

Nigeria Saudi Arabia Economic Diplomacy A Focus On The Hajj Operations 2005 – 2015

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Abstract: *This study examines the role of hajj in the dynamics of Nigeria - Saudi Arabia relations, which are hajj-driven and how the constant movement of pilgrims to and from Saudi Arabia intensifies the relations between the two states. Hajj remains the main issue around which Nigeria - Saudi Arabia relations revolve; Saudi Arabia and the Sudan were among the first states with which Nigeria established diplomatic relations (1961), hajj prepared the ground for a link between colonial Nigeria and emergent Saudi Arabia, meanwhile hajj holds a great potential for trade relations between the two countries culminating into enhanced economic diplomacy. This practice originated from hajj being the basis of the first diplomatic mission. The hajj has rubbed positively on the duo relations for enhanced South - South relations and is relevant to the global concern for terrorism, peace and security. The study demonstrates how the role of hajj in Nigeria - Saudi Arabia relations can opens a new vista in South - South relations. It shows how cultural events involving two or more states can draw them closer diplomatically; a further proof of the relevance of the cultural factor to the understanding of the foreign policies of states. The study further shows how Government's efforts to improve the condition of her citizens can be met by enhancing this economic relation. The study shows the failure of International Relations (IR) Theory to capture the realities of Third World International Relations, and the inadequacies of concepts such as sovereignty, alliance system and international order often taken for granted, but uses theories such as neo-functionalism, inter-governmentalism and globalism as bedrock upon which the study is built. Primary data for the study were collected through structured interviews with Foreign Affairs personnel, embassy officials, international relations scholars, Pilgrims Welfare Boards officials and selected people who have performed the hajj. Primary data were also collected through well-structured interviews from policy makers and stakeholders, hajj reports etc mainly from the archives. This data was complemented with data from books, journal articles and newspaper editorials on hajj operations. The method of data analysis was descriptive and qualitative using general deductions. The study recommends amongst other things the importance of discussing the hajj operations from its economic perspective in a bid to reinforce the narrative of the economic benefits inherent in the diplomatic relation.*

Keywords: *Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Economic, Diplomacy, Hajj Operations*

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I. Introduction

Certain watershed events in history have shaped and continue to shape the pattern and manner of relations between and amongst nations in the international system, such events range from the historic Westphalia Treaty of 1648, to the Vienna Convention and the establishment of the League of Nations and so forth. These events have the propensity of changing global affairs and have recorded tremendous success in the growing interdependence amongst nation-states. Partly, this is what has corroborated in bringing about the robust shades of diplomacy as a tool of interaction amongst nation-states, which is by far and wide driven by economic diplomacy which has shrunk the world and created space for collaboration between and amongst nations in the international system. This relationship has been enjoyed at state level, regional, continental and global scale. Nigeria has had its fair share of relations between her and other numerous countless countries including the kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It goes without gainsaying that on a continental level, Africans and Arabs have maintained contact through trade, pilgrimage, and scholarly exchange since before the arrival of Islam in sub-Saharan Africa. Beginning in the colonial era and accelerating after independence, however; technological, political, and economic changes increased the intensity and diversity of contacts between dwellers of the continents, Nigeria and the Arab world in particular. Especially after the 1950s, elite Nigerian Muslims studied at Islamic universities in Sudan, Egypt and Saudi Arabia, while hundreds of thousands of ordinary Nigerians performed the pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina. The Muslim pilgrimage (Hajj) is the observance of specific acts in places in and around the sacred city of Mecca in Arabia at the end of each Muslim year during the twelfth lunar month of *Zhul-Hajj*. The observances of hajj are based on the Holy Qur'an (2:196-203, 3:96-97, 22:26-30) and the *sunnah* (the practice of the Prophet Muhammad), (may the Peace and blessings

of Allah be upon him). They commemorate certain events in the lives of the Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham), his wife Hagar (Sarah) and their son Prophet Ismail (Ishmael), peace be upon them. The main object of the hajj, as in any other form of Islamic worship, is to create the spirit of submission to God and to nourish spiritual joy. The spirit of the hajj is the spirit of total sacrifice — of personal comforts, worldly pleasures, the acquisition of wealth, the companionship of relatives and friends, the vanities of dress and personal appearance, and of pride relating to birth, national origin, accomplishments, work, or social status. Along with the declaration of faith (*shahadatayn*), prayer (*salat*) five times a day, fasting (*sawm*) during the month of Ramadan, and alms (*zakat*), and making the pilgrimage at least once in a Muslim's lifetime completes the five fundamental personal obligations of the Muslim. The unity of place and time as well as its regular annual occurrence gives the rite of pilgrimage in Islam great religious importance especially among the West African Muslims (*Takari, sing, Tukrur Pl*) of which the Hausa stands out. Pilgrimage is among the Islamic institutions that made the most important contributions to the development of states already formed. The earliest recorded pilgrimage from West Africa is that of the Kanem Bornu *Mai*, King Dunama bin Umme of the Sayfawa dynasty. According to H. R. Palmer's *Diwan*(1926), *Mai* Dunama made the pilgrimage twice between 1098 and 1150 and died returning from a third journey. However, *Mai* Dunama may not have been the first pilgrim of the Sayfawa since the *Diwan* also tells us that his father, *Mai* Umme bin Abdel-Jalil (1058-1097), died in the land of Masr(Egypt) having intended or even accomplished a pilgrimage. The Islamic pilgrimage tradition continued to persist in the Sayfawa dynasty. The great scholar Muhammadu Bello who was also a son and lieutenant of the Islamic revolutionary, ShehuUsmanDanfodiyo, acknowledges the longstanding Islamic reputation of the Sayfawa in his book *Infaq*(translated 1957). According to Bello, the Sayfawas' ancient ancestors were good and devout Muslims who included many pilgrims. Among the eighteenth century *Mais* of Bornu there were three pilgrims—*Mai* Dunama bin Ali, *Mai* Hajj Hamdun bin Dunama, and *Mai* Muhammad bin Hajj Hamdun. It was probably immediately after the Muslim conquest of Northern Africa in the seventh century that the faith of Islam found its way across the great Sahara to West Africa. By the eleventh century early Arab sources record the conversion of some African chiefs to Islam. Remarkably, the earliest available records of pilgrimage also date back to the same period. From then onwards, a steady and continuous tradition of pilgrimage developed in West Africa, particularly in Nigeria. What however has not been critically analysed within the intellectual paradigm is the economic benefit that accrues from the hajj operation. Albeit the religious and cultural aspect of the hajj operation it goes without gainsaying that the hajj operation has a remarkable economic undertone associated with it that tends to be overwhelmed or out rightly discarded when the debate on the hajj operation is thrown to the board. The study therefore seeks to make an analytical x-ray of how the above painted relations could be of immense benefit to both countries and could in contemporary times solidify the diplomatic relations between Nigeria and the kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the study will try to make an intellectual discovery into how viable this economic diplomacy has been in the interest of both countries as the current status quo puts Saudi Arabia more on the benefitting side.

II. Materials and Methods

Research methodology simply refers to the method employed by researchers in collecting information or data. According to Sambo (2005) research is the active production of new ideas, new knowledge, and new technological application of research result. His contention is that modern knowledge requires modern method, which brought the relevance of research to any field of human endeavor. He concluded that research is the process of arriving at reliable solution to problems through planned and systematic collection, analysis and interpretation of data. Against this background, Osuala (1982) noted that research is the systematic inquiry aimed at providing information to solve problems. There are basically two methods of data collection; the primary and secondary method. The research utilizes the benefit of the two methods.

The primary methods were interview was conducted from amongst stakeholders in the area under study and the secondary methods were information is sourced from libraries, journal articles, internet, newspapers, magazines etc.

Theoretical Framework

Much as there is indeed failure on the part of International Relations (IR) Theory to capture the realities of 'Third World' International Relations, and the inadequacies of concepts such as sovereignty, alliance system and international order are often taken for granted, it is pertinent to note that the paper has drawn from a few existing theories of international relations to explore the topic of discussion even as it has adopted the theory of neo-functionalism as a bedrock upon which the study is built.

I Neo-functionalism

Neo-functionalism desires to explain the reason and process of state cooperation aimed at solving conflicts between each other and gradually giving up on national sovereignty. The theory had its base on the

assumption that the role of nation states would decrease, and did not see the state as single unified actor on the international stage (Ian Bache: 2011). This position is strengthened in the key features, expressing that the concept of the state is more complex and that the activities of interest groups and bureaucratic actors are not limited to the domestic political arena of the member states. Rather it was argued that interest groups with familiar ideologies and goals, but from different states would start to get together at a supranational level, which is called Transnationalism. The same cooperation-factor, though for state departments was described as Transgovernmentalism.

Further the importance of non-state-actors in international politics is a key feature of Neo-functionalism, referring to Multinational Corporations and the international organizations – with particular reference to the European Union which largely gave rise to the theory – which has a particular role in EU integration that according to the Neo-functionalist theory gets advanced through the process of spill-over (Ian Bache: 2011). The spill-over-process described in the Neo-functionalism is the theory's main point describing how regional integration evolves; In order to fulfil and satisfy one goal of integration it is necessary to take actions in another area, which then set other actions in motion. Within political spill-over it is meant that when one sector integrated, the interest groups usually lobbying on national level then switch to the new integrated supranational agency, which then encourages other interest groups to pressure their national access points to integrate as well. Cultivated spill-over describes the international organization with regional outlook such as the European Commission's unique position to manipulate domestic and international pressures on national governments through cultivating agreements with national interest groups to bring forward the process of integration (Ian Bache: 2011). Critique is pointed at the over-recognition of the spill-over process (Simon Hix: 2011). The theory assumes that integration will develop from one sector to another, but the evolving of integration from low politics to high politics, which is of great national interest – such as is the case with the Nigeria Saudi Arabia relations – is highly unrealistic as national governments would have to agree on a common interest, which in the eye of diversity seems to be unrealistic. Therefore the spill-over function should be looked upon with limits to different polity areas (Neil Fligstein: 2008).

III. Intergovernmentalism

This theory has its foundation on between-government cooperation, and declares the member states as the main actors in the organizations. It is those states' preferences and decisions that are primary and important and decisive when deciding on politics. The governments have a strong and autonomous position in this approach, and bargain intensively in order to get their interests followed in the regional or global policies (Simon Hix in Daniele Caramani: 2011). Within the prism of the theory of Intergovernmentalism; the national governments control the pace and nature of integration based on protecting and promoting their own national interests. When those national interests are of similar kind a closer integration is supported, but generally limited to some areas, as for example high sovereign sectors like national security and defense (Ian Bache: 2011).

Even though interest groups are able to perform influence on national government's policy making in low politics, like social and regional policies, they do not have the power to pressure governments to integrate, as those governments are independent decision-makers because of their legal sovereignty and political legitimacy. Further, national governments can with their decisions that are domestic driven, give directions to powerful interest groups to follow, instead of being pressured by those groups (Ian Bache: 2011). One point of criticism questions the theory's deposition that every country has fixed preferences on the shape and nature of the regional or global organization and further questions the assumption that the division of functions between the member states are in constant equilibrium, because it is argued that those preferences can change as the states position in the world-order is unfixed and can vary due to constant changes in the global context. Citizens, for example, demand further integration if it benefits them, and they refuse it if it degenerates their conditions (Neil Fligstein: 2008). Another point for further argumentation is the feature stating that governmental actions always follow national interests. Governments are constraint to work at international level, and with a shift in a nation's regime after elections, the new government officials may have different political ideologies and interests, but they are limited to follow the decisions the previous government has rendered, as they not always can be undone. In such a case the following of national interests is impeded (Neil Fligstein: 2008).

➤ Comparison of the Two Integration Theories

In the Intergovernmentalist approach to the international system (organizations) describes it as a political organization formed by nation-states in appreciation of their economic interdependence (Neil Fligstein: 2008). The role of the state is the main difference between the Neo-functionalism and the Intergovernmentalism: The nation-states are much stronger in the Intergovernmentalist theory, they form the leading figures in the integration process and are operating to bring their national interest to the supranational level (Simon Hix: 2011). Under the Neofunctionalist theory their role and influence is decreasing as integration increases. Here the states are not the only players on the international stage and they are willingly giving up more and more national

sovereignty over time by not restrictedly following only national interest, but actually cooperating to enhance the common interests for the regional alliance (Ian Bache: 2011).

The powerful role of the national governments is the leading string throughout the whole concept of the Intergovernmentalist theory as it gives the states the dominating power to decide upon the process of EU integration. The states decide in behalf of the national interests whether integration shall continue and involve further areas, or if the process should be stopped. According to the Intergovernmentalist theory national governments create limitations as to which policy areas the integration process may go, and thereby control and protect policy areas of special interest and work to avoid the jeopardy of the electoral power the governing party owns (Ian Bache: 2011). On the contrast the path of integration is described in the Neo-functionalism theory as state-independent spill-over process. This process, distinguishing from the Intergovernmentalist explanation, extends integration from one sector to another based on their connectedness and is stated to work like a powerful, semi-automatic progress that forces the less-influential-becoming national governments to follow the integration (Simon Hix: 2011; Ian Bache: 2011). This spill-over process that decides on the nature of integration can be driven by the strong and important role of non-state-actors, like interest groups, as they are described in the Neo-functionalism theory. Those interest groups have the power to put pressure on the national governments, influence government decisions, which outcome is reflected in the state's international activities and thereby strengthen the integration process caused by spillover (Ian Bache: 2011). Agreements on the supranational level are reached by interactions between international organizations and the constituencies the integration created, and all elite groups have the same equal weight and could outnumber each other to reach a consensus (Neil Fligstein: 2008). The Intergovernmentalist provides a somehow different image with far less powerful and less influential interest groups. There it is the reversed situation where the governments decide the directions for the interest groups, again positioning the nation-state as the main center, deciding on the others (Ian Bache: 2011).

IV. Globalization

Globalization certainly represents a mega phenomenon that is shaping today's trends. Its influence is the most visible in the sphere of diplomatic relations as in the case of the Nigerian Saudi Arabia diplomatic relations. There is no unique view of this process in international relations. Various schools of thought comprehend the process of international or diplomatic relations in accordance with their ideological positions. Then, crucial empirical trends of globalization should be taken into consideration. This should lead to some conclusions about appropriateness of this particular school of thought for analysing this complex phenomenon.

Theoretical Debate on Globalization

The theory of globalization today is a field of intensive and multidisciplinary debate. Attendees are numerous, and often opposing views of the mentioned phenomena. The efforts towards defining globalization most often highlight its individual aspects. Numerous definitions emphasize economic dimensions of globalization. Removing "artificial" barriers to flow of goods, services and factors of production on the world market (as the consequence of modern development of transport and communication means) is seen as a crucial channel of international integration. Thus, globalization is defined as integration on the basis of the project, which expands the role of markets on a global level (McMichael, 2000).

There are also definitions that emphasize other relevant dimensions of globalization – social, geographic, psychological and of course the globalist view of diplomacy and relations amongst state and non-state actors. Globalization in some quarters has been perceived or understood as a social process in which geographic obstacles to social and cultural arrangements lose importance and where people are becoming increasingly aware that they lose importance (Waters 1995). Another definition of globalization, as intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa, is well known (Giddens, 1990). Globalization is also defined as compression of the world and intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole (Robertson, 1992).

Even this small sample of definitions is sufficient to conclude that globalization is a complex phenomenon with multiple effects, which makes it hard to define. There are, in fact, three possibilities for understanding globalization (Mittelman, 2006). First, it can be seen as intensification of global flows of goods and production factors, facilitated by modern transportation and communication means. Globalization can also be defined as a compression of time and space in a way that events in one part of the world have instantaneous effects on distant locations. The third approach is to comprehend globalization as a historical structure of material power. Globalization represents historical transformation in the economy, politics and culture (Mittelman, 2006).

The driving force of globalization is certainly the progress of technology and the continual interdependence amongst nation states. They speed up the effects of globalization, and contribute to essential

transformation of the functioning of global systems. "International economy is no longer divided vertically to separate national economies, but involves a number of different levels or types of market activities, which spread horizontally over a wider area of virtual space - replacing physical geography of national borders with quasi geography of market structures, transaction costs and informational cyber space." (Jakšić, 1997)

The theory of globalization is a very propulsive area of research, but composed of contributions from many authors. Therefore, it is necessary to systematize sometimes quite heterogeneous understandings of globalization. Quite spread out, but, for the purposes of further consideration, an entirely appropriate classification of globalization theories differentiates three courses of analysis of this multidimensional phenomenon (Held, McGraw, 2007):

- Hyperglobalists
- Transformationalists
- Skeptics.

By hyperglobalists, globalization is viewed as a legitimate and irrepressible historical process, which leads to a world order based on the market and supranational institutions. Globalization presents a new era in the development of civilization, without precedent in the course of human history. This process is referred to as progressive and socially desirable. It is also stressed that the intensity and dynamics of current changes in the relations among states lead to changes in core framework of social action (Held, McGraw, 2007). Guided by the self-enforcing growth of global relations and technological progress, globalization inexorably destroys all previously established hierarchical structures. Multinational corporations concentrate vast resources, and become the main carriers of economic activity on a global level. This creates a global civilization in which states are integrated on the world level, multinational companies are becoming major actors in the economic process and international institutions substitute the role of national states. Multinational companies have fundamental influence on the economy and represent natural response to the "borderless" economy that is characterized by homogenous consumer tastes. These companies crowd out national models of economy as relevant units of economic activity (Ohmae, 1990).

Hyperglobalists conceive globalization as a process, which has the internal logic and predictable outcome, the global society based on a fully integrated system. In other words, all the variety of heterogeneous cultures withdraws in front of the unique social pattern and institutions derived from the radically liberal cultural framework. In this sense, a well-known assumption about the "end of history" is generated, which implies that the modern, global capitalism with liberal democracy as the political framework represents the last word of socio-economic evolution (Fukuyama, 1992).

The aforementioned approach has evident deterministic character. Globalization is seen as a kind of final stage in the spontaneous and self-enforcing process of creating a global society, as the most efficient model of society, which stops the further process of selection of types of socio-economic order, in which the relations amongst nation states is are the core of this configuration and this should be driven by diplomatic relations either at bilateral or multilateral level. It should also be mentioned that this reflection of globalization includes liberal-oriented authors such as Theodore Levitt, Thomas Friedman as well as protagonists of neoclassical economic theory – Sachs, Friedman and others. Moreover, all theories of socio-economic dynamics that conceptualize that process as a simple succession of phases, with the "optimal" final form of society as a social outcome, which stops further dynamics, can be considered as a part of the same intellectual tradition.

Transformationalists (Giddens, Scholte, Castells, Walerstein) are more moderate in terms of emphasis of ubiquity and linearity of the globalization process, as well as assessing of progressivism of its effects. But they do not accept skeptic thesis about globalization either. For them, the indisputable fundamental changes in the organization of society that globalization brings are the growing overall integration and acceleration of socioeconomic dynamics through "compression" of space and time. However, their approach is multidimensional, taking into account mechanisms of globalization other than economic ones. In this sense, a sociologist of modernism, Anthony Giddens, considers globalization as a phenomenon shaped by forces of "modern" capitalism: politics, military power and industrialism (Giddens, 1990). These forces are the sources of dimensions of globalization.

Four basic dimensions of globalization are world capitalist economy, system of national state, world military order and international division of labor. The specified dimensions of modernity have enabled western countries to become the leading force in the world. Spreading dimensions of modernity, according to Giddens, to all countries in the world is identified as the process of globalization. (Vuletić, 2001). However, another sociologist of modernity, Beck, believes that the unintended effects of modernity forces are global risk and the new global threat. In order to overcome the risks, as important dimension of reality, it is necessary to create institutions of democracy and cosmopolitan confidence. Without it, globalization represents only a facade for the game of imperialist powers (Vuletić, 2001).

There are also opinions that the liberal economic policy, which is inseparable from globalization, creates political backlash by groups whose interests are negatively affected. It is difficult to predict how much

and in what direction will this political backlash influence future developments in the global process (Heileiner, 2006).

Transformationalists take up much more moderate position in terms of progressivity and outcomes of globalization, when compared to hyperglobalists. Globalization is not linear-progressive in character, but represents a stream of capitalistic development, subject to cycles and probabilism. The underlying influence of globalization on socio-economic trends is not questioned, but its final effects are considered uncertain. In this sense, such an understanding of globalization is not deterministic. The third group of theoreticians, who expressed skepticism with regard to ubiquity of the process of globalization, is also characterized by the criticism towards globalization. In that sense they emphasize that the level of integration and openness of today's economy is not unprecedented. International trade and capital flows were more important relative to GDP in the pre-1914 period (the first wave of globalization) than in the contemporary economy (Hirst, Thompson, 2003). Also, instead of a destructible character of globalization in relation to the hierarchy and the nation-state, they emphasize the significant role of national economies in pursuing economic liberalization and promotion of cross border activity. The creation of regional blocks as the essential characteristic of the world economy offers argumentation that the world economy is less integrated than it was in the late nineteenth century (Held, McGraw, 2007). Within this direction of thought, assessments of the non-sustainability of the current unification of the world are also present, because it raises radical resistance within individual cultures, which in the end can lead to a conflict of civilizations (Huntington, 1999).

In short, skepticism is expressed both in terms of impacts of globalization and its ubiquity, as well as in terms of sustainability of unification influences which it produces. Another classification of globalization theories is also possible. It consists of three theoretical orientations (Miletić, 2007, p. 176):

- i structural
- ii conjunctural
- iii social-constructivist.

Structural explanations perceive globalization as a lawful process, inherent to socioeconomic dynamics. Globalization presents an understandable result of the development of society, led by the logic of technology and capital accumulation. Determinism present in this kind of approach is evident. Conjunctural explanation of globalization considers consequence of unification of techno-economic tendencies with specific historical conditions and policies, which determine its character. This approach deals with the cyclic character of globalization, the causes of its acceleration or slowdown in certain periods.

Social constructivist explanations are more interested in the origin of ideas about globalization, and the ways in which they became part of scientific and everyday discourse. By setting appropriate tendencies in the world systems and their classification under the concept of globalization, the process became socially and ideologically constructed. In this way, the idea of globalization itself becomes in a certain sense, through the influence on the awareness of actors, the initiator of the further process of global integration (Miletić, 2007). It can be concluded that each of the above explanations can lead us to make a resolve that the theory of globalization regardless of its pitfalls have the salient ingredients to propel integration amongst nations states as is with the case of Nigeria and Saudi Arabia and is therefore the most appropriate theory of international relations suitable for the topic under discussion given that it situates the discussion in proper context as the research work largely looks at not just any diplomatic relations but specifically the economic diplomatic relations between the kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Nigeria. The theory therefore fits into one of the main directions of contemporary theories of global relations.

Theme of the Study

Organized Hajj: The Pre-colonial Period

The history of organized pilgrimage caravans from Kano dates back to the early nineteenth century when caravans were regularly started from the city. According to the Kano Chronicle, the Islamization of Hausaland began in the middle of the fourteenth century by Malian wangara traders, Clarke (1971). Although Hausaland was by this period already on the route of pilgrims from the Western part of the Sudan, nevertheless available historical accounts do not suggest an interest in the pilgrimage among the Hausa rulers and governing class in contrast to the Mais of Bornu, Al-Naqar (1972).

The longstanding pilgrimage highway of Hausaland known as the Sudan route ran from the cities of Katsina and Kano through Air (Agades), the Fezzan and Aujila into Egypt or else across the Nile, Ajayi and Crowder (1971). The leader of a caravan was known as the madugu under whom intending pilgrims would congregate and travel, often on foot. In the pre-colonial period, there was little formal organization of travelling to hajj and the journey was usually undertaken at the discretion of private individual and groups. The organization was often informally assigned to the madugu who was usually an important personality such as a scholar, wealthy merchant or notable person who automatically assumed the status of the Amiral Hajj (Pilgrims' Leader). At the beginning of this century groups of pilgrims from the south, especially Yorubaland where the

Fulani jihad had established Islam in Ilorin and Oyo, traveled northwards to Kano or Bornu where they joined the caravan, Crowder (1968). An early English explorer, Barth, who came to Kano in 1857, estimated the city's population at 30,000 but added that the figure doubled during the main caravan season, Ajayi and Espie (1696).

The pilgrims usually visited the rulers in the capital cities of the lands through which they passed in order to solicit alms and "safe conduct"-- usually escorts, in case of clear danger, or a standard letter of introduction giving the name of the recipient and the seal of the issuer. However, formal visits to the rulers were not always necessary. In some cases, well-to-do volunteers played host to the passing pilgrims and ulama (Islamic scholars) offered 'du'a' (prayers) for safety.

Organized Hajj: The Colonial Period

The British colonial occupation of what is today Nigeria lasted effectively for a century: from 1861 until 1960 Stride and Ifeka (1971). The year 1906 marks the real beginning of British administration throughout Nigeria as the North was finally occupied in that year. The British, aware of the potentials of hajj in forging global solidarity among Muslims, wanted to curb the flow of pilgrims in order to protect their own interests in Nigeria. Rigid rules restricted the number of pilgrims while 'good conduct' was ensured through surveillance by escorts and at strategic posts along the pilgrimage land routes up to the Sudan. Colonial policy was to discourage contact among the various national segments of the Islamic community. Some of the measures introduced by the British colonial government were modern travel requirements such as passports, immigration control, health regulations and some payment of deposits for services in the holy land, *The Development of Islam in West Africa* (1984).

A positive aspect of these measures was the introduction of motorized trucks buses and, finally, aircraft. As the pilgrims' transportation facilities were improving to the point where a quick trip was possible, the British came to regard the pilgrimage as less threatening. New travel formalities, combined with modern travel facilities, brought revolutionary changes in hajj organization in Nigeria. As early as 1920, His Majesty, the Emir of Katsina Alhaji Muhammadu Dikko pioneered the Hajj by sea when he traveled aboard a British steam boat from Lagos through London and Cairo, Webster and Boahen (1967). His Majesty was followed in 1927 by the famous Kano businessman Alhaji Alhassan Dantata who traveled by the same means through Morocco and Egypt in company of fifteen persons after obtaining passports from the colonial Resident in Kano 17. In 1931 the Waziri of Kano, Muhammadu Gidado Dan Malam Mustapha traveled on the hajj by road along with selected family members 18. Sixteen years after his first journey by sea, the Emir of Katsina traveled by road along with a renowned Kano merchant Alhaji Ibrahim Ringim, who bought a light truck for the Hajj journey. He took along with him his son Alhaji Uba Ringim (then about 15) and his teacher Malam Shehu Usman and joined the Emir's entourage on a request by the Emir of Kano.

In 1937, the famous Emir of Kano, His Majesty Alhaji Abdullahi Bayero (Sarki Alhaji) traveled on the Hajj by road in the company of forty persons including family members. Two other Kano merchants, Alhaji Muhammadu Nagoda and Alhaji Haruna Kassim, who traveled in 1944 in a truck from Nagoda's fleet, followed his route. Alhaji Haruna Kassim was to become modern Nigeria's most prominent private pilgrimage travel agent.

Organized Hajj by Road

The first fully organized hajj journey by road undertaken by a group from Kano occurred in 1948 when three merchants, led by Alhaji Muhammadu Nagoda, provided lorries for the long trip to the Sudan (the terminus of the land route), charging each pilgrim 20 pounds, Paden (1986). The pilgrims then crossed the Red Sea to Jeddah by ship from the port of Suakin near Port Sudan. The journey usually lasted six months. The year 1948 was a turning point in hajj by road. That year Alhaji Mahmud Dantata (1922-1983), jointly with Alhaji Haruna Kassim and Alhaji Ibrahim Musa Gashash, established the West African Pilgrims Association (WAPA). Their aim was to facilitate pilgrimage travel by road and air. Buses and lorries were provided for the road journey that passed through Bornu to Chad and onto the Sudan Republic. Later, when air transport became more readily available, the WAPA established a new corporation, Hajj Air Limited, to handle hajj travel by air, Suleiman (1986). It is not certain which of the two: the Pilgrims Aid Society (PAS) of Kano or the WAPA / Hajj Air Limited pioneered the mass pilgrims transportation by air from Kano, but it is certain that the PAS obtained the approval of the colonial Resident in Kano to airlift pilgrims from Kano in a West African Airways Corporation (WAAC) aircraft. The Director civil aviation in Lagos, gave the approval for the airlift, Works (1976).

Organized Hajj by Air

The prosperous modern business of hajj by air went on side by side with the hajj by road option through the 1950's. However, hajj by road must have begun to decline by the end of the decade as air travel was becoming popular, safer, faster and cheaper. Perhaps hajj by air was given impetus partly by a recommendation

of Alhaji Ibrahim Dasuki who was stationed in Khartoum, Sudan (September, 1960-October, 1961) where he became aware of the considerable obstacles that intending Nigerian pilgrims encountered in the Sudan. Thus, during this period the overland route for the pilgrimage was discouraged in favor of the air route. Pilgrimage by air also received a boost in the late 1950's as Northern Nigerian leaders began to visit London more frequently for constitutional talks. It became possible to stop in Saudi Arabia on the way home to Nigeria for the hajj or the umrah (a shorter, voluntary visit to Mekkah that can occur at any time of the year, also referred to as the lesser hajj), Sufi (1993).

Direct Government Involvement in Hajj Affairs

During the budget session of the Federal House of Representatives in Lagos early in 1953, a member, Alhaji Abubakar Imam tabled a motion for the establishment of the 'Nigeria Office' in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia to cater for Nigerian pilgrims. The motion was accepted with minor amendment and Imam was asked to submit a proposal on its actualization. As the motion was motivated out of concern rather than personal experience, Alhaji Imam decided to perform the hajj himself that same year in order to study the real problems and report back. He departed Kano on 27th July 1953 in a plane chartered by the Nigerian Pilgrims' Aid Society Limited, which started operating in Kano in 1951. In September 1953, shortly after his return from the pilgrimage, Alhaji Imam recommended for the appointment of a pilgrims commissioner to accompany the pilgrims yearly; the establishment of a dispensary at the major pilgrims centres; the provision of accommodation for the pilgrims in Mecca and Medina; and the control of fees and charges that are indiscriminately imposed on the Nigerian pilgrims. He also recommended for the recognition and commendation of meritorious services rendered to the pilgrims by officials and volunteers in Nigeria and Saudi Arabia. All the recommendations were accepted in principle and for the purpose of implementation the Government appointed a three-man hajj delegation led by Alhaji Isa Kaita, a Northern Nigerian Regional minister. The delegation submitted a report on the pilgrimage to the Northern Regional and Federal Governments in 1954 when there were only about 300 to 400 official pilgrims from Nigeria each year. As he came face to face with the issues involved in the Hajj Operation, Alhaji Ahmadu Bello, the Sarkin Sokoto and the Premier of Northern Regional Government, became very interested in the hajj. In 1955 the Sarkin Sokoto led a four-man delegation to Saudi Arabia to personally investigate hajj conditions and to advise the Government.

The commission focused on several thorny operational problems such as the mutawwif (local guide) agency to be responsible for guiding Nigerian pilgrims in the holy land, the absence of accommodation for Nigerian pilgrims, the lack of medical facilities, and arrangements for reception at Jeddah's sea and air ports. Meanwhile, Alhaji Ibrahim Dasuki was assigned to Kano as a pilgrims' officer to assist Nigerian pilgrims at Kano airport on matters of hajj operations especially relating to passports, visas, customs and immigration formalities, health requirements and foreign exchange.

In 1958 the Federal Government of Nigeria became involved in the hajj operations. Its concern at this stage was the welfare of some 21,000 Nigerian pilgrims of uncertain diplomatic status in the Sudan as well as another 20,000 West Africans, mostly Nigerians, who were facing deportation from Saudi Arabia. Consequently, the federal government appointed a goodwill mission under the leadership of the Sarkin Sokoto to find ways of solving the problems of the Nigerian pilgrims in both the Sudan and Saudi Arabia. In this manner, the pilgrimage began to take on the characteristics of a high-level diplomatic delegation.

Earlier in the year the Northern Regional government had formed a partnership with the Kano-based businessman Alhaji Haruna Kassim to handle pilgrimage traffic. The company, Alharamaini Limited, provided cheap and dependable service to both land and air pilgrims. Following the recommendations of the goodwill mission, the Nigerian pilgrims' office in Jeddah was raised to a diplomatic status, a mutawwif fee was introduced and offices of Alharamaini Limited were established in the Sudan and Arabia. Alharamaini Ltd. was granted a license by the Northern Regional Travel Agency Licensing Board along with many rival agencies that sprang up in subsequent years, mostly in Kano. The agencies depended largely on chartered foreign airlines such as Sabena and British Caledonian. In 1965 the Ministry of Civil Aviation authorized Nigerian Airways to take over the airlift of pilgrims.

By 1960, the year of independence, the pilgrimage was not only a major event in the religious life of the Northern Region, especially Kano, a city that has been a pilgrim center for centuries. It was also becoming a major logistical exercise, with problems of fare structure, money handling, baggage allowances, foreign exchange and flight schedules. Statistics indicate that in 1956 only 2,483 Nigerians went on the pilgrimage. However, the numbers rose geometrically to 48,981 in 1973 and 106,000 in 1977. Refer to Table-1 for the official record of hajj pilgrims from 1979-1998. The practical arrangements became increasingly complex, but civil servants had acquired sufficient experience to handle them and to cope with new problems as they appeared.

The Northern Nigerian Regional Government set up its first Pilgrims Welfare Board in 1965, following the earlier example of the Western Region in 1958. The Board's duties were to collect hajj fares, to arrange

passports, to collect and issue tickets, to obtain visas, and to arrange for vaccination. When twelve states were created out of the four regions in 1967, most of them set up State Pilgrims Welfare Boards to carry out the same functions. For its part, the Federal Government created a section under the Ministry of External Affairs (now Foreign Affairs) known as the Nigerian Pilgrims Commission to serve as the link among the State Boards.

Concerned about the lack of preparation, both material and spiritual, of the average Nigerian pilgrim, the Northern Nigerian Regional Government set up a high commission in January, 1961 to report and advise on the religious aspect of the pilgrimage and on the problems of destitute Nigerians in the holy land. The commission investigated the conditions laid down in Islam concerning Muslims' obligations on the holy pilgrimage to Makkah. It paid particular attention to conditions effecting important groups such as people without sufficient funds for the journey, the insane, the blind, the sick and disabled, the very old and the very young, pregnant women and unaccompanied women.

The committee noted that "... people in the above categories suffer great hardship on the journey to Makkah; some of them constitute a grave social problem there and do great damage to the prestige of Nigeria ... , The Federal Government... intends to control the immigration of such people in the future." It also became clear to the government that the enormous responsibilities involved in the transportation of thousands of pilgrims annually and the provision of welfare services could not remain entirely in the hands of private travel agencies. The problem was one of working out a form of diplomatic representation during the transition period to independence, of effecting the arrangement with the Alharamaini Company and of considering the whole issue of pilgrimage as government concerned. It should be noted that, by now, both governmental (public) and non-governmental (private) organizations actively participated in various aspects of the hajj. The public sector however bore the bulk of the responsibilities for policy formulations and for the administrative and technical support necessary for the annual hajj operations.

Private pilgrims travel agencies continued to grow in number until they became beset with many problems, including absurd competition, exorbitant commissions to subagents that lowered profits, delays in airlifts, baggage losses and a poor attitude toward pilgrims' welfare. The private agencies that undertook most hajj arrangements on behalf of the intending pilgrims were also blamed for being unreliable and exploitative since their owners were primarily motivated by profit maximization. The public sector too was blamed for certain lapses regarding policy and technical support. Although governments at regional and federal levels realized the need for involvement in the important affairs of pilgrimage, no clear and comprehensive policy was formulated to guide hajj affairs. Kano State, the major pilgrims centre in Nigeria, nay in West Africa, made a modest attempt in 1968 to put in a controlled measure through an edict cited as the Travel Agencies (Control) Edict, 1968.

On the aspect of technical support, the then Nigerian Airport Authority (NAA) now Federal Airport Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) was blamed by the general public for the January, 22 1973 plane crash in which 180 returning Nigerian Pilgrims lost their lives when their Boeing 707 aircraft force landed at the Kano International Airport due to poor visibility as well as poor and inadequate landing aids.

The Nigerian Pilgrims Board (NPB), 1975-1989

In order to correct this situation, the Federal Government of Nigeria issued Decree No. 16 of 1975 establishing the first Nigerian Pilgrims Board to coordinate and control the annual pilgrimage to the holy land at the national level. There were several reasons for setting up the board. The number of pilgrims continued to grow as hajj travel became easy, affordable, and popular. It became clear to the government that the enormous responsibilities involved in the transportation of thousands of pilgrims annually and the provision of welfare services in a foreign country could not be left in the hands of private travel agents. The rise in standards of living and travel both locally and internationally necessitated more extensive and efficient services for pilgrims. Nonetheless, the private agencies showed little concern for pilgrims' comfort, welfare and moral guidance. Meanwhile, the government deepened its longstanding involvement in hajj operations through several important agencies such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nigerian Airways, the FAAN, the Customs Service, the Immigration Service, the Port Health Services, and the Central Bank. Consequently, there was a growing need to coordinate the activities of these various agencies with those of the Pilgrims Welfare Boards in the states. The hajj had developed to the point where it had acquired far-reaching implications not only for economic and welfare policies but also for national security and international relations.

The Nigerian Pilgrims Board that formally came into being in July 1975 was charged with many functions. It was responsible for coordinating the activities of the independent State Pilgrims Welfare Boards and for securing sufficient aircraft to transport pilgrims to and from Saudi Arabia. The NPB established and maintained pilgrims transit camps for accommodating and processing pilgrims. Medical personnel, welfare officers, pilgrims' guides and porters were provided to cater to the needs of the pilgrims. In addition, the federal Board had to arrange for the pilgrims' travel documents and foreign exchange while trying to maintain accurate statistical data on the Nigerian pilgrimage. The NPB had the responsibility of distributing the hajj seats allocated

by annual quotas that were approved by the President, see Table-3. It also set up the machinery for public education about the hajj including the dissemination of information to libraries and the mass media.

Although the board was authorized to supervise air transportation, it merely extended the monopoly over the supply of aircraft that Nigeria Airways had enjoyed since 1965. Naturally, setting up the NPB required the abolition of the private pilgrims' agencies and their replacement with state boards. The NPB also opened regional offices in seven cities —Kano, Lagos, Port Harcourt, Maiduguri, Sokoto, Kaduna, and Ilorin. Recently, additional offices were opened in Abuja and Katsina. These regional offices serve the host states and their neighbors by providing pilgrims with transit camps and processing centers and by serving as points of departure and arrival. The regional centers are supposed to coordinate the extensive operations of the state boards. The state boards screen and register intending pilgrims, collect fares, prepare travel documents, obtain foreign exchange allowances, draw up flight schedules with the centrally designated airline, and care for pilgrims' welfare from their departure until their return home.

If the private travel agencies deserve the credit for popularizing the hajj and contributing to the revival of the hajj tradition in Nigeria, the pilgrims welfare boards at the federal and state levels deserve the credit for standardizing and improving the hajj organization throughout the country. However, these institutional innovations have also created many new problems in their own right. In addition to suffering from the corruption and poor work ethic that plague the Nigerian public service in general, the NPB also struggled with a number of special difficulties. Because the board was under the purview of the Ministry of External Affairs (now Foreign Affairs), the board lacked the autonomy it required in order to discharge its responsibilities effectively. Moreover, the board's functions overlap with those of Nigeria Airways, which continued to enjoy the monopoly over the airlift of pilgrims that it acquired in 1965--ten years before the NPB was established.

Since 1978 the Federal Government has used annual quotas as part of its policy to restrict and control the number of Nigerian pilgrims. Ironically, this measure significantly boosted 'international pilgrimage' i.e. unofficial hajj traffic by private arrangements that were not under state control. Government restrictions also fueled several forms of criminal activity such as widespread bribery, corruption, favoritism, and black marketeering in the allocation of hajj seats to individual pilgrims. It is noteworthy that, despite all of the problems of hajj organization that arose prior to the NPB, there was never any thought of limiting the growth of pilgrimage in Nigeria when the hajj was in the hands of the private sector.

Demands to reduce the size of the Nigerian pilgrimage arose only after it became dominated by the state. Among the reasons advanced by Government for this action two were emphasized: to reduce drain of the Nigerian foreign reserves; to reduce the suffering of the Nigerian pilgrims by reducing their number. The fact that what remains of hajj organisation and operation in Nigeria today is the same as obtained in the years this policy was introduced i.e. 1978 means that the measures were either ineffective or not enforced.

For many years, organizing the hajj flight schedule has been a serious operational problem that seems to reflect managerial rather than technical shortcomings. Officials of both the airlines and the pilgrims' boards often appear incompetent in handling flight schedules and logistics. In general, hajj managers have inadequate incentives to develop a sense of administrative professionalism. They are discouraged by frequent interference from politically influential persons, by inadequate financing from the government budget, and by the ephemeral tenure of boards that are appointed and dissolved in quick succession as well as the unacceptable attitudes and behaviours of the pilgrims themselves.

The Nigerian Pilgrims Commission (NPC) 1989-1991

In a bid to distance itself from the mounting problems of pilgrimage affairs, the Federal Government of Nigeria promulgated Decree No. 6 of 1989 establishing the Nigerian Pilgrims Commission (NPC). The Decree repealed the Nigerian Pilgrims Board Act of 1975 and charged the new Commission with responsibilities for the general welfare of Muslims undertaking hajj or umrah. Setting up the Commission was a compromise between the two extremes of Government disengagement and direct control of hajj affairs. The decree clearly reflected the Government's intention to make the Commission autonomous. The NPC was authorized to charter aircraft by appointing the airline of its choice, thus doing away with the Nigeria Airways' monopoly. The Commission was also permitted to appoint its own staff, and for the first time, the hajj authority was empowered to initiate and establish a Hajj Savings Scheme to serve as a forerunner to interest-free banking (popularly known as Islamic Banking). In practice, however, the NPC's autonomy was narrowly circumscribed because powerful Government functionaries often interfered with its functions even in the choice of airline. Indeed, it was the collective decision of the Commission on January 17, 1991 against one such airline that led to the Commission's dissolution only one week later. In fact, the Government went ahead to appoint the same airline that the Commission had rejected only to plunge the country into a tragic disaster when one of the planes crashed in Jeddah and killed all the 500 Nigerian pilgrims on board who were on their way home.

The Directorate / Office of Pilgrims Affairs (DPA / OPA), 1991-The Present

In 1991, the Directorate of Pilgrims Affairs (DPA) was set up under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and in 1995 its functions were transferred to the Presidency under the ill-fated Task Force. Amid growing revelations of corrupt practices by its leaders, the Task Force was dissolved after Saudi Arabia imposed a total ban on Nigerian pilgrims in 1996 that included even Nigerians residing abroad. In 1997, a Sole Administrator was appointed to run the Office and it has remained under the Presidency throughout the military era.

Table-1: Official Nigerian Pilgrims Record 1979-1998 (By Air) Year	Pilgrims
1979	50,580
1980	66,370
1981	78,000
1982	49,849
1983	49,390
1984	19,503
1985	19,470
1986	19,468
1987	19,468
1988	17,552
1989	17,936
1990	9,358
1991	30,000
1992	20,108
1993	30,652
1994	54,889
1995	56,485
1996	5,417
1997	24,193
1998	18,371

Source: *Office of Pilgrims Affairs, Ministry Of Foreign Affairs, Abuja, Nigeria: 2001*

Table-2: Federal Government Allocation Of Hajj Seats In Nigeria By States (1978-1982) States	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	Total
Bauchi	2,000	2,000	3,500	3,750	1,914	13,164
Benue	500	500	1,000	1,000	488	3,488
Borno	4,000	4,000	4,500	4,500	3,413	20,413
Gongola	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,500	1,341	9,841
Kaduna	8,000	8,000	11,000	11,000	6,949	44,949
Kano	12,000	12,000	14,000	14,000	9,265	61,265
Kwara	2,500	2,500	4,500	4,500	2,196	16,196
Niger	2,000	2,000	2,500	2,600	1,537	10,637
Plateau	2,000	2,000	3,500	3,750	1,920	13,170
Sokoto	4,500	4,500	6,000	7,000	3,535	25,535
Anambra	250	250	250	200	200	1,150
Bendel	1,500	1,500	500	500	500	4,500
Cross Rivers	250	250	250	200	200	1,150
Imo	250	250	250	200	200	1,150
Lagos	3,500	3,500	4,500	4,000	2,316	17,816
Ogun	1,000	1,000	2,000	1,500	890	6,390
Ondo	500	500	500	400	341	2,241
Oyo	3,000	3,000	4,500	3,000	2,195	15,695
Rivers	250	250	250	200	200	1,150
Abuja	-	-	-	200	400	600
Totals	50,000	50,000	65,500	65,000	40,000	270,500

Source: *Nigerian Pilgrims Board: 2010*

V. Discussion and Analysis

From the foregoing it can be deduced that the hajj operations has a very significant place in both spiritual and cultural life of the citizens (Muslims) of Nigeria and the kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The research maintains however that the spiritual and economic benefits of the hajj operations are often intertwined but the conventional wisdom in making the analysis on hajj operations often tends to discard or neglect the economic importance of the pilgrimage therefore reducing it to a spiritual and cultural affair only. What should however be noted is the fact that verily the material undertone in this relation is glaring and must not be ignored on the contrary the tremendous benefit therein should be allowed to come to public knowledge thereby enhancing and deepening not just cultural relations but improving economic diplomatic ties between the both countries.

The imperativeness of this economic relation can be further consolidated if improved upon as has been revealed by our interaction with stakeholders in the hajj operations. We conducted a study using well-structured

interview were data was obtained directly from stakeholders as to the significance of the hajj operation to Nigeria – Saudi Arabia economic diplomacy. The response from our interview conducted with Eng. Umar Abdulrahman, the Executive Secretary of the Yola Pilgrimage board, Adamawa state revealed that the relations between Nigeria and the kingdom on hajj operations although has more inclination towards being spirituals due to the injunction of religious values adhered to by people of similar faith in both countries it also does not in any way invalidate the fact that there is an economic angle to it as the religious faith itself does not hinder some form of buying and selling in the course of performing the hajj operations, he further implied that at the moment the kingdom of Saudi Arabia stands to benefit more in the economic relations owing to the fact that we (Nigeria) have failed to identify the importance of this inherent economic benefits and key into it. He further opined that the relations between Nigeria and Saudi Arabia is one that is lopsided owing to the fact that billions of naira have been taken to the kingdom yearly as a result of the annual hajj operations and Nigeria only benefits meagrely from this relation which he believes ought to be reversed. He further revealed that the hajj operations must be seen from the light of its economic benefits so as to bolster the diplomatic ties between Nigeria and the kingdom of Saudi Arabia as it is believed that the number of those conducting the hajj operations will explode exponentially in the coming years and this will come with a lot of monetary exchange between the kingdom of Nigeria and Saudi Arabia. For example it has been revealed that the current hajj fare stands at between N800,000.00 to 1,380,000.00 besides this every pilgrim must carry at least \$1000 and feeding and accommodation cost in the Holy land not included, where we have a population of between 100,000 to 110,000 people and this startling figure will over the years explode, it is very pertinent at this point that Nigeria begins to key into this relation and devise a means of exploring the economic angle to the diplomatic ties between Nigeria and the kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

It has been observed that the issue of hajj operations and the relations between Nigeria and Saudi Arabia when brought to the fore has always been shrouded in emotions and sentiments rather than logic therefore the inherent benefits in this magnificent relation is often carried away in this emotional brouhaha mostly by misguided elements whose thoughts are galvanized by the reasoning that Nigeria will be ‘Islamised’, this in his view must be discarded and the truth brought to bear if Nigeria is to in any meaningful way benefit from the economic diplomacy with Saudi Arabia, government must as a matter of urgency make the hajj operations issue a national policy so as to enable Nigeria and Nigerians benefit from this relations.

VI. Conclusions

The paper tries to elucidate expressly the imperativeness of the hajj operations to Nigeria and Saudi Arabia economic diplomacy. It shows that Nigeria just like other countries of the world has had its fair share of diplomatic relations with other countries at bot state, regional, continental and global levels which were made possible by the very famous treaty of Westphalia of 1648. The paper goes further to tackle headlong the bone of contention of the discussion which is to x-ray within the academic context the relations between Nigeria and Saudi Arabia which most at times have often more than not being shrouded in sentiments, the paper tries to also reveal the fact that the conventional wisdom in analysing the issue of hajj operations which views it from an angle of being a cultural cum spiritual act alone is not necessarily correct owing to the fact that statistics have revealed that there is a tremendous and significant amount of material benefit that accrues from this operation one that is indeed enjoyed and reinforced by the religious doctrines and injunctions. It reveals that as a direct corollary of the current status quo and the perception of individuals about the issue at hand the hajj operation tends to favour the kingdom of Saudi Arabia alone at the expense of Nigeria because we have not explored the economic angle of the diplomatic relations.

VII. Recommendations

As it is traditional in every research endeavour, where problems are identified recommendations are advanced. In this case recommendations will be advanced as leeways and these recommendations are thus;

1. Recognizing the economic significance in the hajj operation: it is imperative that we begin to consider and reckon with the reality that the hajj operations are of immense and significant economic benefit to both Nigeria and the kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This is in direct contrast with the conventional analysis and narrative that the hajj operation is limited to the spiritual and cultural benefit alone.
2. Nigeria Saudi Arabia Foreign Policy: Government must re-strategize its foreign policy statements and actions towards the kingdom of Saudi Arabia in a bid to reinforce the bargain to favour Nigeria, particularly as it relates to the hajj operations which as we have stated can drive tremendous advantage towards Nigeria in terms of economic benefits.
3. Making Hajj operation a national policy: owing to its tremendous benefits to people of all divide it is important that government begins to consider the possibility of adopting a national policy statement that will make the hajj operations a matter of national interest as the country and her citizens stand to benefit

immensely from the relation, for example airlines that airlift pilgrims are not necessarily Muslim owned, so will the technology overtime required to get people to process their travel documents and so forth.

4. Deepening economic diplomatic relations: it is important to note at this juncture that Nigeria must reinforce the process of deepening ties and cooperation with the kingdom of Saudi Arabia in a bid to create for smooth relations and ease of access between the both countries, considering the economic viability of that cooperation or economic relations.

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