The Role of Africa Foreign Policy Practices in African Countries and its impact in the Kenya Foreign policy since 1963 to 2014

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 ABSTRACT: The African Foreign Policy has played a significant role in shaping social, political and economic space of African countries and in particular in Kenyan through its involvement in Pan- Africanism, Nonalignment, peace building, economic empowerment and development, and social justice initiatives. Despite extensive historical accounts of the African Foreign Policy contributions to continental development, limited research has comprehensively analyzed its long-term contribution to specific countries such as Kenyan Foreign Policy from 1963 to 2014. This study sought to fill this gap by examining the Contribution of African policy to African Countries a Case study of Kenya 1963-2014. This was achieved by focusing on the following specific objective: Assessing he contribution of Africa foreign policy practices in African countries a case study of kenya 1963-2014.The study was guided by Diplomacy Theory, which provide analytical frameworks for understanding the contribution of the African Foreign Policy to African Countries a case of Kenya 1963-2014. The study used a case study research design was employed, allowing for an in-depth exploration of the contribution of African Foreign policy to African countries a case of Kenya 1963-2014. The study utilized qualitative methods, including interviews, observation, focus group discussions, and document analysis, to gather rich insights from ministry of Foreign Affairs leaders, beneficiaries of foreign –Policy led programs, and historical records. Sampling was purposive, targeting individuals who had direct experience of the Church's institution or interventions. Data was analyzed thematically to identify patterns and trends in the African Foreign Affairs in Kenya contributions to peace building, security, Pan -Africanism, and Economic development. The findings of this study will contribute to the broader discourse by highlighting how Africans Foreign Policy particularly the Kenyan Foreign Policy has played a pivotal role in addressing foreign Policy gaps in other African Counties.

Key Terms: Foreign policy refers to a set of principles, strategies, and actions adopted by a country or a government to interact with other countries and international actors (Eskenazi, 2015; Britannica, 2019). It encompasses a range of diplomatic, economic, and military activities aimed at safeguarding national interests, promoting international cooperation, and addressing global challenges

I.   INTRODUCTION

At independence in 1963, Kenya assumed control and management of its Foreign Policy setting the pace for active participation in regional and international affairs. Since then, Kenya's conduct of diplomacy has progressively evolved driven and guided primarily by the quest to promote and protect its national interests. Like other countries, the Foreign Policy orientation of Kenya has been determined by the realities both at the domestic and external environment. From the early years, Kenya's diplomacy has largely been influenced by its history as much as developments within country and beyond. At independence, Kenya undertook several initiatives and decisions that puts the country's position at the international system. This includes membership in the Organization of African Unity & the imperative to uphold the right to self-determination and support to end decolonization in Africa, which established Kenya's Pan-Africanist credentials. Africa's foreign policy practices have been shaped by a multitude of factors, including historical legacies, resource endowments, & global power dynamics. The continent's diverse nations have pursued varied approaches to international relations, reflecting their unique circumstances and national interests, but, some common themes and priorities have emerged, such as the pursuit of economic development, regional integration, and the promotion of peace & security.

II.   Pan-Africanism

African countries prioritize unity, solidarity, and cooperation among themselves to address common challenges and promote African interests. Pan-Africanism has been a driving force behind efforts to promote regional integration and cooperation among African nations (Wapmuk, 2021). The African Union (AU), established in 2002, is a manifestation of this ideology, aiming to foster political, economic, and socio-cultural integration among its member states (Wapmuk, 2021). The AU's agenda encompasses various initiatives, such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AFCFTA), which seeks to create a single continental market for goods and services, thereby enhancing intra-African trade and economic cooperation (World Bank, 2020). To add the AU's Agenda 2063 envisions a prosperous and integrated Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena (African Union, 2013). This Pan-African vision has influenced the foreign policies of many African countries, encouraging them to prioritize regional cooperation & present a united front on global issues. Pan-Africanism has also shaped Africa's foreign policy towards the African diaspora and the broader struggle against racism and colonialism (Chigozie, 2018). For instance, the African Renaissance, a concept championed by former South African President Thabo Mbeki, emphasized the need for African nations to reclaim their identity, embrace their cultural heritage, and assert their rightful place in the global community (Ahluwalia, 2002; Olifile Marumo & Chakale, 2018). This ideology has influenced South Africa's foreign policy, leading to its active role in supporting the anti-apartheid movement and advocating for the rights of Africans and people of African descent worldwide (Olifile Marumo & Chakale, 2018). Plus, countries like Ghana and Senegal have implemented policies to encourage the resettlement of African diaspora communities, promoting cultural exchange and strengthening ties with their kinfolk abroad (Tetteh, 2019).

III.   Non-Alignment

Non-alignment has been a prominent foreign policy practice among many African nations, particularly during the Cold War era. During the Cold War period, several African countries adopted a non-aligned stance, seeking to avoid direct alignment with either the Western or Eastern blocs led by the United States and the Soviet Union, respectively (Kofele-Kale, 1978). This approach was motivated by a desire to maintain independence, prevent external interference in domestic affairs, and pursue their own development agendas without being caught in the ideological and geopolitical rivalries of the superpowers. Notable examples include Tanzania under Julius Nyerere, who was a leading proponent of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), and Ghana under Kwame Nkrumah, who championed Pan-Africanism and advocated for African unity and self-determination (Shivji, 2012; Gerits, 2015). These countries played influential roles in the NAM, which provided a platform for developing nations to collectively voice their concerns and assert their interests on the global stage. Even in the post-Cold

War era, some African nations have continued to embrace non-alignment as a foreign policy principle, seeking to maintain strategic autonomy and diversify their international partnerships. For instance, South Africa has actively pursued a non-aligned stance, positioning itself as a bridge between the Global North and Global South (Hendricks & Majozi, 2021; Sidiropoulos, 2022). It has cultivated strong economic and political ties with both Western and emerging powers, such as China and Russia, while also playing a prominent role in multilateral organizations like BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa). Similarly, countries like Algeria and Egypt have maintained a degree of non-alignment (Willis, 2023; ECFA, 2023), seeking to balance their relationships with various global powers and prioritizing their national interests rather than aligning exclusively with any particular bloc or ideology.

IV. Sovereignty and Self-Determination

The pursuit of sovereignty and self-determination has been a central tenet of Africa's foreign policy since the wave of decolonization in the mid-20th century (Ojo, 1981). African nations sought to assert their independence, reject external interference, and establish their rightful place in the international arena. This stance was exemplified by leaders such as Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, who advocated for the complete political and economic emancipation of Africa, and Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, who championed the Arusha Declaration, which emphasized self-reliance and the rejection of neo-colonialism (Shivji, 2012; Kam Kah, 2016). These principles influenced the foreign policies of many newly independent African states, which sought to forge their own paths and resist attempts by former colonial powers or other external actors to exert undue influence over their affairs. In more recent times, the principles of sovereignty and self-determination have manifested in various ways, including the assertion of African solutions to African problems and the prioritization of continental interests. For example, the African Union (AU) has emphasized the importance of "African ownership" in addressing conflicts and security challenges on the continent, as reflected in initiatives like the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) (Dersso, 2012; European Court of Auditors, 2018). Countries like Nigeria, Kenya and South Africa have played prominent roles in peacekeeping and mediation efforts, seeking to resolve regional conflicts through African-led processes rather than relying solely on external interventions (Adetula, 2015; Allen, 2023). Additionally, the establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) represents a collective effort by African nations to promote intra-African trade and economic integration, further strengthening their economic sovereignty and reducing dependence on external markets.

V. Peace and Security

Peace and security have been major priorities in Africa's foreign policy practices, given the continent's history of conflicts and the recognition that stability is essential for development and prosperity. The African Union (AU) has placed a strong emphasis on promoting peace and security across the continent through various mechanisms and initiatives (Moolakkattu, 2014). The AU's Constitutive Act mandates the organization to intervene in cases of grave circumstances, such as war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity, reflecting a commitment to protecting civilian populations and preventing mass atrocities (Moolakkattu, 2014). The AU has deployed several peace support operations, including the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), which aimed to combat the terrorist group Al-Shabaab and support the Somali government's efforts to establish stability (Allen, 2023). Countries like Uganda, Kenya, and Ethiopia have contributed troops to AMISOM, demonstrating their commitment to regional security efforts (Williams, 2017).

Individual African nations have also played significant roles in conflict resolution and mediation efforts, both within their regions and beyond. For example, South Africa has actively engaged in peace diplomacy, leveraging its post-apartheid experience and moral authority to facilitate dialogue and negotiations in various conflicts (Wu, 2023). South Africa played a crucial role in mediating the political crisis in Lesotho in the late 1990s and the conflicts in Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo (Hendricks, 2020). Similarly, Nigeria has been a major contributor to United Nations peacekeeping missions and has played a vital role in addressing conflicts in West Africa, notably in Liberia and Sierra Leone, through the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) interventions (Jaye & Garuba, 2011; Dauda et al., 2017).

VI. Economic Development

Economic development has been a central pillar of Africa's foreign policy practices, as nations across the continent strive to attract investments, foster trade, and accelerate growth to improve the lives of their citizens. Many African countries have actively pursued economic diplomacy as a means of fostering development and achieving sustainable growth (Mudida, 2012). This has involved cultivating strategic partnerships with major economies and leveraging international trade agreements to access global markets. For instance, Ethiopia has positioned itself as an attractive destination for foreign direct investment, particularly in manufacturing, by offering incentives such as tax breaks and access to affordable labor (Muse & Mohd, 2021). The country has also negotiated preferential trade agreements with partners like the United States and the European Union, facilitating export opportunities for its products. Similarly, Morocco has actively courted foreign investment, especially in sectors like renewable energy and automotive manufacturing, while also seeking to strengthen economic ties with partners in Africa, Europe, and the Middle East (Penresa, 2024).

Regional economic integration has also been a key focus in Africa's pursuit of economic development. The establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) in 2018 represents a major milestone in this regard, aiming to create a single continental market for goods and services, facilitate intra-African trade, and promote industrial development (World Bank, 2020). Regional economic communities (RECs) like the East African Community (EAC), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) have also played crucial roles in fostering economic cooperation, harmonizing policies, and facilitating the movement of goods, services, and people within their respective regions (Gigineishvili et al., 2014; Akperan & Kayode, 2014; (Mkwizu & Monametsi, 2021).

VII. Kenya's Foreign Policy Practices

Kenya's Foreign Policy has since its inception showcased a disposition towards an Afro-Centric orientation that continues to influence the country's commitment to the East African Community (EAC) integration, the realization of Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want and continental integration as envisaged in the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

In 1972, Kenya achieved one of the milestones of its early diplomacy by securing to host the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) Headquarters in Nairobi. This established Kenya's special position in the United Nations as the only Headquarters in the Global South and inspired the country's desire to play a more active role within the international body & continues to inform the country's aspirations within the international community. Various developments at the internal situation have also influenced the evolution of Kenya's diplomacy. The successes the country has achieved through progress in its democratic process and the strengthening of its governance system that culminated in the Constitution of Kenya (2014), have particularly given Kenya a better standing in the international community and thus provided leverage in enhancing diplomatic relations.

The publication of Kenya's Foreign Policy in 2014, the first time since its independence, is a major achievement as it provides a reference document on the country's foreign relations. The Foreign Policy Booklet provides a broad framework on Kenya's foreign relations and diplomatic engagements within the contemporary global environment. The Policy outlines the evolution of Kenya's diplomacy since independence and informs on the strategic thrust in pursuit of Kenya's national interests. Observably, the overall objective of Kenya's Foreign Policy is derived from a common desire for a peaceful, united and prosperous country as embodied in Kenya's National Anthem, the Constitution of Kenya 2014, and Vision 2030, the country's development blueprint. In the recent past, the country's involvement with global debate on Sustainable Development have given Kenya leverage in building blocks for an enhanced role and contributions particularly emerging issues such as Climate Change, Oceans and Blue Economy and the quest for the reformation of international organizations to ensure equity and fair representation of all member states. In undertaking this renewed role at the global level, Kenya has established its credentials as a global champion for multilateralism and a proponent of as rule-based multilateral system. Furthermore, Kenya has assumed a lead role in the African Union's efforts to strengthen relations with the People of African Descent, the 6th Regional Constituency; under the framework of the Organization of African,

Caribbean and Pacific States. Kenya has also continued to expand its diplomatic footprints in all regions to cater for its growing strategic interests across the world. This is aimed at boosting foreign relations at the bilateral level through establishment of diplomatic relations with select countries and to meet the needs for the anticipated active participation in global affairs. The reflections of Kenya's increasing role and contributions at the global level and the country's growing diplomatic footprints form the basis for review of the country's Foreign Policy. Kenya has been a proponent of Pan-Africanism and regional integration, actively participating in initiatives that promote continental unity and cooperation (Chepkwony, 2013).

The country has played a key role in the East African Community (EAC), a regional intergovernmental organization that aims to foster economic, political, and social integration among its member states (Maurer et al., 2023). Kenya has also contributed significantly to peacekeeping efforts in Africa, exemplifying its commitment to peace and security on the continent. For instance, Kenya has contributed troops to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), aimed at combating the terrorist group Al-Shabaab and supporting the Somali government's efforts to establish stability (Williams, 2017). Furthermore, Kenya has embraced a nonaligned foreign policy stance, seeking to maintain strategic autonomy and cultivate diverse international partnerships (Okumu, 1973). While maintaining strong ties with traditional Western allies, Kenya has also strengthened its economic and diplomatic relations with emerging powers such as China and India (Moss, 2015).

VIII.   CONCLUSION

Africa's foreign policy practices are diverse and shaped by a range of factors. Pan-Africanism, non-alignment, sovereignty and self-determination, peace and security, and economic development are key themes that have influenced the continent's approach to international relations. The pursuit of regional integration, economic cooperation, and the promotion of peace and stability remain significant priorities for African nations. By navigating these practices, Africa aims to promote its interests, assert its identity, and contribute to global affairs in a meaningful way. This approach aligns with the principles of sovereignty and self-determination, as Kenya aims to chart its own course and prioritize its national interests. Additionally, economic development has been a central pillar of Kenya's foreign policy (Kenya Embassy, 2014), with the country actively pursuing foreign direct investment, promoting trade, and leveraging regional economic integration initiatives like the AFCFTA to access new markets and foster growth.

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