

CONCEPTIONS AND ORIGIN OF CAREER AND NON-CAREER DIPLOMATS IN NIGERIAN FOREIGN SERVICE: IMPLICATION FOR CAREER PRACTICE AND DEVELOPMENT



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ABSTRACT

This paper was an analysis of the concept of career and non-career diplomats as represented in the Nigerian Foreign Service. The issue of career and non-careerism in the appointment of heads of Nigerian missions abroad have been hotly debated in various fora. Thus, this paper attempted to give a clear-cut conceptions on the ideas surrounding the two opposing concepts in Foreign Service, as well as its origination and trends in the Nigerian Foreign Service from 1960 to 2015. This was to bring forth its implication for career practice and development in Nigeria's foreign affairs. This paper was based on secondary analysis of data, drawn from primary and secondary sources. The paper revealed that the concept of career diplomats in Nigeria's foreign mission is well spelt out in various Foreign Service regulations, compared to non-career diplomats that involves various positional antics. It further shows that appointment of both career and non-career diplomats in the Nigerian Foreign Service between 1960 and 2015 have been influenced by constitutional provisions, regime structure and political patronage. In addition, it was highlighted here that the implications of the dichotomies in the use of career and non-career diplomatic heads in Nigerian foreign missions are diverse with both negative and positive effects. The paper, therefore, concluded that non-career diplomats serve as "salts" or "creams" to Nigeria's diplomatic representations abroad. Thus, it was recommended that merit and

capability should be reconciled with political influence in the appointment of non-career diplomats for the headship of Nigerian missions abroad.

Keywords: *Career, Non-career, Diplomats, Foreign Service*

Introduction

Diplomacy is an ever green international practice that has passed through series of developmental phases. Its evolution and relevance are largely made manifest by the activities of distinctive personnel that practice it at both national and international fronts. Such personnel are collectively referred to as “diplomats” or “diplomatic agents”. According to the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, “peoples of all nations from ancient times have recognized the status of diplomatic agents” (United Nations Treaty Series, 2005). Hence, world over, sovereigns maintain diplomatic missions to foster better and peaceful bilateral and multilateral relationships. However, overtime there have been a sharp categorization of diplomatic agents into career and non-career diplomats, most especially in the headship of missions.

Strictly, diplomatic missions are carried out by different categories of Foreign Service staff, which include the heads of missions, administrative or executive staff, technical staff and service staff (United Nations Treaty Series, 2005). Among these categories of staff, the appointments of heads of missions have been the most hotly debated and politicized in the Nigerian foreign missions, most especially in a democratic order (Sesay & Owioye, 1993). Consequently, the term “diplomats” as represented in this paper is largely referring to heads of missions.

The Heads of Missions according to the Vienna Convention of 1961 are divided into three classes, namely:

- i. That of ambassadors or nuncios accredited to Heads of State, and other heads of mission of equivalent rank;
- ii. That of envoys, ministers and internuncios accredited to Heads of State;
- iii. That of chargés d'affaires accredited to Ministers for Foreign Affairs.

For this reason, using the term “ambassadors” to generally refer to all the heads of mission will not be adequate to cover all the classes that will be captured by the term “diplomats”. In addition, among Commonwealth countries heads of missions are addressed as “High Commissioners” as against “Ambassadors”.

However, by the provisions of the Vienna Convention, the ambassador or nuncios, is the diplomat with the highest rank; but, article 14(2) of the

Convention noted that “except as concerns precedence and etiquette, there shall be no differentiation between heads of mission by reason of their class”. This by extension is in conformity with the United Nations definition of a head of mission, as “the person charged by the sending State with the duty of acting in that capacity” (United Nations Treaty Series, 2005). In other words, anybody so appointed in that capacity by the state, through the internationally recognized processes, undertakes that duty and is accorded the necessary recognition to that effect, without prejudice.

Against this background, it is noteworthy that, the concept of career and non-career diplomats ascribed to Heads of Missions, as found in most Foreign Affairs Ministries have no clear cut definition in any international instrument regarding diplomatic relations (Attah, 2018). As such, the definition of career and non-career diplomats varies from country to country.

At the beginning of the history of Nigeria's Foreign Service administration, issues of career and non-career diplomats had little or no significant impact. However, in recent times, the issue is not just a debate, but it appears to be a kind of “contest” for occupational or professional defense. Meanwhile, these issues are not clearly understood in the common parlance, as most scholars or students of international relations call themselves “diplomats” (Attah 2018). This paper therefore examined the concepts of career and non-career diplomats, as conceived in the Nigerian context, as well as underscored trends in the appointment of non-career diplomats between 1960 and 2015 in order to identify its origin, as well as its implication on contemporary diplomatic practice and development.

Concept of Career Diplomats in the Nigerian Context

The first attempt to give Nigeria's diplomatic representation a career definition was at the floor of the Parliament in Lagos, on February 20, 1958, when the Prime Minister Tafawa Balewa noted that:

after independence, Nigeria will largely be judged by the quality of its representation overseas, its diplomatic service. It is easy to say that Nigeria should be represented by the best; it is rather more difficult to define what the best is. In determining the qualifications for the new service, government has these considerations in mind. First, the candidate should be well educated; second, he must be, or should be trained, to be, a civil servant divorced from politics and third, he must acquire proficiency in languages (cited in Chibundu 2003: 23)

The principles outlined here by Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa did not clearly make any distinction, between career and non-career diplomats, rather, emphasis was placed on education, civil service career and language proficiency. This therefore, to some extent suggests that the concept of career and non-career diplomats did not emanate from the onset of Nigeria's diplomatic history. Therefore, originally, what appears to be the major basis for career in the foreign mission was employment in the civil service, both at the federal and regional levels (Adeleke, 1986). This could be attributed to the fact that Nigerian diplomacy during the colonial period was completely conducted by the British government through the Governor-General on behalf and under the direction of the colonial office in London (Adeleke, 1986). In essence, British diplomats conducted diplomatic affairs of Nigeria under the colonial government both in formulation of policies and the actual diplomatic representations. Hence, immediately after Nigeria's independence, streamlining careerism in the foreign missions solely on the basis of employment in the Ministry of External Affairs will not be able to provide the required man power to man these newly emerged missions, hence, the involvement of knowledgeable Nigerians from all walks of life (Attah 2018).

Adebo (1988) commenting in this light, in a post-independence era, posited that, any person that will serve as Nigerian ambassador “has to be a man or woman of good education, which does not necessarily mean a graduate”. In his opinion “a graduate would be good if other things were equal. But other things are not always equal; there are graduates who have been very narrowly educated, knowing little outside their discipline or profession”(Adebo 1988:57). On this note he maintained that, “the candidate for diplomatic appointment has to have a fairly broad knowledge of public affairs”(Adebo 1988:57), which will serve as a good foundation to build on other practical experiences that will come in the course of doing the job. In terms of language proficiency, Adebo however, observed through the lines of the career diplomats, that “the Nigerian diplomat must know his English very well and continue to improve on it, so that by the time he or she reaches the rank of an ambassador, his or her proficiency in the language is unquestionable”(Adebo 1988:57).

From Adebo's later submission, career heads of missions could be seen as those diplomats who work with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs before their appointment as heads of missions. This explains the reason why most of the first cadet entrants into the Nigerian Foreign Service in the late 1950s were posted as heads of missions by 1970 when they had spent up to ten years in the ministry of foreign affairs(Adeleke, 1986). Nevertheless, narrating in a more

contemporary standpoint, Akpuru-Aja (2004) noted that Nigerian Ambassadors (heads of missions) are partly appointed from the pool of high ranking career diplomats who have spent some fifteen years and over as diplomats in various capacities at Ministry of Foreign Affairs headquarters and foreign missions.

Obviously, these underlining principles for the definition of careerism in the diplomatic service seem to be changing from time to time, since 1960. This could be observed in the light of the entry requirements, creation of cadres, and professional training in the Foreign Service, as well as the vacancies available for posting of heads of missions in accordance with federal character, which also influence promotions to the rank of an ambassador (Adeleke, 1986).

Nevertheless, based on present administrative set-ups, careerism in the foreign service of Nigeria is viewed from the number of years an officer puts in as a staff of Ministry of Foreign Affairs employed as a Foreign Service Officer (FSO) (Attah, 2018). The FSOs fall within what the Ministry of Foreign Affairs classified as “branch A” of the Foreign Service as against the “branch B” which is occupied by executive or administrative staff, who function mainly as “auxiliaries” in foreign missions. The FSOs by and large constitute the elite corps of the Foreign Service (Attah, 2018).

However, the questions that arise from here is the fact that, there are staff of specialized agencies or institutions responsible for the training of the FSOs, like the Nigeria Institute of International Affairs (NIIA), Nigeria Institute of Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS) and University scholars in international relations, international economics, history, diplomacy, languages and linguistic, who are not conceived as career diplomats during appointments of heads of missions. Perhaps, someone will begin to wonder if long experience in service and expertise are exempted as part of the core ingredients for the definition of careerism.

This notwithstanding, as far as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nigeria is concern, presently, the only classes of staff that can attain the rank of career heads of missions are the Foreign Service Officers (FSOs). Such FSO must have reached grade level fifteen in the service, which is the equivalent of an Assistant/Deputy Director approximately must have put in 25 years in service. Thus, other staff of the foreign missions are not considered for appointment as career heads of missions, due to the fact that, the FSOs are the ones solely responsible for diplomatic representations at the missions. In addition, the FSOs have been specifically trained in the Foreign Service Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to take-up the task of diplomatic

representations professionally (Attah, 2018). More so, most of the FSOs are believed to have put in reasonable number of years in various capacities of diplomatic representation in foreign missions and at home office, which accordingly, exposes them to intricacies of diplomatic protocols and practices. Furthermore, the high level of divisions of labor in the Foreign Service, do not permit non-FSOs to interface with any direct diplomatic representation. As such, executive or administrative, as well as technical staff of the foreign missions, cannot be considered in any way for career diplomatic heads of missions, no matter how many years they put in, in such service (Attah, 2018). In other words, career diplomats in the Nigerian context, are staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs directly employed as FSOs, who passed through the professional diplomatic academy and have rose through the ranks, to the level of an Assistant Director.

Conceptions on Non-Career Diplomats in the Nigerian Foreign Service

It is perhaps a statement of fact that throughout history, the skill set of a diplomat has been a search for a mixture of qualities. Against this backdrop, many modern political as well as diplomatic systems have enlisted technocrats, academics and other political and business figures as heads of missions; whose skills have been seen as appropriate for diplomacy (SAGE publication 2016). In some quarters, the entrance of these non-career diplomats has been vigorously contested, while in some other places it is widely welcomed. In the Nigerian context, Attah, (2018) identified three schools of thoughts in this regard; the first school of thought observed is the “efficiency advocates”, which believes that the presence of non-career diplomats in the Foreign Missions is no longer a veritable debate, instead, attention should be shifted to general competence. In the view of this school, efficiency in diplomacy is not domiciled in any particular occupational career, but generally on an individual's wealth of experience and level of intellectualism, as well as the ability to articulate timely and reasonably. The second school of thought is referred as the “professional defenders” which holds that non-career diplomats completely have no business in diplomatic representation under no guise, because they do not belong there and they are not trained to handle such responsibilities; while the last identified school of thought was tagged the “gray-diplomatists” This school advocates that the actual diplomatic headship should be largely left in the hands of experienced, advanced and well established non-career diplomats, especially in strategic missions, whereas the career diplomats provide them with technical support (Attah, 2018).

From the foregoing, the conceptualization on non-career diplomats in

Nigerian foreign missions is obviously characterized by many positional antics. For instance, non-career diplomats are conceived as “invaders” and “unsuccessful” politicians, who lost election bids by some observers which represent the first school of thought. To the proponent of this view, most politicians who did not win election but contributed in various ways during political campaigns often catch the attention of the President and political stalwarts, who reward such loyal party supporters with ambassadorial appointments (Akpuru Aja, 2004). In addition, it is argued that most “political figures” that the President deemed to be an obstacle in their party politics, are often sent abroad as ambassadors in order to get rid of them (Attah, 2018).

As such, non-career ambassadors are believed to be appointed mainly on the basis of political expediency rather than personal merit (Adeleke 1986). This, according to him, has done a lot of damage to Nigerian foreign missions, especially where the heads of missions exhibited gross incompetence. To this end, most career diplomats, expressed some reservations over the appointment of non-career diplomats, which he believes has contributed to demoralize competent career diplomats, who have worked with some of these non-career heads of missions (Attah, 2018); and has also created some kind of apprehension among career diplomats as “to their promotional prospects, since they all look forward to enjoying ambassadorial posting, at the apex of their career” (Adeleke 1986: 60). In other words, the appointment of non-career ambassadors often did not create room for promoting career diplomats to ambassadorial rank when they could not be deployed overseas as ambassadors.

Nonetheless, to Jolaoso (cited in Akpuru Aja, 2004), the concept of career or non-career diplomats has little or nothing to do with preparation that emanated from the class room or that of a long stay in Foreign Service. Thus, in his opinion, “many diplomats have achieved professional pre-eminence without such preparations” (p.6), as such, to him, “the best qualification for a diplomatic career is the gift of good health, a lot of good native sense, ability to adapt to any given environment, an inquiring mind and to get along with people” (Akpuru Aja, 2004:6). Against this background, Akpuru Aja, (2004) noted that reports reaching the Ministry of Foreign Affairs received from various Nigerian missions abroad of many erring diplomats often cut across career and non-career diplomats, which therefore suggest that formal training must be supplemented by personal ingenuity of the diplomat, irrespective of careerism or not (Oyolakin 1989). On this note, Attah, (2018) contend that in as much as it is a hard fact, non-career diplomatic heads of missions most often are the “creams” for the attainment of specific diplomatic objectives in certain designated grey areas and missions, as they bring their previous experiences in

private and public sectors and their connections within and outside Nigeria to bear on their new diplomatic task. In addition, non-career diplomats are more likely to have personal relationship with the President, which is an asset in the world of international relations.

Diplomacy as matter of reality, basically required diplomats that understand the national interest of their country, with soundness of mind and of course, with the required patriotic spirit to pursue those interests without any form of fear or intimidation (Deca 2016). Suffice to said that “having passed a tough foreign service exam, is no guarantee they (career diplomats) will be able to successfully promote the national interest or project a positive image of the nation on the world stage; there is room for limited number of political (appointees) whose special skills and qualifications make them valuable asset in dealing with the international community”(Farolan, 2011 cited in Attah, 2018). Therefore, efficiency cannot be streamlined under any heading, whether “career’ or “non-career”.

Instructively, against the erroneous believed that all the non-career diplomats are completely novice, most of the Nigerian non-career heads of missions have actively participated in international engagements before their nominations (Adebo 1988 and Attah, 2018). To this end, in the opinion of the “gray-diplomatists”, as far as there is need to ensure effective political, social and economic direction in Nigeria's missions abroad, the non-career diplomats would continue to dominate (Attah, 2018). This is in the sense that, foreign and domestic policies are intertwined. Therefore, it would be natural and safe for any government to feel more comfortable with its own political associates representing its views abroad, more than the career ambassador would (Owoeye 1993).

Meanwhile, in a conceptualized term, non-career heads of missions are usually political appointees, who are not employed directly under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as Foreign Service Officers (FSOs), but are drawn from the public or private sector, like university scholars, retired military officers, retired civil servants, politicians, technocrats, entrepreneurs and so on, to serve in foreign missions by personal recognition of the President or through nomination by those close to the President. From all indications, the common notion that non-career diplomats are basically politicians who failed to secure a win in an election or has contributed to election campaigns and are therefore rewarded with ambassadorial appointments is not a general case scenario. The basic stringent feature among the non-career diplomats is the fact that, they are all nominated and appointed based on political recognition but not necessarily that they are politicians (Attah, 2018).

Trends in the Appointment of Non-Career Diplomatic Heads of Missions in Nigerian Foreign Missions 1960-2015

Various Nigerian constitutions after independence placed the appointment of heads of missions (both career and non-career) directly under the heads of government, to be approved by the parliament. However, with the absence of the parliament during military regimes, appointments of heads of missions were only announced to the Supreme Military Council (SMC), for their information (Owoeye, 1993). All in all, such appointments are often characterized by political patronage or clientele as well as ethnic and sectional intrigues.

According to Owoeye (1993), during the First Republic, more than half of the heads of missions (ten out of thirteen) were political appointees. Section 148 of the Republican Constitution vested the power to appoint heads of missions on the President acting on the advice of the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister was required to consult the Federal Public Service Commission, but in practice this protocol was barely followed (Adeleke, 1986). However, the Prime Minister who had the plenary powers on foreign affairs appointed heads of missions. As a matter of fact, the first sets of heads of missions appointed to Nigerian Foreign Service were largely experienced civil and public servants with vast knowledge of world affairs, co-opted into the foreign affairs department. The first officer in this light was Alhaji Muhammad Ngileruma, who was recalled from retirement and appointed on contract as a Grade IV foreign affairs officer to head the Nigeria mission in Khartoum present day Sudan, before he was appointed the first Nigerian Permanent Representative to United Nations in New York (Adeleke, 1986).

However, the percentage of non-career heads of missions' vis-à-vis the career diplomats went down to 25 percent by the end of General Gowon's Military regime in 1975 (Owoeye, 1993). By 1970 Twelve out of the forty-seven heads of missions were non-career officers. This change in the ratio of appointments of the career and non-career diplomats between 1966 and 1975 is attributed to numerous factors. First, the oil boom in the early 1970s led to the expansion of Nigeria's foreign missions, thereby opening rooms for increase in the number of heads of missions. Secondly, staffing situation in the Ministry of External Affairs (as it were) also improved significantly within this period, with a lot of career officers putting reasonable years in the service. Thirdly, with the absence of partisan politics and the parliament, the military government of 1966, relied completely on the Ministry of External Affairs to foster Nigeria's international relations. Finally, the civil war crisis demanded for core international propaganda experts to respond swiftly to the

overwhelming international pressure from the secessionist's propaganda, thus, the government of the day sought for more career officers to assume Foreign Service duties (Adeleke, 1986; Owoeye, 1993 and Mahadi, 1988). In a recapitulation of the Nigerian Foreign Service under the Gowon's regime Ashiru (2009) maintained that his government carefully nurtured a service that was focused, articulate, dynamic and well-funded and that appointments were made on the basis of merit and resistance to inject many political appointees into the service.

However, this trend appeared to have changed after the exit of the Gowon led government, due to the civil service shakeups by the Murtala Muhammad military government in 1975 against civil servants, who were alleged to be unproductive, incompetent and corrupt. The purge brought an end to the career of many top civil servants, both within and outside the Foreign Service. As should be expected, the lot of career diplomats to be appointed heads of missions suffered a downward trend under the Murtala-Obasanjo regime. This was to the extent that the percentage of non-career to career heads of missions increased 45 percent and 55 percent (Owoeye, 1993).

Similarly, the Second Republic of 1979 experienced greater involvement of non-career diplomats in the Nigerian foreign missions. In spite of the new recruitments and entrances at the various levels in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the political appointees occupied the post of heads of missions equally with the career FSOs. Ambassadorial appointments were believed to have been used by the politicians of the Second Republic to extend their ethnic and state constituencies at the international scene, based on the spirit of the federal character as contained in the 1979 constitution (Owoeye, 1993). This is based on the fact that some states at the period of these nominations had no senior FSO in the Foreign Ministry to fill their quota. As such, restricting appointments of heads of missions on the basis of careerism might not afford many states opportunity to fill in their quota in the foreign missions. However, the extent to which these quota system based appointments prevail on merits has remained a subject of debate (Adibe 2017). Thus, as observed by Ogunbambi (1986: 167), this perhaps contributed to the reason why "the Senate which was empowered under the 1979 constitution to give its 'advice and consent' to nominees for Ambassadorial positions never even for once refused to confirm presidential nominees for such positions throughout the period of the Second Republic". Against this backdrop, the percentage of political to career Ambassadorial appointees moved to 50 percent (Owoeye, 1993). It is therefore not surprising that most commentators saw the second

republic as the watershed to the influx of non-career diplomats in the headship of Nigerian foreign missions(Oyelakin, 1989).

Prospects for increase in the percentage of career diplomats to head foreign missions was further truncated by the General Muhammad Buhari led military government that ousted the Second Republic in 1983. Federal civil service reforms initiated by this military government led to another purge of top high ranking officers. This was due to the fact that officers who had spent thirty-five years or more in the service were asked to retire whether or not they had attained the statutory prescribed retirement age of sixty years(Oyelakin, 1989). This was largely responsible for the retention of the 50 percent in the number of non-career heads of missions during that military administration as asserted in Owoeye (1993).

This trend however, did not change greatly, even after the August 27, 1985 palace coup that ushered in General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida as the head of state. The non-career heads of missions were still given a pride of place in Nigeria's mission abroad. Beside the initial purge in Federal Civil Service, other factors perhaps further facilitated the significant involvement of the non-career diplomats in the Nigerian foreign service during the Babangida led military government. For instance, the Babangida administration took a "democratic" posture, which to a reasonable extent enhanced political participation among the elites, most of whom were rewarded through ambassadorial posting (Attah, 2013).

Right from its inception, the administration tried to improve Nigeria's image and diplomacy, through quiet and shuttle diplomacy which apparently caught the admiration of most of the Nigerian elites. The Babangida administration on this note involved many of the political and technocratic elites in Nigeria's diplomacy, not just as heads of missions, but in other diplomatic capacities. At the Commonwealth, the administration facilitated the emergence of Chief Emeka Anyaoku as the organization's Secretary General. Nigeria also produced the President of OPEC at this time, and further ensured that Prof. Adebayo Adedeji, completed his tenure as the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission in Africa. More so, under the Babangida administration, Major-General Joseph Garba (rtd) emerged as the President of the 4th United Nations General Assembly session (Ugwukah and Michael 2010). Nevertheless, the annulment of June 12, 1993, election bartered the image of Nigeria in the international arena, which could not be remedied, even by the finest diplomat the world had ever known.

Chief Ernest Shonekan led Interim National Government did not depart completely from the trends on the ratio of appointment between career

and non-career ambassadors. It was more of an off-shoot of the Babangida's regime, as it was battling with issues of legitimacy, both at home and abroad (Chibundu 2003). However, the coming of General Sani Abacha in 1995 brought a dramatic twist on the trends and ratio of ambassadorial appointments between career officers and political appointees. Towards the beginning of his rule, General Abacha opted mainly for the services of career officers as his diplomatic envoys with the intention of using them to brighten and sustain good foreign relationships. Ambassador Babagana Kingibe was appointed as the Minister of Foreign Affairs in this right, and he handled Nigeria's foreign relation with high level of dexterity of quiet diplomacy, knowing the global perception of the country at this time (Ugwukah and Michael 2010). This apparently changed, when the regime discovered the displeasure of the western world towards his military government and of course dictatorship. General Abacha on this note resorted to appoint diplomatic "fighters" in his external affairs, with Tom Ikimi as the Foreign Affairs Minister, at the same time he used more of "ad hoc" political appointees as "emissaries" in his external relations. All these resulted to "crude" diplomatic representations, as Nigeria's diplomacy at this time became known, both in the academic and diplomatic parlance as, "area boy diplomacy" (Okogwu and Akpuru Aja 2004). As noted by Okpokpo (2000: 32);

Nigeria became a pariah state (under Gen. Abatcha) with whom none except compliant African countries talked to. It was at this time that experienced diplomatic advice would have saved Nigeria. None was given a chance; instead a select delegation of incredible, though famous Nigerians, was sent abroad to explain the unexplainable to the international community. One such delegations led by Chief Odumegwu Ojukwu visited Europe, but its failure was obvious.

Suffice to say that, more importantly to Nigeria's foreign affairs dilemma during Gen Sani Abatcha, the spokespersons for foreign policy were not clearly known. "Too many people spoke for Nigeria anyhow and anywhere. Such pronouncements were, at best, undiplomatic and conflicting. Diplomatic posting (was) being put at bay" (Akinterinwa, 1998:4). Manifestly, diplomatic doors of Nigeria were basically shot at this time. As such, many ambassadorial positions remained vacant and no diplomats were posted out during much part of Abacha's tenure of office. Even the few deployed diplomats in few foreign missions became highly apologetic to the military head of state, as should be expected (Akinterinwa, 1998).

After the sudden demise of General Sani Abacha, General Abdulsalami Abubakar took over as Nigeria's head of state in June 8, 1998. Having realized the old fashion nature of military administration round the world with the wave of democratizations and democracy, General Abdulsalami reviewed a lot of domestic policies centered around rule of law, protection of Individual's rights and freedom, by repealing numerous draconian laws enacted by his predecessor(Ashaver, 2014).

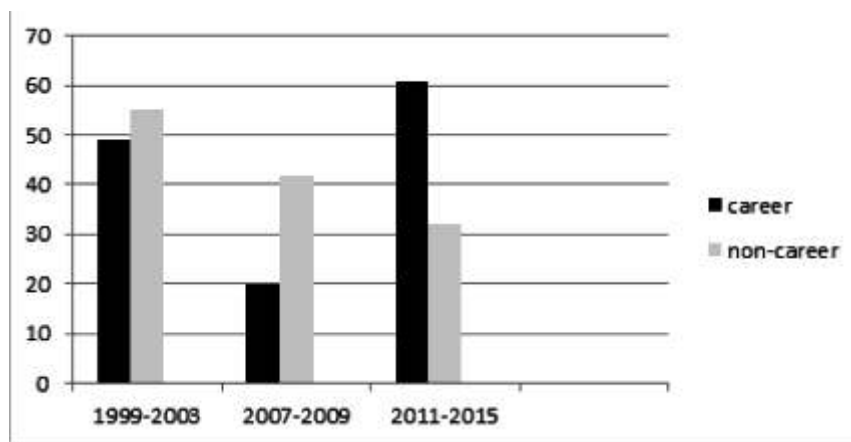
In view of the enormous task of mending diplomatic walls, mismanaged during the General Abacha era, “humble diplomacy” became not just the necessary diplomatic approach, but the only way out for the regime. This as a matter of fact fell appropriately to the skills and mannerism common among career diplomats, as Ambassador Ignatius Olistemeka, one of the foremost of Nigeria's Foreign Service officer, was appointed the Minister for Foreign Affairs (Chibundu 2003). In addition, with planned return to democratic rule, the politicians and many other Nigerian elites were mainly concerned with issues in respect to emerging political institutions, as well as electoral matters, like formation of political parties. To this effect, many career diplomats were used in the Nigerian missions abroad, than the non-career diplomats, the ratio was pegged at about 80:20. Nevertheless, the actual diplomatic representations at this time were carried out mainly by the Head of State and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, who toured round the globe advocating and soliciting for a “welcome back” of the “prodigal” Nigeria into the international folk. As such, the appointment of 41 new ambassadors took place only after the 1999 Presidential election. In announcing the appointment, the then Press Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. J.B Awe noted that the exercise was “designed as an integral part of the transition programme, meant to lift Nigeria out of international isolation and to continue the process of reconciliation with the outside world”(Town Crier, 1999).

To a large extent, these “humble diplomacy” paid off, as evident in the handing over ceremony of General Abdulsalami. An overwhelming 23 Presidents/heads of states and government as well as special envoys from about 110 countries witnessed the inauguration of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo as the Executive President and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in Abuja on May 29, 1999(Chibundu, 2003).

With the return to democratic rule in 1999, the leadership of Nigeria was under the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), who produced three Presidents until 2015, when political power was taken away from them, by the All Progressive Party (APC). Thus, between 1999 and 2015, the trends in the appointment of career and non-career diplomats have been almost within the

Conceptions and Origin of Career and Non-Career Diplomats in Nigerian Foreign Service:...

same proportion, considering the fact that party men and women of the PDP largely influenced the nominations. However, each of the Nigerian Presidents-Chief Olusegun Obasanjo (1999-2007), Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar Adua (2007-2009) and Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan (2009-2015), had showcased their personal discretions to this dichotomy, in nominations of diplomatic heads of missions (Attah, 2018).The table below is an illustration to show the appointment between career and non-career diplomats in Foreign Service between 1999 and 2015,



Ratio of Ambassadorial Appointments between Career and Non Career Diplomats in Nigerian Foreign Missions (1999-2015). (Source: Attah, 2018)

From the above diagram, it is obvious that non-career diplomats occupied significant ratio in the headship of Nigeria's missions until 2011, when President Jonathan made his first ambassadorial appointments. Between 2003 and 2007, ambassadorial appointments involved a lot of reappointments and rotations, and therefore the ratio was similar to that between 1999 and 2003 (Attah, 2018).

Implications of the Career and Non-career Dichotomy in Nigeria's Diplomat Practice and Development

According to Attah (2018) the implications of the dichotomies in the use of career and non-career diplomatic heads in Nigerian foreign missions are diverse. On one side are the negative effects, which include;

- i. Downturn of cost-benefit,
- ii. discouragement of professional morale,
- iii. service inefficiency;

- iv. lose of mentorship/tutorship;
- v. supremacy struggle (Attah, 2018).

Meanwhile, so many positive effects have been recorded as a result of the integration of non-career diplomats and career diplomats in Nigerian Foreign Service. Some of such positive outcomes include;

- i. result orientation;
- ii. fearless diplomatic discretion;
- iii. application of apt domestic contacts to achieve results;
- iv. improved welfare of retired ambassadors;
- v. improved public awareness on the importance of Nigerian foreign missions, are the positive effects (Attah, 2018).

Conclusion

From the foregoing, it is clear that the concept of career and non-career diplomats is purely an occupational cum administrative descriptions as enshrined by the Foreign Service rules. However, the constitutional prerogative powers of the head of government to appoint heads of Nigerian foreign mission, has interfaced with these rules in all ramification. Thus, in terms of the trends in the appointment of non-career diplomats, historical developments, like the Nigerian Civil War, June 12 annulment as well as regime structures- military, interim and civilian governments contributed in shaping the nature of the dichotomies between career and non-career diplomats in Nigeria's foreign missions between 1960 and 1999. These factors apparently explain the reason behind the fluctuating ratio between the appointment of career and non-career diplomats as heads of Nigerian missions abroad. Each head of governmental regimes in Nigeria between 1960 and 1999 appointed heads of missions (ambassadors) from among the career and non-career diplomats on the basis of circumstances and preference. On the other hand, between 1999 and 2015 political patronage and influence of politicians shaped the ratio of appointment between career and non-career diplomats.

It could also be inferred here that non-career diplomats serve as “salts” or “creams” to Nigeria's diplomatic representations abroad due to their diverse wealth of experience. This in other words, is a reaffirmation of the preposition that modern diplomacy is not predominately meant for traditional diplomats, but requires diversity of talents, that could be streamed from non-career diplomats. By extension, the outcome of this paper suggest that it is not enough to rely solely on pools of career FSOs in the appointment of Nigeria heads of missions abroad, rather, it should be extended to other individuals whose skills, contacts, and experience are assets to the practice of modern diplomacy.

Recommendations

From the foregoing, the following recommendations are forwarded;

- i. merit and capability should be reconciled with political influence in the appointment of non-career diplomats for the headship of Nigerian missions abroad;
- ii. career diplomats should wholeheartedly acknowledged and accept the relevance of non-career diplomats in Foreign Service.
- iii. Non-career diplomats should be posted in line with their career experience, in missions where specific national objectives like military, intelligent, educational, commercial etc interest will be met.

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