saudi – US relations.

According to Niblock, the three possible uses to the United States of Saudi Arabia's Islamic role was (i) as a counter to Russia's potential influence and regaining its position of power in the newly independent republics in the Caucasus and Central Asia, (ii) to prevent the expansion of Iranian religious influence (again, mainly in the Caucasus and Central Asia, (iii) to bring the excesses of radical Islam under control, through spreading a more conservative vision of Islam. The irony of the twist of this role for Saudi – US relations in the manifestation of international terrorism can however not be overemphasized.

Piscatori (1983) pointed out how Ibn Saud, after having achieved his territorial goals, manifested four objectives: to maintain his Kingdom's independence; to secure the international approbation of his control of the formerly Hashemite territory; getting concerned that Arab leaders treat him as an equal; desiring to broaden his diplomatic contacts among the Great Powers. The second initiative failed and the Saudi house had to reiterate its commitment to Islam. Without legitimacy by Islam, the

Saudi regime would enjoy less prestige at home and abroad (Quandt, 1981). Thus, Goldberg (1986) asserted, in laying the basis for Saudi foreign policy, Ibn Saud was interested in securing his position in the Islamic world, having other powers, irrespective of religious or ideological persuasion, recognize his status, and in broadening his foreign relations. Saudi Arabia has also directed its aid policy towards bolstering its political interests; to enhance Saudi influence and prestige in the Arab world, the Islamic world and internationally (Harrison, 1995).

To Piscatori, appeal to Islam becomes relevant to the regime when its position is weak internationally especially in relation to Arab politics. "In the final analysis the overriding purpose of that policy is to preserve the Saudi regime and Saudi independence" (Piscatori, 1983). One cannot however generalize too much on this point; Islam hardly played any significant role in the early days when Abdul Aziz was trying to establish his Kingdom. When in the 1980s revolutionary Iran was challenging Saudi's position, relying on Islam was not too effective.

In any case, Islam is not an absolute determinant of Saudi foreign policy; it reinforces its narrow national-(self)-interests adding a reason for devising a policy and does not merely justify other reasons. Islam has been more important in the implementation of Saudi policies, 'legitimizing' them.

The foregoing shows why the non-Muslim, non-contiguous Third World states do not enjoy too enthusiastic Saudi foreign policy attention. Even states like Nigeria can only come into the periphery of the so-called Islamic circle. The non-popularity of Wahhabi doctrine in Nigeria explains the waning of general Saudi influence in Nigeria and perhaps also the decline of Islamic projects in the country. And since Nigeria does not fall within the security environment of Saudi Arabia, either strategically or economically, Hajj remains the pivotal issue in Nigeria – Saudi Arabia relations.

From the economic perspective, to discuss Saudi foreign policy draws us to the very important Saudi – America relations, itself bringing in the all-pervasive Saudi preoccupation with national and regime security. The most enduring feature of Saudi interaction with the international system is the flow of strategic-economic diplomatic relations between Riyadh and Washington. It is incontrovertible that if the key factor in Saudi – America relations is Saudi oil, it is an economic relation based on a commodity of strategic value and which calls for diplomatic savvy. The thrust of these relations might arguably center on oil for security; they are maintained in spite of the inherent contradictions because the foreign policy elites of the two states respect their mutual understanding of the respective different cultural settings from which they operate (Lippman, 2018, p. 293ff). Sicherman (2005) has reminded us how after the fall of the Shah (1979), President Carter proclaimed the defense of the Gulf to be in America's vital interest. When in 1990 Saddam Hussein double-crossed King Fahd by his invasion and occupation of Kuwait, King Fahd welcomed the Americans to defend the Kingdom, and urged them to evict Saddam (Woodward, 1991). There is close link between Saudi oil and the security and stability of the Saudi state and regime. Oil is the umbilical cord of interests between Saudi Arabia and the USA.

The essential duties of Saudi rulers since 1953, Sicherman (2005) pointed out, are five: holding the family together; ensuring the blessing from the Ulama, the Salafi Clerisy emphasizing early Islamic practice - public austerity, male prerogative, female seclusion, and the dangers of foreign seduction; popularity with the people to be secured through an improvement in their conditions of life; having alliance with the strongest external power, in this case, the USA; not taking sides in Arab disputes – if possible. These duties of Saudi rulers Nonneman calls 'Omni balancing'. His words: "Like the other

conservative Gulf states, then, Saudi Arabia is an 'Omni-balancer', balancing between threats and resources within and between the domestic, regional and global levels simultaneously" (Nonneman, 2005, p. 351).

The US has however been involved in the Saudi domestic politics by virtue of its economic-strategic relations with Saudi Arabia. According to Abir (1997), Saudis were enraged that their territory was being used by the US to attack a Muslim country in the event of the coalition attack on Iraq to evacuate Kuwait in 1991. This, he contended was an exacerbation of the opposition to the Saudi regime for its corruption and its modernization programme associated with the West. The opposition among the Ulama and the middle class has their different reasons. The most dreadful are the anti-regime preachers. As Abir put it, feeding on the widespread anti-American and anti-Saud sentiments in the Kingdom, the conservatives wish to replace the House of Saud government, the intelligentsia and the middle class want reform and democratization. Yet, there are the militants, especially those working abroad with the opposition in exile to "hatch anti-American terrorist operations in Saudi Arabia". To Abir, the objection to the US presence in Saudi Arabia and antipathy for Americans, as a whole is nearly universal.

But Bronson (2005) has warned us against the "oil for defence" caricature, not to fall into the pitfall of a profound misunderstanding of the relationship's underpinnings and obscure the reasons why the relationship deteriorated so quickly after 9/11. She contended that oil has been an important factor in every country's relationship with Saudi Arabia. Well, not so Nigeria! But then, that might be why Nigeria – Saudi Arabia relations are so cool and hardly involved. According to Bronson, only Saudi Arabia, with its 70 percent of OPEC's spare capacity, can 'rescue' the world for energy needs. In any case, as far as Saudi – America relations are concerned; the USA might be considered the undeclared 14th member of the OPEC.

Yet, Bronson insists that oil alone does not explain why the United States and Saudi Arabia forged such an intimate partnership. Together their relationship helped draw the battle lines for the Cold War. It also made it easier for Washington to sanction the oil exports of states it defines as threatening, and thus making Saudi Arabia's position ever stronger and more valuable. As she put it, "The importance of Saudi Arabia's oil holding is, in part, politically constructed, rather than pre-ordained" (Bronson, 2005, p. 374). The end of the Cold War, no doubt, explains why the relationship deteriorated so quickly after September 2001 (Goldberg, 1993).

Bronson's analysis however has not moved us "beyond mutual recriminations over whether American policies or Saudi Arabia's domestic environment explains the terror attacks". According to Doran (2004), Washington cannot afford to ignore what Saudis say about one another, because sooner or later the hatred generated at home will be directed toward the United States. To most analysts, the growth of anti-Americanism in the Middle East has been due to US policies themselves. The September 11, 2001 bombings of American economic and security citadels brought home the message in a most harrowing manner. Forced to abandon his Sudan haven in 1996, due to US and Saudi pressure, Osama bin Laden whose Saudi citizenship had been stripped in 1994 became the rallying point of anti-Americanism and Saudi hate. Saudi – America relations are further complicated by the US's special relationship with Israel (Abir, 1997) and the Palestinian problem is a volatile issue in Saudi's domestic politics. In fact, as Doran put it:

... the jihad against the United States is actually a continuation of domestic politics by other means. The Saudi religious classes and al-Qaeda use it (the suicide bombing of an American compound in Riyadh, Monday, May 12th 2003) to discredit their indigenous enemies, who, given half a chance, would topple the clerics from power.

The US no doubt is totally enmeshed in Saudi and Middle East politics, all for a barrel of oil.

Even in the post-Cold War period, the military-strategic dimension of the flow of oil based on the West-East rivalry had turned into the new Western oil-phobia, with the potentiality of unfriendly regional powers, like Iran and Iraq turning the nozzle against the West. This possibility has made Saudi Arabia a more attractive bride. This is the essence of Doran's "Saudi paradox". As Falk (1993, p. 404) has rightly pointed out, in the post-Cold War period the Third World has become both a potential friend and a dangerous enemy for developed countries. But just as the US handled the post-Yom Kippur War (1973) Saudi-led oil war against the West – waited it out and ensured that Saudi Arabia spent most of its new found oil wealth in the US (Lippman, 2018) –, the two states are not likely to have run out of resources to mend any crack in their relations as usual.

Where does this quagmire of Saudi – America relations land us as far as Nigeria – Saudi Arabia relations are concerned? The situation has only reinforced the thesis that Third World bilateral relations are largely jejune. States of the Global South, for the sake of stability and security, are preoccupied rather with the West and are concerned mainly with Great Powers relations. They leave the potentially mutually beneficial relations between and among them largely unexplored. They expend much of their diplomatic energy on promoting and enhancing their economic relations with the developed countries. They leave much of their diplomatic relations with their fellow Third World states on the cosmetic level and routine consular activities. This last view is within the ambit of Nigeria – Saudi Arabia relations.

FOREIGN POLICY, CULTURE AND NIGERIA – SAUDI ARABIA RELATIONS

Both Nigeria and Saudi Arabia's foreign policies, like any other states, display the influence of the domestic environment on the decision-making process. The House of Saud is largely responsible for policy decisions in Saudi Arabia. The Al-Saud decision-makers, as Nonneman (2005, p. 319) pointed out, constitute an element in the domestic environment in the way they perceive the effects, which other factors have on regime security. Thus, from a peculiar history of a reconsolidation of a dynastic culture forging an alliance with a religious standard, in a regional environment of fierce contending powers, state security in Saudi Arabia has always been entwined with regime security. It is a bit more complex in Nigeria where there is no dynastic prerogative. Yet the final decision resides with the apex political hierarchy in the Presidency and at the Ministerial level. At this level lies Frankel's "legal power" in the two countries. But Nigeria is a federation, Saudi Arabia is a monarchy and there lies the divergence. The peripheral part, which in Frankel's scheme is influence, lies with the bureaucracy and other groups in the states.

Lentner (1974) has identified patterns of attitudes and orientations towards politics (political culture and national style) as moderately stable domestic determinants of foreign policy. The people, including the foreign policy elites share common values such as, among others, protection, safety and

well-being, self-respect and some measure of deference.

As Hudson explained, some scholars emphasized culture as the organization of meaning; others view it as primarily shared value preferences while a third group conceptualizes cultures as templates of human strategy, available templates for action. The type of study one wishes to conduct will determine whichever conceptualization one takes. The study of Nigeria – Saudi Arabia relations readily falls into the third category.

Hajj, for an example is a cultural matter; a popular culture, as ritual. Government involvement in its management puts an elitist stamp on it. Yet, the political culture and national style of Hajj operations differ in both Nigeria and Saudi Arabia. Through it each state expectedly pursues its national interest. As Quandt (1981) pointed out, the Islamic content of Saudi foreign policy is predominantly linked with Hajj. In the same vein, according to Gambari (2004), pilgrims are seen as ambassadors of Nigeria. The annual pilgrimage brings the two states into contact. The Hajj comprises domestic events both in Saudi Arabia (the arrivals, departures of pilgrims, the rites of Hajj etc.) and Nigeria (airlifting of pilgrims, processing of visas, exchange of foreign currencies etc.). These events bring forth issues like pilgrims' welfare, health standard etc. These domestic events and issues are however 'internationalized', especially since Hajj is not just between the two states; it involves hundreds of states in the international system (Oluwatoki, 2011). This internationalization of cultural templates therefore makes the discussion about what constitutes national interest an elusive venture; to be included in the discourse is individual (pilgrim's) interest and international interest (Oluwatoki, 2018; Bianchi, 2004). Just as Nigeria's national interest is at stake here, Saudi Arabia's national interest is affected. The former's image is tied to its reputation as effective protector of the welfare of its nationals; the latter's as host is entwined with its security and national survival. It is this linkage, Quandt's "special burden" that the Saudis have to carry every year in the course of the Hajj. After all, as Rosenau pointed out, no state is so self-sufficient that it can be immune to internationalization.

Gaenslen (1997) has argued that it is imperative not just to develop cultural explanations of politics but also to develop political explanations of culture. If done, the role of culture in the foreign policies of states would be easily determined. As Adefuye (1992) reiterated, as countries seek, through foreign policy, to promote and protect their interests in their international relations, these countries react to situations in the international system, guided by certain principles formulated during the process of the evolution of the country as a player on the international scene. Giving its near-millennium practice in Nigeria including official involvement in its operations even in pre-colonial and colonial periods, it can be claimed that Hajj became institutionalized in the course of the evolution of Nigeria as a state. Nigeria therefore handles this institutionalized cultural matter according to the principles of its foreign policy. Thus as a foreign policy issue, Hajj readily accentuates the role of the domestic factor in the formulation of foreign policy.

"People's worldview" – the way they perceive the world and consequently how they relate with it – is value-laden. Furthermore, an understanding of the motives for human and group behaviour is enhanced by an appreciation of a people's cultural values. Thus, Hudson has shown, culture, under specific conditions, does play pivotal role in national behaviour. Frankel (1963) also draws a distinction between objectives and principles of behaviour in the application of values which lead directly to political action when decision-makers adopt concrete objectives. Hence, according to him, the decision on how far to go in the effort to secure the values may be called the pitching of the level of

aspirations. This level differs, however with the psychology of the decision-makers whether individuals or groups, and with national character. Thus, in bilateral relations, distinct aspirations contend in distinct psychological environments of different decision makers.

Distinct from objectives, principles of behaviour are governed by what Frankel called the character of the individual or the national character of a nation. He gives the example of equality, which apart from being a value, can also be an objective in the sense that action will be taken to achieve it. Yet, it can be a principle of behaviour, which permits things to be left as they are but demands that if changes are undertaken, they should go rather towards than away from equality. In effect, the realization of specific objectives might be dependent on the decision-maker's principle of behaviour. In the same vein, the situation determines whether a particular value, say peace, constitutes a concrete objective (war situation) or a principle of behaviour (the wish to refrain from war).

If Nigeria's concrete objective as far as Hajj is concerned is to ensure the welfare of its pilgrims on the Holy Pilgrimage, it is its principle of behaviour to "take its time" in the course of achieving the objectives. It is also its principle of behaviour to be cool about other aspects of its relations with Saudi Arabia and it is its objective to retain its relations with this non-contiguous state. It is in this respect, Oluwatoki (2020, p. 61) contends, that "Nigeria's Hajj (Foreign) policy aims at getting its nationals to and from Hajj in Saudi Arabia, catering to their (consular and boarding) well-being, and avoiding national embarrassment."

Culture and foreign policy therefore serve the purpose of mutual state projection not only of the attitude of the state but also its image on the international scene. A good example of this fusion of the role of culture and foreign policy in the projection of the attitude and the image of the state as far as bilateral relations are concerned is vividly presented in Kostiner's (2005) analysis of Saudi Arabia's reliance on cooperation with Arab states to offset the 'delegitimizing' effect of its contacts (relations) with the United States. To Kostiner, playing the "Arab card", in the Palestinian, Iraqi or Islamic contexts, in Saudi eyes, was a means to prove that Riyadh was loyal to Arab and Islamic causes and not worthy of being a target of either terrorism or criticism. It follows then, that behind every foreign policy statement, behind every diplomatic move of a state are the cultural values, which the state as society has built into its political, economic, social and cultural institutions.

Hajj, the Muslim Holy pilgrimage (Qur'an 3, v. 96), is, arguably one of the means through which "great world religions teach that there is a higher moral law and a higher moral authority than the changing policies of any national state" (Deustch, 1989). In this respect, religion creates opportunities for the exercise of moral leadership, influence, and quite possibly power across states' frontiers. The Ka'aba, epicenter of Islamic worship and the Hajj rituals, is an anchor for Saudi Arabia's foreign policy. Since Islam is a source of legitimacy for the Saudi regime, Hajj holds a centripetal force stabilizing the many pulls of domestic and international demands. As the protector of the Holy Places of Islam in the Kingdom, the Saudi ruler can damage or enhance a key base of his legitimacy, in Nonneman's opinion, by his foreign policy.

Hajj most importantly falls into these restricted relations between Nigeria and Saudi Arabia. It is thus understandable that even though Saudi Arabia's relations with Nigeria are a league way below its relations with the US, a former Saudi Minister for Hajj, Hujjaj Baghini was credited with saying that there are two Ministries of Hajj in his country, one for Nigeria, one for the rest of the world (Opeloyeru, Diplomat, 40+, MFA Abuja, Personal Communication, 19/3/03 quoted in Oluwatoki, 2011).

This is no doubt in reference to the special attention that Saudi authorities have always had to pay to Nigeria to cater for lapses in its Hajj management. It accentuates Saudi Arabia's magnanimity in accommodating Nigeria's inadequacy; an acknowledgement of Nigeria's importance as a regional power with large Muslim population as well as a justifiable call for the recognition of Saudi Arabia as a good host. Culture definitely qualifies to serve as a scorecard for effective foreign policy !

CONCLUSION

The paper has explored the intricate relations between foreign policy and culture especially as they manifest in Saudi Arabia's external relations with particular reference to Nigeria and the USA. The simple and yet complex meanings of culture add to the further complexity of its relationship with foreign policy. Just as culture serves as a people's identity and the decision makers are part of the domestic environment, the politician that projects his state's objectives to the international system tries to influence the foreign policy elites of other state(s) even when they might not share strictly identical cultural experience.

While the USA and Saudi Arabia's relations center on strategic-economic mutual advantages, both Nigeria and Saudi Arabia, just like most states of the Global South concentrate their relations with the great powers, in this case, the United States of America. Hajj, a cultural template shared by both states writ large in Nigeria – Saudi Arabia relations. Yet, with the cultural variance between Saudi Arabia and the USA, they both find accommodation with their mutual needs and common interests. Yet, a lot of the issues involved in the larger Saudi – America relations still rub off in the restricted Nigeria – Saudi Arabia relations.

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