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Research article

Nigeria — South Africa Rivalry in Quest for Regional Power Status: from Material Potential to UN Security Council Membership

I. Omoruyi
University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria

S.O. Idahosa, M.M. Mugadam, O. Sidibe
RUDN University, Moscow, Russian Federation

Abstract. The paper explores the role and the power potential of Nigeria and South Africa with special attention to their comparatively high military, economic, political capabilities that enable them to shape and dominate regional agenda. It also analyses the internal, regional and external dynamics within Africa, particularly in Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and Southern African Development Community (SADC). The paper further thoroughly examines the hegemonic contest for the UN Security Council membership among the dominant African states through the lens of Ezulwini Consensus, as well as the Pan-African credentials of Nigeria and South Africa in accordance to their contribution to ensuring peace, stability and development on continental and sub-regional levels. Nigeria and South Africa are the most important actors on the African continent, but there are obvious constraints undermining their ability to play an effective regional role. Thus, the research was guided by the comparison case-study of Nigeria and South Africa in crucial for understanding power potential areas. The study concludes that although Pan-Africanism stands of Nigeria and South Africa are commendable, both powers mostly follow this strategy for advancing their national interests. Taking into account the whole set of internal and external factors, both countries need to unite their efforts and practical strategies to advance the common goal of Africa development, peace and security.

Key words: Africa, regional power, hegemon, Nigeria, South Africa, CINC, UN Security Council, Ezulwini Consensus, ECOWAS, SADC, African Union (AU)

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Научная статья

Соперничество Нигерии и ЮАР за статус региональной державы: от материального потенциала до членства в Совете Безопасности ООН

И. Оморуйи

Университет Бенина, Бенин-сити, Нигерия

С.О. Идахоса, М.М. Мугадам, О. Сидибе

Российский университет дружбы народов, Москва, Российская Федерация

В статье сопоставляются роль и потенциал Нигерии и Южной Африки, особенно их сравнительно высокие показатели в военной, экономической, политической сферах, что позволяет обоим государствам формировать и существенно воздействовать на региональную повестку. Авторы рассматривают внутреннюю и региональную динамику Африки преимущественно в рамках региональных интеграционных группировок Экономическое сообщество стран Западной Африки (ЭКОВАС) и Сообщество развития Юга Африки (САДК), а также воздействие внешних факторов на ситуацию в регионе. В работе оцениваются возможности и амбиции крупных африканских государств на членство в Совете Безопасности ООН в контексте общей африканской позиции, известной как «Консенсус Эзулвини», а также панафриканские инициативы Нигерии и Южной Африки в соответствии с их вкладом в обеспечение мира, стабильности и развития на континентальном и субрегиональном уровнях. Нигерия и Южная Африка являются наиболее важными акторами на Африканском континенте. Вместе с тем ведущие региональные державы сталкиваются с объективными ограничениями, подрывающими их потенциал и возможности в эффективной реализации своего лидерства. Исследование было проведено преимущественно на основе сравнительного анализа опыта Нигерии и Южной Африки, в частности показателей, ключевых для определения потенциала государств. В исследовании подчеркивается, что хотя панафриканские амбиции Нигерии и Южной Африки заслуживают одобрения, обе державы продвигают данную стратегию исходя из собственных национальных интересов. Учитывая внутренние и внешние факторы, обеим странам необходимо объединить свои усилия и практические стратегии для достижения общей цели развития, мира и безопасности в Африке.

Ключевые слова: Африка, региональная держава, гегемон, Нигерия, Южная Африка, CINC, Совет Безопасности ООН, «Консенсус Эзулвини», ЭКОВАС, САДК, Африканский союз (АС)

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Introduction

Starting off the regional power hierarchies and the regional security complex theory (RSCT), B. Buzan and O. de Waever clearly differentiate between superpowers and great powers, acting and having influence on the global (or system) level, and regional powers whose influence may be large in their respective regions but is not projected heavily at the global level [Buzan, Waever 2003]. A regional power is a state that projects its influence in a specific region. If this power capability is unrivaled in its region, the state could rise to the level of a regional hegemon. The regional powers display comparatively high military, economic, political, and ideological capabilities enabling them to shape their regional security agenda. Regional powers define the structure (polarity) of any regional security complex. Their power capabilities might be considerable, but they are restricted to the regional context [Nolte 2010].

The category of regional powers includes Brazil, Egypt, India, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey. Based on Buzan — Waever approach Nigeria and South Africa are also qualified as regional powers. But scholarly analysis of regional hegemony in Africa is characterized by contestation. This stems from the fact that no single state has sufficient power to be labelled an uncontestable hegemon on the continent, as there is no significant gap between the major powers' capability and influence [Adebajo 2008; Alden, Schoeman 2015; Prys 2010].

While Nigeria, South Africa, Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, and Kenya and to a lesser extent Angola, Ethiopia and Tanzania are cited as the major actors in Africa, most analysts agree that, to a large extent, Nigeria and South Africa fulfill the prerequisites to be regarded as a hegemon [Adebajo 2008; Alden, Le Pere 2009; Tella 2018].

South Africa and Nigeria are playing leading roles in the economy of the continent. Only two economic giants account for about one third of regional GDP, although conflicting economic and social relations often arise between them.

The emergence of regional powers that are expected to provide security, stability and other public goods in their respective regions identifies the following criteria that regional powers need to meet in order to play these roles [Nolte 2010: 890; Prys 2010]:

i. The internal dynamics of such a state should allow it to play a stabilizing and leading role in its region;

ii. Such a state should indicate and demonstrate its willingness, and, of course, also its capacity or ability, to assume the role of regional leader, stabilizer and, if not peacekeeper, or at least peacemaker;

iii. It should be acceptable to its neighbors — the members of the security complex in which it operates — as a leader responsible for regional security.

While broader or extra-regional acceptance is perhaps a necessary condition, it is not sufficient, even if supported and promoted by major world powers.

The issue of regional powers and regionalism is treated as IR top-agenda. Although the concept of regional power is frequently used, the defining characteristics and sources of regional power status, as well as its connections to the global power structure and security, lead to different perspectives and interpretations. Some experts offer outstanding interdisciplinary surveys revealing the pluralism and the richness of theoretical debates and relevant case studies [Börzel, Risse 2016; Söderbaum, Shaw 2003]. The regional power status stems from the ability to shape a region within which one may be great. There is also the interaction among self- and other-ascribed identity, structural position in the system, goals, behavior, and the ultimate impact on international processes. In assessing the factors that determine the sources of regional power status, one can conclude that solely building a military or economic power base does not suffice for the attainment of regional power status [Neumann 1992].

Comparison of Material Power

Nigeria and South Africa are arguably the most powerful and influential Sub-Saharan African states in terms of hard (material) power (see table 1) which is proven by comparison of Composite Index of National Capability (CINC) scores. The widely-used CINC index is based on the share (rate) of the country in global population (*TPR*), urban population (*UPR*), iron and steel production (*ISPR*), energy consumption (*ECR*), military expenditure (*MER*) and military personnel (*MPR*), which is calculated according to the formula (1), though the last update of CINC index was made for 2012:

$$CINC = \frac{TPR + UPR + ISPR + ECR + MER + MPR}{6}. \quad (1)$$

Table 1

Top 10 African Countries in Material Capacity[1]

Countries	% of global potential	% of AU potential
Egypt	0.99	12.8
Nigeria	0.91	11.2
South Africa	0.69	9.0
DR Congo	0.47	6.1
Algeria	0.42	5.4
Morocco	0.39	5.0
Ethiopia	0.38	5.0
Sudan	0.30	3.9
Angola	0.24	3.1
Eritrea	0.22	2.9

Source: Composite Index of National Capability (CINC) (v5.0) // The Correlate of War Projects. URL: https://correlatesofwar.org/data-sets/national-material-capabilities (accessed: 15.02.2020).

[1] Composite Index of National Capability (CINC) // The Correlate of War Projects. URL: https://correlatesofwar.org/data-sets/national-material-capabilities (accessed: 15.02.2020).

In Africa, Egypt has come to the forefront in terms of material potential, projecting its power mainly in North Africa. Nigeria, being dominant in the framework of ECOWAS and South Africa, projects power in the countries of South and East Africa [Degterev 2020: 164].

Our personal calculations of CINC for 2018 (see table 2) shows that the share of Nigeria in global potential increased during 6 years from 0.91 to 0.94 % while that of South Africa decreased from 0.69 to 0.61 %.

Nigeria largely dominates South Africa in military personal (118 thousand against 66), in total population (195 mln against 57 mln), as well as in urban population (98 mln against 38 mln), while South Africa maintains leadership in military expenditure (3.6 bln USD against 1.7 bln USD), in steel production and energy consumption.

Table 2

Nigeria and South Africa CINC Scores for 2018

Countries	MER	MPR	ISPR	ECR	TPR	UPR	CINC
Nigeria	1 746	118	100	7 135	195 875	98 611	0.009445
South Africa	3 678	66	6 327	197 130	57 398	38 087	0.006174

Source: calculated by the authors.

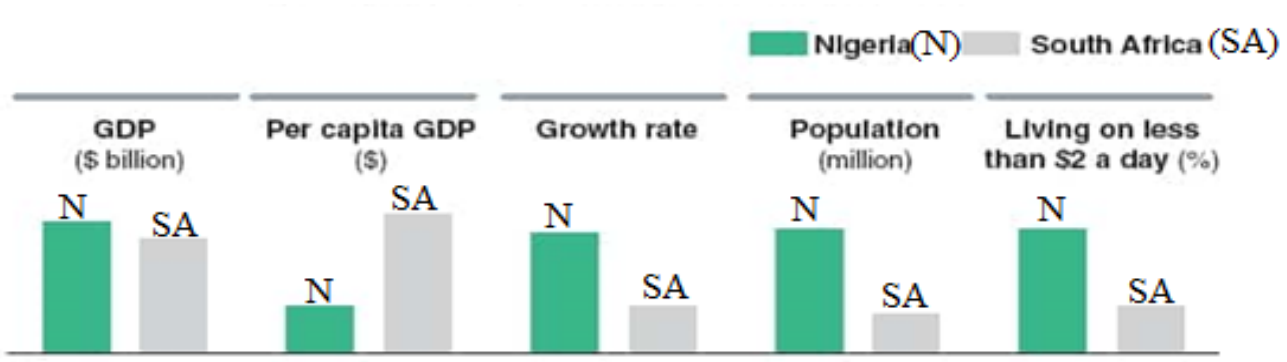

Fig. 1. Nigeria overtakes South Africa

Source: World Bank. URL: http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/307811542818500671/Global-Economic-Prospects-Jan-2019-Sub-Saharan-Africa-analysis.pdf (accessed: 13.02.2020).

Economic Power Rivalry

Nigeria and South Africa are the largest economies in Africa with a combined GDP of around 750 billion USD[2]. Nigeria with an estimated population of 202 million, the West African country boast of 376.284 billion USD in GDP, making Nigeria the highest GDP in Africa. While, South Africa with a GDP of 349.299 billion USD, is the second largest economy in the continent (Fig. 1).

Nigeria is a key regional player in West Africa [Omo-Ogbebor, Sanusi 2017], it accounts for about half of West Africa's population and one of the largest populations of youth in the world[3]. While Nigeria has made some progress in socio-economic terms in recent years, its human capital development remains weak due to under-investment and the country was only ranked 152 of 157 countries in the World Bank's 2018 Human Capital Index[4]. Inequality in terms of income and opportunities has been growing rapidly and has adversely affected poverty reduction. The North — South divide has

[2] Oyekunle O. The Largest Economies in Africa by GDP, 2019 // The African Exponent. February 6, 2020. URL: https://www.africanexponent.com/post/9786-top-six-countries-with-the-biggest-gdp-in-africa (accessed: 15.02.2020).

[3] Overview of Nigeria // The World Bank in Nigeria. 2019. URL: https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/nigeria/overview#1 (accessed: 15.02.2020).

[4] Human Capital Project // World Bank. URL: https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/human-capital (accessed: 15.02.2020).

widened in recent years due to the Boko Haram insurgency and a lack of economic development in the northern part of the country[5]. Nigeria is the first contributor of wealth creation in the ECOWAS region (75 % of regional GDP), but does not feature in the top performing countries on regional integration. At the same time Côte d'Ivoire, being the top performer on regional integration, represents only 6 % of regional GDP[6].

Over the years, Nigeria has been able to use its economic strength as a hard and soft power resource to project its power status, particularly within Africa. For instance, in 1975, at the peak of its economic recovery following a devastating civil war, Nigeria nudged other sub-regional states to establish ECOWAS. Then Nigerian leader, Yakubu Gowon, not only played a pivotal role, but also pledged that the country would be responsible for a full one-third of ECOWAS' financial needs. The unexpected oil boom of the 1970s, which brought about a buoyant economy, increased the impetus for Nigeria's rising continental prominence. The confident posture of its leadership clearly manifested in the leading role it played during the struggle to secure independence for Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Namibia and Zimbabwe, as well as the dismantling of apartheid in South Africa [Tella 2019].

Nigeria is the biggest oil exporter in Africa and has the largest reserve of natural gas on the continent. In the geopolitical realm, Nigeria's significance is intrinsically tied to its economic superiority and comparative economic advantage, particularly within the West and Central African subregions. In essence, Nigeria wields the financial power to assert influence on an international scale.

South Africa's economic strength is illustrated by the spread of its multinational companies across Africa. More than 150 South African companies are currently operating in Nigeria and Tanzania, and its banks, including the Absa Group, First National Bank, Nedbank and Standard Bank are visible in countries such as Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, Nigeria, Seychelles, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe [Ogunnubi, Tella 2017]. South African companies have thus penetrated African economies including those with large markets such as Nigeria and Tanzania. Economic strength has been critical to South Africa's pursuit of its foreign policy objective of providing aid and development assistance to fellow African countries. It has also engendered its promotion of a liberal economic order on the continent.

Nigeria and South Africa have both elevated their image with the unusual roles they have played in respect of economic development in Africa generally and their sub-regions in particular. Unavoidably in their pursuit of their national interests, their paths considerably intertwine as they both pursue regional power status on the African continent [Odubajo, Akinboye 2017].

Military Capabilities: Changing Roles

According to 2020 Global Fire Power (GFP) index, Nigeria is ranked 42 of 138 out of the countries considered and ranked 4 in Africa for the annual GFP review[7]. While, South Africa is ranked 29 of 138 out of the countries considered and ranked 3 in Africa for the annual GFP review[8].

Military expenditure in Nigeria increased in 2018 from 1621 mln USD in 2017. This was done to accommodate more funds to boost the country's expenditure on security to combat rising militancy and kidnapping[9]. Military

[5] Overview of Nigeria // The World Bank in Nigeria. 2019. URL: https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/nigeria/overview#1 (accessed: 15.02.2020).

[6] Africa Regional Integration Index // ECOWAS — Economic Community of West African States. URL: https://www.integrate-africa.org/rankings/regional-economic-communities/ecowas/ (accessed: 15.02.2020).

[7] Nigeria Military Strength // Global Fire Power. 2020. URL: https://www.globalfirepower.com/country-military-strength-detail.asp?country_id=nigeria (accessed: 15.02.2020).

[8] South Africa Military Strength // Global Fire Power. 2020. URL: https://www.globalfirepower.com/country-military-strength-detail.asp?country_id=south-africa (accessed: 15.02.2020).

[9] Ojekunle A. 5 countries with the biggest and smallest military budgets in Africa // Pulse. September 8, 2019.

expenditure in South Africa decreased in 2018 from 3639 mln USD in 2017. According to Trading Economics, global macro models and analysts' expectations in the long-term, the Nigeria military expenditure is projected to trend around 2 bln USD in 2020[10]. While the South Africa military expenditure is projected to trend around 3050 mln USD in 2020[11].

Currently, Nigeria lags behind other comparable countries in self-sufficiency in indigenous weapons production. For instance, South Africa through painstaking efforts and proper political polices has developed a world class defense industry[12]. South Africa has progressed from manufacturing of mere ammunition to combat helicopters, armored vehicles, and light combat aircraft[13].

More than 55 years after Nigeria's independence, the country should be able to boast of a flourishing industrial military complex able to manufacture sophisticated weapons as well as dual use of military equipment. The protracted war to defeat the dreaded Boko Haram terrorists exposes the flaw in lacking a viable indigenous defense industrial complex.

The above statistics on Nigeria and South Africa's military capability (Fig. 2) explains how their foreign policy behavior aligns with the consideration of the perceived acceptance by other actors.

Nigeria's economic strength has been vital to its acquisition of military hardware and projection of its soft power in the form of peace keeping and aid. Similarly, South Africa is the sole African country with the capacity to manufacture significant arms and ammunition and has been active in peace-making and peace keeping across Africa. The development of local defense industry was government's top priority since the establishment of democratic state in the 1990s, when Defense Related Industries White Paper was adopted[14]. Major actors of South Africa defense industry are Armscor and AMD. Armaments Corporation of South Africa Ltd (Armscor, Act 51 of 2003) is the officially appointed acquisition organization for the SA Department of Defence and of other government departments and public entities which promotes the local defense-related industry in its acquisition policy. AMD is the South African Aerospace, Maritime and Defence Industries Association which is focused primarily on representation in the South African as well as global markets[15].

African Eligibility for UN Elective Office Holdings

The two largest African economies, Nigeria and South Africa, are the leading contenders for the UN Security Council (SC) membership. But, were there to be a real prospect for an African permanent seat, other rivals would likely emerge[16]. However, African leaders have also held the UN General Assembly (UN GA) presidency on several occasions, such as Joseph

URL: https://www.pulse.ng/bi/politics/5-countries-with-the-biggest-and-smallest-military-budgets-in-africa/1q3lbm1 (accessed: 15.02.2020).

[10] Nigeria Military Expenditure. 1960–2018 Data, 2019–2020 Forecast // Trading Economics. URL: https://tradingeconomics.com/nigeria/military-expenditure (accessed: 15.02.2020).

[11] South Africa Military Expenditure. 1960–2018 Data, 2019–2020 Forecast // Trading Economics. URL: https://tradingeconomics.com/south-africa/military-expenditure (accessed: 15.02.2020).

[12] Lionel E. South African made weapons // Military Africa. November 28, 2017. URL: https://www.africanmilitaryblog.com/2017/11/here-are-some-of-south-african-made-weapons (accessed: 15.02.2020).

[13] Lionel E., Rooivalk D. South Africa's indigenous attack helicopter // Military Africa. January 5, 2018. URL: https://www.africanmilitaryblog.com/2018/01/denel-rooivalk-africas-indigenous-attack-helicopter (accessed: 15.02.2020).

[14] South African Defence Related Industries White Paper // South African Government. 1998. URL: https://www.gov.za/documents/south-african-defence-related-industries-white-paper (accessed: 15.02.2020).

[15] South African Defence Industry // Embassy of the Republic of South Africa to the Kingdom of Belgium. URL: http://www.southafrica.be/south-african-defence-industry/ (accessed: 15.02.2020).

[16] Campbell J. Global Peacekeeping Operations Overwhelmingly African and in Africa // Council on Foreign Relations. July 10, 2018. URL: https://www.cfr.org/blog/global-peacekeeping-operations-overwhelmingly-african-and-africa (accessed: 15.02.2020).

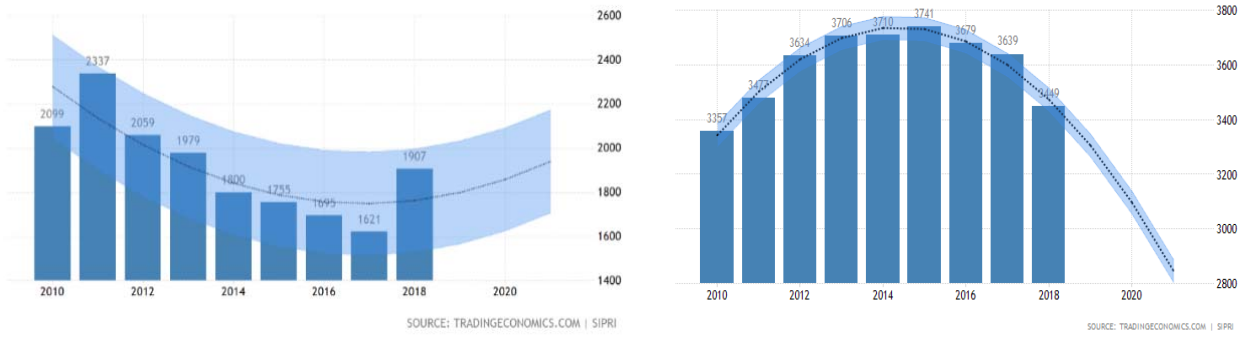

Fig. 2. South Africa (left) and Nigeria (right) Military Expenditure's Projection
Source: TradingEconomics.Com / SIPRI. URL: https://tradingeconomics.com/nigeria/military-expenditure; https://tradingeconomics.com/south-africa/military-expenditure (accessed: 03.02.2020).

N. Garba (Nigeria, 1978)[17], with the most recent four being Sam Kutesa (Uganda, 2014), Ali Abdussalam Treki (Libya, 2009), Jean Ping (Gabon, 2004) and Tijjani Muhammad-Bande (Nigeria, 2019 till date)[18], as well as Amina Mohammed — Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations (2017 till date)[19].

Africa has also produced two UN Secretary Generals, i.e. Boutros Boutros-Ghali (Egypt, 1992–1996) and Kofi Annan (Ghana, 1997–2006). In the 54-member Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the UN, Africa has been allocated 14 seats, further illustrating the continent's participation in and contribution to the UN [Tella 2019]. On a seat at the UN SC African Union members hope to redress through its call for reform and the adoption of its Common African Position (CAP) on African representation on the UN SC, the so-called *Ezulwini Consensus*. It was adopted by the AU in 2005 as he common position on the proposed reform of the United Nations, and advocates that Africa be fully represented in all UN organs, specifically the UN Security Council (SC): that is, that the continent should be granted no fewer than two permanent seats on the UN SC with all privileges, including veto power, and an additional five non-permanent member seats [Maseng, Lekaba 2014].

Although the Ezulwini Consensus indicates that the AU should be responsible for the selection of the African representatives on the UN SC, it is silent with regards to which African states should occupy the two permanent seats [Maseng, Lekaba 2014]. It is worth noting that there exists what can be called a region-based factor. During the nomination and election of the AU Commission chairperson in 2012, the continent voted along regional lines. This shows a regional division on the continent. South Africa received its overwhelming support from the South African Development Community (SADC) region, while Jean Ping, the Gabonese candidate, received his support from the ECOWAS region [Maseng 2013: 22]. To this effect, the hegemonic contest for UN SC seats between dominant African states such as South Africa and Nigeria becomes probable.

Hegemonic Contest for UN SC: 3 Criteria Revised

In order to evaluate the eligibility of Nigeria and South Africa for UN SC membership we will use three concrete criteria for comparison [Tella 2019: 44–45], two of them (1 & 2) were outlined in High-Level Panel Report[20]. They are:

[17] Joseph N. Garba — Elected President of the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly // UN. URL: https://www.un.org/en/ga/president/bios/bio44.shtml (accessed: 15.02.2020).

[18] Newly-elected Nigerian UN General Assembly President pledges focus on 'peace and prosperity' for most vulnerable // UN News. June 4, 2019. URL: https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/06/1039801 (accessed: 15.02.2020).

[19] Sanni K. Nigeria: Another Nigerian Gets Top UN Position // Premium Times. June, 2018. URL: https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/more-news/271499-another-nigerian-gets-top-un-position.html (accessed: 15.02.2020).

[20] A more secure world: Our shared responsibility. Report of the Secretary General's High-level Panel on threats, challenges and change. New York: United Nations, 2014.

— Criterion 1: in line with Article 23, among others participation in mandated peace operations, contributions to voluntary activities of the United Nations in the areas of security and development, and diplomatic activities in support of UN objectives and mandates;

— Criterion 2: bring into the decision-making process countries more representative of the broader membership, especially of the developing world;

— Criterion 3: Pan-African credentials of Nigeria and South Africa.

Criterion 1: Contributions to the UN and its Activities. Alex J. Bellamy and Paul D. Williams pointed out five reasons why states contribute to UN peacekeeping, these are: political, economic, security, institutional and normative reasons [Bellamy, Williams 2013]. Politically, peacekeeping contribution enhances the national status of the nation on the security issues or it can strengthen a country's bid for an elected seat in the UN Security Council. The security benefit would be due to the fact that usually peace operations being more likely to receive contributions from states in the immediate neighborhood or region than those further afield. Neighboring states are likely to contribute to contain armed conflicts that might affect them.

While earlier references were made to both states' contribution of troops to the UN missions, this criterion is assessed by evaluating the contributions of Nigeria and South Africa. It also evaluates the contribution of both states to Peace Support Operations (PSOs) mandated by the UNSC, as well as their voluntary mediation efforts.

Nigeria and South Africa have consistently projected their militaries in furthering the objectives of their regional bodies — ECOWAS and SADC — as well as those of the AU and the UN. As a result of these efforts, Nigeria and South Africa are ranked among the top contributing countries to UN missions.

Criterion 2: Broader Representation. Both, Nigeria and South Africa are indeed part of the developing world. With a population of more than 200 mln, Nigeria is by far the most populous country in Africa, leaving South Africa in the fifth place with less than 60 mln citizens. Nigerian scholars often use this fact to argue its permanent representation in the UN SC. Nigeria views herself as the most representative of the African continent and also the most populous black nation on earth [Akpotor, Agbebaku 2010: 53]. On the other hand, although South Africa's population is dominated by black Africans, with 79.4 %[21], it has the highest white population (approximately 9.2 %, 8.8 % colored and 2.6 % Indian or Asian) of all African states. Consequently, Nigeria critics argue that it should thus not be allowed to represent a largely black continent in the UN SC [Tella 2019].

While this may be true, the use of population in terms of national size or composition cannot be used as an accurate measure of who should represent Africa in the UN SC. In terms of population size, Nigeria outnumbers all other members of the P5, save the United States and China. Stepping away from using the population size as a criterion, W. Okumu suggests that "whichever country is chosen to represent Africa has to see itself as African first, and seek to promote the interests of the whole continent equally"[22].

In addition, South Africa has been rewarded with a number of leadership positions in and membership of international groupings such as the Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa (BRICS) grouping, IBSA, the Group of 20 (G20) and the UN SC; an instance of "symbolic representivity" as the international community views South Africa as being worthy to lead [Alden, Schoeman 2015: 241].

Although Nigeria has been gifted with groupings such as Organization of Islamic Cooperation [Kayaoglu 2015], UN SC, nevertheless, Nigeria still has an edge over South Africa considering her role in anti-colonialism across the continent. It is worth noting that as a newcomer, South Africa has done well to become one of the major role players in Africa.

[21] South Africa Population 2020 // World Population Review. URL: http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/south-africa-population/ (accessed: 15.03.2020).

[22] Okumu W. Africa and the UN Security Council permanent seats // Pambazuka News. April 28, 2005. URL: http://pambazuka.org/en/category/aumonitor/27913 (accessed: 15.02.2020).

Criterion 3: Pan-African Credentials. The pan-African credentials of Nigeria and South Africa can be assessed in accordance to their contribution towards African peace, stability and development. Nigerian postcolonial administrations placed the liberation of Africa as the centerpiece of their foreign policies. This manifested in their vigorous fight for the decolonization of Africa and, in particular, the liberation of all people of Southern Africa. With its assistance to Angola, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Namibia and South Africa, Nigeria effectively made itself a frontline state even though it was not in the Southern African region [Akpotor, Agbebaku 2010: 54; Raimi 2016: 318].

Not only did Nigeria contribute immensely to the OAU's African Liberation Coordination Committee, but it also provided direct financial, material, military and moral support to the nationalist liberation movements in South Africa. As a result of its dedication and commitment towards dismantling apartheid in South Africa, Nigeria chaired the UN Anti-Apartheid Committee from the early 1970s until all apartheid laws were repealed in 1994 [Adebajo 2008]. While pursuing decolonization of the African continent, Nigeria also embarked on other programs such as the OAU-backed Lagos Plan of Action for the Development of Africa (1980–2000), aimed primarily at increasing Africa's self-sufficiency. Nigeria's role in conflict resolution in West Africa was evident in its operations in Liberia and Sierra Leone, where it not only contributed troops but also almost single-handedly funded the operations.

After the fall of apartheid in the 1990s, it was a foregone conclusion that a democratic South Africa would be a newcomer to African affairs. Even though virtually a newcomer to Africa's political landscape, South Africa's political clout has risen rapidly since the dawn of the democratic era, making her a major actor in the Southern African Development Community region, the continent and the globe. Amos notes that the Southern African Development Community has been the "most important priority of its foreign relations", illustrated by its "commitment to all spheres of the SADC agenda including political, social and economic wellbeing of the region..." [Amos 2010: 124]. With its readmission to world and African affairs, South Africa has pursued an "Africa-first" policy, indicated by diplomatic representation in 46 of Africa's 54 countries. Although it was not a founding member of the Organization of African Unity, South Africa played a key role in its transformation to the AU. South Africa has to varying degrees of success, and often at the request of the AU or the concerned parties, been requested to mediate in conflict situations in countries such as Burundi, the DR Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Lesotho and Zimbabwe, among others [Miti 2012].

O. Abegunrin notes that the Western powers look more favorably at South Africa than Nigeria since due to its all-races democratic institution [Abegunrin 2009: 32]. This preference for South Africa is proven by its invitation to join BRICS, a group of major emerging economies and the G20, in addition to the role already fulfilled in the UN [Alden, Schoeman 2015: 113].

Conclusion

Consequent upon the analysis above, the paper posits that, although both countries Pan-Africanism stands are commendable, they are mostly criticized for advancing first their national interests under the guise of Pan-Africanism by bullying some of their regional partners [Amos 2010: 127]. Nigeria and South Africa are arguably the most important states in Sub-Saharan Africa. However, there are constraints undermining their ability to play an effective regional role. In order to provide African development, peace and security both countries need to unite their efforts, plans and strategies.

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About the authors: *Omoruyi Ikponmwonsa* — Professor, Department of International Law, Faculty of Law, University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria (e-mail: ikponmwonsa.omoruyi@uniben.edu).
Idahosa Stephen Osaherumwen — Postgraduate Student, Department of Theory and History of International Relations, Peoples' Friendship University of Russia (RUDN University) (e-mail: idahosa8@gmail.com).
Mugadam Mahamat Mugadam — Postgraduate Student, Department of Political Analysis and Management, Peoples' Friendship University of Russia (RUDN University) (e-mail: mmougadammahamat@gmail.com).
Sidibé Oumar — Postgraduate Student, Department of Theory and History of International Relations, Peoples' Friendship University of Russia (RUDN University) (e-mail: omersidibe@gmail.com).

Сведения об авторах: *Оморуйи Икпонмвонса* — профессор, департамент международного права, факультет права, Университет Бенина, Бенин-Сити, Нигерия (e-mail: ikponmwonsa.omoruyi@uniben.edu).
Идахоса Стефан Осахерумвен — аспирант кафедры теории и истории международных отношений Российского университета дружбы народов (e-mail: idahosa8@gmail.com).
Мугадам Махамат Мугадам — аспирант кафедры политического анализа и управления Российского университета дружбы народов (e-mail: mmougadammahamat@gmail.com).
Сидибе Омар — аспирант кафедры теории и истории международных отношений Российского университета дружбы народов (e-mail: omersidibe@gmail.com).