

HISTORICIZING THE GAMBIA'S POST-INDEPENDENCE POLITICO-ECONOMIC AND DIPLOMATIC DEVELOPMENT TRAVAILS, 1965 – 1994

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the political, economic and diplomatic travails of The Gambia during its formative years of nationhood from the time of independence in 1965 to the fall of first republic on July 22, 1994, following the military coup by Lieutenant Yahya Jammeh. This is with the view to ascertain how The Gambia's post-independence position the country to attain sustainable development. Thus, the paper revealed that the small but long and skinny geographical size and location of the country nearly separating Senegal into North and South with just 30 miles across its widest points and a very short coastline of 80 kilometres coupled with lack of natural resources' endowment except aquatic lives in its blue/ocean economy and soil for farming especially in groundnut among others contributed to political, economic and diplomatic challenges the country faced during this period. This challenge among others rationalizes why the country's chances on attaining sustainable development is slimmer. However, it contends that despite these setbacks, the country made some remarkable accomplishments ranging from peaceful and stable polity to sustained multiparty democracy for 29 years from 1965 to 1994. This is against the backdrop that its small population and territorial sizes are 'justifiable' excuses to impose one-party dictatorship as obtainable then in Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Tanzania, and Zambia among others. Similarly, unlike elsewhere in Africa where disagreements over inter-state boundaries precipitated wars, diplomatic rows over borders between the country and its only neighbor, Senegal, have always been resolved peacefully with both countries even merged once into a Senegambia confederation that collapsed after few years. This is notwithstanding occasional skirmishes between border forces of both countries leading to border closures. Hence, while relying on realist and regional integration theories, the paper sourced data from textbooks, journal articles and oral interview among other sources. Data were analyzed using historical method.

KEYWORDS: The Gambia, Sustainable Development, Democracy, Geography, Diplomatic Relations

INTRODUCTION

Historically contextualizing the many challenges in Gambia's post-independence era that are concomitant with the political, economic and diplomatic travails that the country faces do not only pose serious question as to whether sustainable development can be guaranteed for the country but if its independence can indeed, be inviolable without merger with Senegal. First, the country has very rich history that shows a huge disconnection between The Gambia before 1800 and modern Gambia as a sovereign state entity since 1965 when it gained independence from the British. Second, of the 54 independent countries in Africa at present, The Gambia is the sixth smallest in terms of landmass of 10, 380 km² after Seychelles (451 km²), Sao Tome and Principe (964km²), Mauritius (2,040 km²), Comoros (2, 235 km²) and Cape Verde (4, 033 km²), making it the smallest mainland country in Africa as a whole and second smallest country after Cape Verde in West Africa sub-region (www.worldatlas.com/articles/which-are-the-10-smallest-countries-of-africa-by-size.html (02 July, 2020)).

For example, according to the subsisting 2013 Population and Housing Census, the country is enumerated to have 1,857,181 people. Of this figure, while 913,755 constituting 49.2 per cent were males, 943,426 representing 50.8 per cent were females. Among the male population, 16.2 per cent were children under the age of five compared to 15.3 per cent of females in the same age-group. Over 3 per cent of the population was aged 65 years or older. The census revealed an increase in the population aged 15-24 years, from 19.0 per cent in 2003 to 21.4 per cent in 2013. There were more females in the age group 15-39 years than males (The Gambian Bureau of Statistics, GBoS, Report, 2013 online).

Paradoxically, despite its small demographic size, the country is ethnically fragmented into different groups that qualify it as a multi-ethnic society comprising of ethnic groups like the *Mandinka* (also known as Mandingo, Mende, Malinke, including Jahanka), *Fula* (also known as Fulbe Fulani, Peul, including Tukulur, Lorobo), *Wolof* (or Wollof), *Jola* (also known as Diola, including Karoninka), *Serahuli* (also known as Serahule, Sarakole and Soninke), *Serer* (or Serere), *Manjago* (also known as Manjack), *Bambara* and *Aku* (Weil, 1968;). Of these ethnic groups, the Mandinka are estimated to be 34% of the entire country's population making it the majority in the country. The Fula constitute around 24.1%; the Wolof (or Wollof), 14.8%; the Jola are around 10.5%; the Serahuli are estimated to be 8.2%; the Serer, 3.1%; the Manjago are around 1.9%; the Bambara, 1.3%; and the Aku, 0.5% (EASO, 2017: 16 – 17; Perfect, 2016: 283 – 284; and Juffermans and McGlynn, 2009: 333 – 334). The Mandinkas preponderate several communities of The Gambia including but not limited to the Kombo area (consisting of Sukuta/Sabiji, Brikama, Serekekunda etc.) while the Wolof and Aku constitute the majority in Banjul, country's capital (Nyang, 1977). Beyond its heterogeneity, population size, territorial compactness and the question of viability as independent state entity, the country has a mix of historical and colonial experiences like many West African countries.

When it was decided that the country would become independent, both advocates of greater African unity and promoters of economic integration quickly raised many questions about the viability of The Gambia considering its small size and the fact that it is nearly enveloped by its only coterminous neighbour, Senegal. For the promoters of economic integration, they claimed that such a small country as The Gambia was unviable as an economic unit and that attainable development and sustaining it in view of lack of mineral resource endowment would be an impossible of difficult task to accomplish. Thus, solution lies in a merger with the much bigger and resource-endowed Senegal. This in the opinion of

pro-economic integration of The Gambia with Senegal is not only the ideal thing to do but the most rational economic alternative (Church, 1966; Welch, 1966; Proctor, 1967; Robson, 1967; and Taal, 1970). Contrary to this, the sustainability of the country's independence and development by these authors is seriously questioned and doubted.

In particular, while it shares many similarities in terms of ethnic composition, cultural values and religious affinities, and historical links with many West African countries especially Senegal, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, and Mali, The Gambia, an Anglophone country, is surrounded by a Francophone Senegal. This promotes deep cultural ties that bound the two countries together. For instance, all the ethnic nationalities in The Gambia are almost represented in Senegal. The Mandinkas, Jolas/Karonikas, Fulas, Wolofs and Majangos, Serehules/Serers, and Bianukas among others that are found in the country are equally found in the neighbouring Senegal and other countries like Mali, Guinea-Bissau and Guinea within the Senegambia Area of West Africa. While Senegal, the only proximate neighbour and by extension, Mali and Guinea-Conakry, the non-proximate neighbours, are Francophone countries, Guinea-Bissau, a Lusophone (i.e., Portuguese-speaking) country, are all secondary neighbours with similar ethnic compositions as The Gambia. Thus, the country becomes an interesting study area for scholarly review more so that achieving sustainable development is a major issue they all face.

HISTORICIZING THE GAMBIA-SENEGAL RELATIONS

Historically, relationship between The Gambia and Senegal predates the period of their respective colonization by European colonialists - British for The Gambia and French for Senegal. Given the geographical contiguity between the two countries, it was the Anglo-French Boundary Summit held in Paris 1889 that creates the borderlines separating the two countries. However, these colonial demarcation lines continued to threaten the peaceful co-existence of both countries after independence. Although, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) (now, African Union, AU) in its First Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of States and Governments in Cairo, Egypt, in 1964, among other things, "solemnly declares that all member states pledge themselves to respect the existing borders on their attainment of national independence" (Touval, 1967: 102; Azaria, 2014: 184). Thus, based on this and perhaps, what the Gambian nationalists considered as their incompatibility in terms of colonial and ideological orientation with a Francophone Senegal, continued pressing for a separate sovereign country from authorities in Dakar, its perceived small size and seeming economic unviability including difficult chance of engendering sustainable development notwithstanding.

Nevertheless, Gambians understandably appreciate the importance of maintaining mutual relations with Senegal. For this reason, successive administrations (with exception of greater years of former President Yahya Jammeh in power) never relent in seeking for closer economic and trade cooperation with the Senegalese based on their countries' incontrovertible geographical proximity, commonality in religious beliefs and practices and cultural affinities. Thus, shortly two years after independence of The Gambia, there was a bilateral meeting with the Senegalese government in April 1967, between Prime Minister Dawda Jawara and President Leopold Senghor. Addressing The Gambian Parliament in Banjul, President Senghor expressed his frustration that amalgamation could not happen and lamented that small countries has no chance of survival. To him, "there is no place for mini-states like us and the future inevitably lies in large groupings" (Touval, 1967: 74 – 75).

Even though President Senghor did not get the desired amalgamation of the two countries, he was able to sign a treaty of association that brought in the Senegalo–Gambian Permanent Secretariat located in Banjul. Among other tasks, both sides mandated the Secretariat to facilitate discussions on the unsettled work of boundary demarcations, organize extra-ordinary sessions of the Interstate Ministerial Committee and other matters of bilateral interest to both countries (Bojang, 2014: 291 – 294).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This paper adopts a combination of *national power* (variant of realism) and *regional integration* theories to explain the bilateral relationship between the two countries and how sustained cooperation within the framework of integration would promote sustainable development individually and collectively. Believably, this will help to situate whether or not the political and economic travails of post-independence including lack of sustainable development in The Gambia can be found in the expressed fear that the country’s small size geographically and demographically makes it economically unviable and politically weak making it susceptible to both internal and external shocks.

Interestingly, national power approach is an offshoot of the dominant realist theory in the field of political science and international relations. It believes that the viability of roles and activities a particular state performs in domestic and foreign affairs is essentially rooted in the amount of power elements – both tangible and intangible – available to such state. Thus, national power elements comprises of the military power (in terms of number of personnel, its combatant readiness and available weaponry), the geographical size and location (with emphasis on expansiveness of land, water and air space sizes separated by natural barriers like waters, hills and forest, and access to major waters as against landlocked), and population size of citizens (with preference for its viability). Others are natural resources endowment, level of economic development, political leadership and leaders’ idiosyncrasies including, regime type among others. These tangible and intangible elements of national power confer greater degree of viability on state and its behaviour at home and abroad and make achieving sustainable development easier. This theory is rooted in the works of Thucydides, the chronicler of the Peloponnesian wars *circa* 420 BC. Later, works of Niccolo Machiavelli, Thomas Hobbes and Max Weber until the emergence of realist scholars like Hans Morgenthau and E. R. Carr in late 1930s and early 1940s contributed to it (Machiavelli, 1961; Morgenthau, 1985; Goldstein and Pevehouse, 2007; Usman, 2013; Usman, 2018; and Salaam and Usman, 2019).

On the other hand, advocates of regional integration believe that for a ‘disadvantaged’ state like The Gambia in estimations of national power, it is more advantageous to it and its perceived national interests to go into political and economic union with a more ‘advantaged’ state like Senegal for ‘protection’ and ‘viability’. Regional integration theorists like Ernst Haas (Haas, 1968) and others believe that “several factors such as geographical proximity, political and cultural amity, the desire to maintain peace and peaceful co-existence, the need to promote mutual development and capacity building etc., explain conditions that make nations to integrate” (Salaam and Usman, 2019: 635). This, as Martin Griffiths and Terry O’Callaghan have explained, is to improve the quality of domestic and global governance, streamline decision-making, and provide a basis for collective action (Griffiths and O’Callaghan, 2002: 156). Integration to form a somewhat federal political and economic union like the European Union (EU) becomes imperative especially where states are within close proximity with some mutually shared values and cultures. It is believed that integration effort is a key driver towards

sustainable development. On the African continent for example, such attraction has persuaded political leaders to go into voluntary economic and trade blocs like the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the New Partnership for Africa Development (NEPAD) among others at the regional and sub-regional levels. Hence, even though The Gambia and Senegal are incompatible in terms of colonial heritage they had gone into Senegambia confederation in 1982 before its eventual collapse in 1989 on the basis of mutually shared values and proximity.

However, anti-Gambia-Senegal integration forces within The Gambia have dismissed the enticement of promoters of federal union or confederacy between the two neighbours by asking few questions. First, they asked that if indeed big size of a country's human population and landmass are key determinant for its viability as national power theorists are insisting, why do countries like Israel in the Middle East, Singapore in Asia, Mauritius and Rwanda on the African continent, are transformed from 'disadvantaged states' that there were from the onset into powerful nations and economies at present? Second, while it is incontrovertible fact that resource endowments and other power elements are stimuli for state viability, why do many African states like Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo that are resourced endowed reveling in poverty and underdevelopment due to what scholar have describe as 'the Dutch disease' or 'resource curse', a situation where resource endowments cause more harms and poverty to the owners than blessings? The disconnection between resource endowment and their proper management and utilization by these countries' leaders makes many of them violent-prone as these resources become main triggers of circle of violent conflicts. Third, even though Senegal temptingly has geographical size, population and even market advantage over The Gambia, is the strategic location of the country in its heart almost dividing it neatly into two equal halves of north and south Senegal not strategic enough to leverage on in exerting considerable influence on the behaviour of this so-called giant? For one thing, while Senegal represents the mouth, The Gambia is the tongue. Even though the tongue is inside the mouth, neither the two can claim to be overlord on the other. Their relationship must at all times be symbiotic for their mutual interest. This exemplifies how The Gambia-Senegal relationship should be. Even though the mouth enclosed the tongue, both need to be in constant sync their constant disagreements notwithstanding. The two countries in their respective rights are strategic to each other enough to forge mutual and beneficial cooperation for the overall interest of their citizens. Finally, if economic viability of states is solely dependent on integration, why did Senegambia confederal arrangement collapse in the first place? Why did Britons and their government pursued until they exit the EU in a historic *Brexit* despite notable and celebrated accomplishments of Europe's regional body? To those opposing the idea of The Gambia-Senegal merger, after all, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR), Yugoslavia Federation, and Ethiopia and Eritrea union to mention these few, all fell apart.

EXAMINING POST-INDEPENDENCE TRAVAILS OF THE GAMBIA

Since attainment of independence as a sovereign nation from the British in 1965, The Gambia has witnessed several challenges in their socio-political, economic, security and diplomatic manifestations, which hinder sustainable development. While these challenges transcends up to the present time, the paper specifically focused on the period covering Dawda Jawara's administration from February 18, 1965 up to July 22, 1994, when his government was toppled in a military putsch led by Lieutenant Yahya Jammeh. Thus, specific area of focus here includes boundary dispute with

Senegal, external relations and diplomatic practices challenges with the country's external environment, multiparty democracy and socio-economic challenges among others.

The Gambia-Senegal Inter-Boundary Disputes

The immediate challenge that the newly independent country of The Gambia faced was boundary issue with Senegal. Thus, the two countries mutually took major steps to address these boundary issues. Part of the resolve was the meeting of the two Heads of States on April 19, 1967 in Bathurst (now Banjul) where they signed a treaty of association that instituted the Senegalo-Gambian Permanent Secretariat charged to further promote and expand areas of coordination and cooperation (UN, 1968). Other issues assigned to the Secretariat bothered on the tackling the intermittent border clashes between the two countries. For instance, in January 1971, Senegalese police and custom officers pursued a smuggler across the border into Bullock in The Gambia. Security forces of The Gambia arrested and took them to Banjul for detention after interrogation for cross border violation. In retaliation, the Senegalese forces abducted four villagers from Bullock. These two separate incidents heightened tension that could lead to open confrontation between the two sides until the United Nations' intervention stemmed the tide (Touray, 2000). This necessitated organizing the first Extra-Ordinary Session of Inter-State Ministerial Committee of Senegalo-Gambian Secretariat in Banjul on January 22, 1975, during which a treaty on the delimitation of maritime and land boundaries were signed and a joint committee established (Bojang, 2014: 11).

However, the joint Committee of experts had difficulties reaching an agreement as each party tried to guard its country's national interest and gave no concessions. The major point of contention was that the boundary followed a straight line off the coast of the Gambia then bend to follow a sweeping meander of the River Gambia at ten kilometres distance from the banks. This created a V-shaped boundary line at the maritime boundary. For The Gambian experts, they wanted the application of the median line principle (Boggs, 1937) that recommends negotiation for boundary cutting across the middle of the V-shaped boundary in a situation involving countries this one (Boggs, 1937; Bojang, 2014). On their part, the Senegalese opposed this principle because the Allahin River near Kartong in the Lower Gambia was a V-shape and will results in ceding a large portion of the maritime border to The Gambia (Bojang, 2014: 293).

Subsequently, the Joint Committee failed to achieve anything concrete as far as the maritime boundary was concerned, but made progress on land boundaries. Later in Banjul in 1976, the Committee the Summit advised the two Heads of State to review the boundaries of Kantora, a district at the eastern end of The Gambia as many border villagers in the district claimed citizenship of both countries. The Joint Committee revisited Kantora to determine the status of citizenship of frontline villages. The criteria used was to determine which side of the border the villagers' socio-economic interest fell such as the side they go for daily markets, education and health services. Hence, The Gambia got twenty-six of the disputed villages and Senegal got two (Archive No. HSC/7/77). Further to the agreed treaty in providing permanent settlement to boundary disputes created during colonial period, the Foreign Ministers of both countries met in December 1978 to ratify, among other things, the following resolutions the work of the Committee of Experts on the disputed villages in Kantora District.

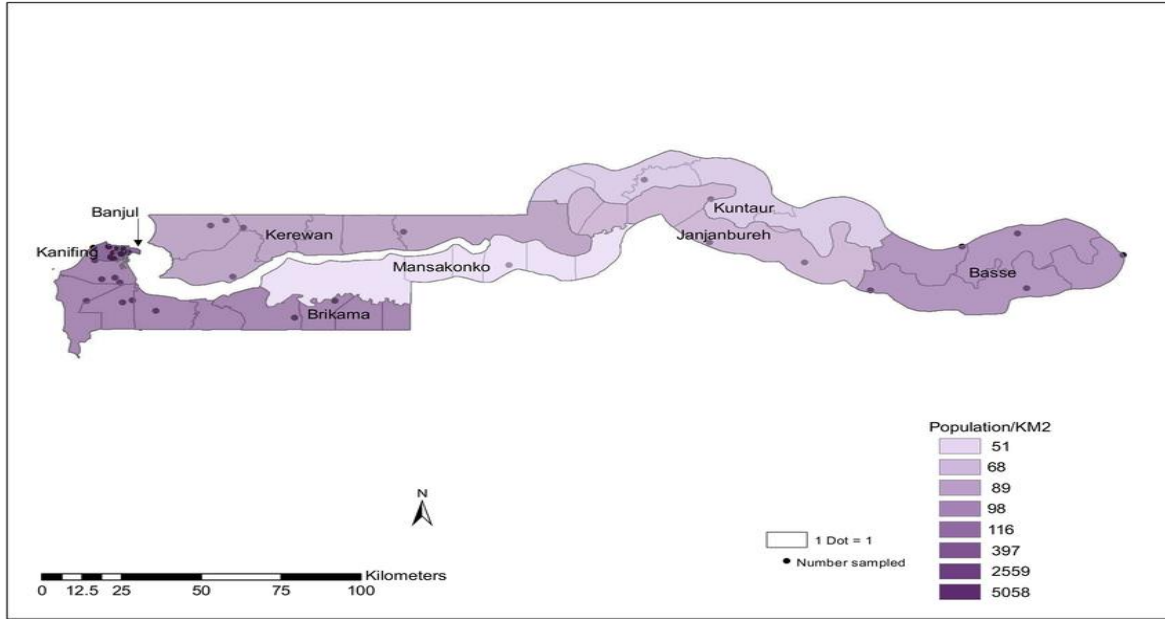
- (a.) Inspection of the demarcated lines of the boundaries in Kantora District by Ambassadors of the two states;
- (b.) Erection of boundary pillars on the sites which should be equal to 12th parallel north;
- (c.) The survey exercise in the Baria area situated at Jokardu District in the northern part of The Gambia by joint team of experts; and
- (d.) Identification of the boundary pillars planted from 1889 to 1902 in conformity with provisions of the treaty signed by the Anglo-French Boundary Commission (Archive No. HSC/7/78).

The Joint Committee had difficulties executing the task as the Senegalese side kept insisting that they preferred the existing boundary mapping by the Anglo-French Boundary Commission. This caused a stalemate as The Gambian side expressed their disapproval at the low level of cooperation from the Senegalese (Archive No. HSC/7/78). The foreign ministries of the two countries set up a new inter-governmental team of experts that will ensure a better balance in determining territorial limits for both countries based on mutual consent. The Gambian Foreign Minister Lamin Kiti Jabang urged the team to maintain a brotherly and friendly atmosphere throughout the survey period to produce acceptable results (Archive No. HSC/7/78).

Notwithstanding, the experts were unable to come to terms in creating clear-cut boundary lines agreeable to all. This led to conveying another summit of the two Heads of State in Dakar, Senegal, in June 1980 (Archive No. WVER/GB/4/80). The Memorandum of the Summit charged the Committee to erect 18 boundary pillars covering a distance of approximately 30 kilometres at the demarcated Kantora District. It also mandated the committee to identify and re-erect 333 colonial pillars covering a distance of approximately 100 kilometres on both the north and southern banks of The Gambian River (Archive No. WVER/GB/4/80). The committee could not reach a compromise as each side maintained rigid stance on the joint plan of action. The Gambian position was a complete overhaul and re-demarcation of the boundary, while the Senegalese insisted on the colonial pillars in conformity with the Treaty of the Anglo-French Boundary Summit in Paris in 1889 (Bojang, 2014: 293). This obstacle remained unresolved until 1981 when President Senghor left office and Abdou Joof took over power. However, the early morning coup d'état of July 30, 1981 led by Kukoi Samba Sanyang, a one-time member of the opposition National Convention Party (NCP) with assistance of members of the field force who broke the armory at the Fajara Barracks while President Jawara was in London, was quashed with the help of Senegalese forces. Toppled Jawara impressed it on Dakar to activate the 1965 Defence pact it signed with the country to help restore constitutional order. The coup incident hampered the work of the Committee of Experts but Senegalese assistance in restoring Jawara back to power greatly facilitated the signing of the Senegambia confederation in 1982.

Below are the two maps showing the study areas, The Gambia and Senegal.

Fig. 1: Showing the map of The Gambia



Source: Map of The Gambia culled from https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Map-of-The-Gambia-showing-administrative-boundaries-population-density-and-districts_fig9_283775741 [accessed 8 Oct, 2023].

Fig. 2: Showing the map of Senegal and location of The Gambia in the middle of Senegal nearly dividing the country into two North and South.



Source:

BBC News (2023, April 26). *Senegal country profile*. Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14093674> [accessed 8 Oct, 2023].

The Gambia's External Relations and Challenges of Diplomatic Practices

Like every sovereign state entity, The Gambia's external relations and diplomatic engagements with other state and non-state actors alike in the international system was consequent of its independence in 1965. This presupposes that as a colony of the Great Britain, The Gambia was only seeing the rest of the world through the British eyes during the period that British colonization lasted. Hence, independence brought about The Gambia's construction of its own foreign policy hinged on the promotion of its national interests particularly the wellbeing of its people, economic development, national security and sovereign identity (Plischike, 1977: 18 – 22). However, even as a sovereign state, The Gambia, like its Nigerian counterpart, both former British colonies in West Africa, is in all intents and purposes, anglophile in its foreign policy projection. To show the extent of anglophile foreign policy of Nigeria at independence (and even until date), Nigeria's anglophile prime Minister (Agwu, 2013: 475), Alhaji Tafawa Balewa was quoted to have said that, 'the British were known first as masters and then as leaders and finally as partners, but always as friends' (Agwu, 2013). Like Balewa, The Gambia's first post-independence leader, Prime Minister Dawda Jawara (as he then was), showing the Gambian commitment to stay within the British orbit made a statement at a reception marking the birthday of the Queen of England on Sunday, April 21, 1974. To him, the most meaningful contribution to the Gambia's development efforts so far has come from Britain and fellow citizens were deeply appreciative of it (Nyang, 1977: 31). Describing Anglo-Gambian relations as 'particularly harmonious' Jawara remarked that, "since we achieved independence, I cannot remember a single instance when any semblance discord has cast a shadow over the relations between our two countries, and I pray and hope that this abiding spirit of amity and complete understanding will continue to characterize our relations" (*The Gambia News Bulletin*, 1974: 1).

Like all other small states, which Plischike (1977) says, their international relations are influenced by close link to former colonial masters for economic and political supports, anglophile disposition of the small country of The Gambia in its foreign policy projections for national security cannot be over-emphasized. To survive economically and politically, The Gambia, during the formative years of nationhood had its recurrent and development budget being dependent on British grants for the first five years to supplement its economic viability. Even though it much later prioritized its multilateral diplomatic engagement with the rest of Africa, Europe and the Middle East (Touray, 2000: 126), its deep-seated anglophile behavioral patterns are very much palpable. Nonetheless, threatened by its neighbour, Senegal that surrounded its entire land territory in the north, east and south, with only 80 kilometres coastal line to the Atlantic Ocean, The Gambia on its Independence Day signed bilateral agreement of cooperation with Senegal on matters of foreign policy (Touray, 2000: 101 – 103. This is regardless of its Francophobic behaviour towards Senegalese neighbours whom average Gambians see as French (Nyang, 1977: 31 – 32).

Indeed, the dilemma of The Gambia's diplomatic practices and external relations was during the unilateral declaration of independence of Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) by Ian Smith on November 11, 1965. Most African countries like Nigeria including the continental body, the OAU, were at the forefront of anti-Smith's campaign calling on all African countries and the global community to ostracize British-backed Ian Smith's government in Southern Rhodesia over its action. For example, OAU declared Ian Smith's action illegal and called for an emergency Council of Ministers meeting in Addis Ababa in December 1965. The meeting passed a resolution that, member states should sever diplomatic

relations with Britain and withdraw from the Commonwealth with immediate effect (Touray, 2000: 125). In response to this call, apart from taking some actions like nationalizing British investment companies like the Barclay Bank and Shell Petroleum to Union Bank of Nigeria Plc. (UBN) and African Petroleum (AP) respectively, Nigeria's government diplomatic relations with the British nosedived for its continued support for Ian Smith (Usman, 2018; Salaam and Usman, 2019). For the Gambia, the dilemma stemmed from whether it should toe the path of African countries and the OAU in which it was (and still) a member or to show open support to its former colonial master, Britain and inadvertently, Ian Smith, or sit on the fence. Its support for Britain and Ian Smith would naturally draw the ire of fellow African countries and the OAU especially as the declaration was made when Africans were calling for decolonization of the continent, just as its solidarity with Africans might put it on collision course with Britain. In addition, on a delicate matter of this nature, sitting on the fence is a risky posture to take as the country stands to lose the camaraderie of both sides to the raging diplomatic rows.

Thus, treading carefully, The Gambia did not attend the OAU Ministerial Meeting and took a middle point position when it issued a statement condemning the action of Ian Smith and at the same time, advising against severing diplomatic relations with Britain. The statement revealed that the country was "solidly and unequivocally behind any move which aims at putting an end to the illegal regime in Rhodesia". It further reads that, "The Gambia Government however, does not see how this can be achieved by severing relations with Britain at this critical time" (Touray, 2000: 126). Indeed, it is only natural that The Gambia acted this way to safeguard its self-interest, as it would amount to political and economic suicide if it severed diplomatic relations with Britain since the country's recurrent and development budget were mainly sponsored by the British government grants. At the same time, it cannot afford to offend the sensibility of OAU member states given that it would have amounted to anti-African behaviour which may cause it losing the needed support from fellow African countries.

Today, in spite of The Gambia's small size, it continues to build a favourable image internationally by keenly intensifying its diplomatic contacts with both state and non-state actors in pursuit of its foreign policy goals. For example, The Gambia maintains close diplomatic ties with the United Kingdom, United States, Arab Gulf States, Mainland China, Belgium, France, South Korea, North Korea, Germany, Nigeria, Senegal and Ethiopia among others (Momen, 1987: 197). Grippled with shortage of technical and skilled personnel due to lack of mass university educated manpower, the country sought coordinated efforts to access and benefit from international organizations like United Nations Agencies through multilateral support in various fields including countries like Nigeria through its Technical Aid Corps (TAC) scheme. In this regard, the Nigerian government like others continues to provide technical cooperation and assistance to support teachers' training, improved variety of seedlings to boost agricultural production, child-care activities, provision of expert services in health and other essential services. Indeed, Nigeria in particular and other West African countries have assisted the country in providing judicial services as many of their nationals even served up to The Gambia's Supreme Court as justices. Again, Gambians continued to enjoy unhindered access to foreign aids, grants and foreign markets. The United States provides both technical and economic assistance with middle management personnel and an increased Peace Corps volunteers to the country through United States Agency for International Development (USAID) (Momen, 1987; Touray, 2000).

Presently, it secured membership of several international and non-governmental organizations like the United Nations (UN), the African Union (AU), the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), a founding member of the Gambia River Basin Development Organization (OMVG) and the Permanent Interstate Committee for drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) among others. It continues to play important roles in many of these global, regional and sub-regional bodies.

The Challenge of Multiparty Democracy in The Gambia

At independence, The Gambia embraced multiparty democracy even though its demographic and territorial sizes ought to be 'justifiable' excuses to impose one-party system on the country by its founding fathers as obtained in many African countries like Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe, to mention these few shortly after independence. For instance, justifying the one-party system, Kwame Nkrumah reportedly said, "post-independent African States were in a state of war and national emergency and could not afford multiparty system which is institutionalized factionalism" (Tuteng, 1973: 649). With the believed that multi-party system breeds national disintegration, most African leaders featured the opposition as outlawed groups and gave no breathing space (Igwe, 2010). For the Gambia, the country was not only multiparty by number of political parties that existed at independence but all political parties were active in their respective functions as ruling and opposition parties with remarkable political stability until the fall of the first republic in 1994 due to military coup. Interestingly, parties' formation along ethnic lines was discouraged as all parties drew their supports from across ethnic divides thereby, making The Gambia enjoyed national cohesion due to peaceful co-existence and harmony among the various groups. These parties are the ruling People's Progressive Party (PPP) and opposition political parties such as the United Party (UP), the Gambia Congress Party (GCP), and the Democratic Congress Alliance (DCA). Showing opposition parties' viability at independence, the merger of the ruling PPP with Reverend J. C. Faye-led DCA (Igwe, 2010: 162) could not ensure victory for the referendum held on November 18 – 26, 1965, over plan to declare the country a republic and abolish the office of the Governor-General representing the British Crown as ceremonial Head of State. The alliance between the two parties failed to secure the needed two-third of the votes in Parliament to effect the needed change. The Prime Minister, Dawda Jarawa himself was surprised that the anti-referendum campaigners won the day (National Archive Report, 1965). Cabinet members urged him to disregard the result of the referendum and declare the country a republic to which he declined. Instead, he called for a general election in May 1966 to test the popularity of his party. The result was a decisive win for the ruling PPP with 65.5 percent of the votes. It renewed the confidence of the Prime Minister to once again, present the republican referendum in 1970 (Hurges and Perfect, 2006: 163). The April 1970 referendum was a successful yes votes for the ruling party with over two-thirds of votes cast. The House of Representatives met on April 24, 1970, and elected Prime Minister Dawda Jawara as the first president of the Republic of The Gambia (Sallah, 1990). This clearly showed that multiparty system reduced the chances for destabilization in The Gambia in its early years of nationhood even with a record of accomplishment of peaceful multiparty elections in five-year terms up to 1994.

However, Ousman Manjang believed that multiparty system in The Gambia gave the ruling People's Progressive Party greater legitimacy with promoted autocracy as several instances of victimization of political opponents like dismissal of civil servants who allegedly supported the opposition, lack of support for vibrant newspaper publications,

elevation of culture of sycophancy, high level corruption and nepotism (Manjang, 1992: 9 – 10). Explaining further, Manjang revealed that the “personalized leadership” established by the ruling party produced institutions that failed to create economic opportunities for majority of the people. He cited the formation of underground movements and *Deja Vous* (secret clubs) with subversive actions such as the burning of the generators that supplied electricity to the city of Banjul in 1978 (Manjang, 1992). Thus, Modou Samkareh attributed the aborted military rebellion of 1981 to several factors. These include incidences of unchecked corruption in government circle, activities of radical socialist in the likes of Pengu George and MOJA- G members, the killing of the Deputy Commander of the field force by a junior officer in 1980, political repression and irregularities of the electoral process among others (Sankareh, 2006: 102 – 103).

Despite its initial stable polity, The Gambia politics of post-1981 coup changed dramatically as the fallouts of the coup caused serious internal wrangling within the ruling party forcing some former cabinet members to break away from the PPP and formed the Gambia People’s Party (GPP) in March 1986. After five months, two senior civil servants and a high school teacher formed another party, the People’s Democratic Organization for Independence and Socialism (PDOIS) in August 1986 (Edie, 2000). In March 1987, four political parties for the first time contested for the presidency in a general election (Hurges and Perfect, 2006: 216). Political tolerance that the country enjoyed at independence disappeared as the ruling party resorted to use of castigation and threats of opposition parties to score political points. For instance, in an oral interview with Dodou Fall, former Sabach Sanjal District’s Chairman of the Gambia’s former ruling People’s Progressive Party (PPP) described the campaign of the opposition parties during the election as awful and disgraceful. While he labeled the GPP sarcastically as ‘the Greedy People’s Party’, it called PDOIS scathingly as ‘the People’s Devilish Organization for Insane and Senile’, and branded the NCP as a tribalist group. The ruling party’s intimidations of the opposition parties worked in its favour as it won the election with 56.4 percent of the votes cast as seen in the table below.

Table 1: Summary of Results 1987 General Election

Parties	Number of Votes	Percentage of Votes
People’s Progressive Party	119,248	56.35
National Convention Party	58,461	28.63
Gambia People’s Party	31,604	14.93
People’s Democratic Organization for Independence and Socialism	2069	0.98
Independent	233	0.11
Total	211,615	100

Source: Hughes and Perfect, *A Political History of the Gambia 1816 – 1994*, Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2006, p. 216.

After the elections, the internal divisions and crisis in the ruling PPP became obvious especially when the new cabinet excluded veteran members while juicy ministerial posts such as Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Tourism were given to new comers. The old guards complained that President Jawara did not prepare anyone as a leader in waiting in case of any eventuality. This created factional camps between the Vice President Bakary Darboe and the Minister of Finance,

Saikou Sabally. The president encouraged the division by favouring the Sabally camp with positions in the civil service and diplomatic missions (Mbassy and Njie, 1996: 88).

In December 1991, the party organized a National Congress in Mansa Konko in the Lower River Region where the president announced his decision to step down in the coming election. The Sabally camp mobilized party supporters across the country to persuade President Jawara to rescind his decision of which yielded to by announcing his candidature for the next general election (Hurges and Perfect, 2006: 244). However, Dodou Fall attributed Jawara's action as a ploy to test his popularity and the level of loyalty of the Vice President's camp. Unlike Sabally camp, Darboe's did not make appeal to President Jawara to change his mind. Thus, they were seen as renegades within the party and government. The outcome was bad for Darboe and his camp as they were sidelined at both government and party levels. The president refused to give Darboe any role to play in coordinating government business or in leading party campaign to the next general election (Dodou Fall, 2018, Oral Interview). The election, which held in May 1992 saw to the victory of the ruling PPP for sixth consecutive times with increased percentage of votes from 56 percent in 1987 to 58 percent in 1992 despite been challenged by five opposition political parties (Darboe, 1992: 35).

The table below indicates summary of 1992 general elections in the country with electoral performances of various political parties.

Table 2: Summary of the 1992 General Election

Parties	Number of Votes	Percentage (%) of Votes
People's Progressive Party	109,059	58.25
National Convention Party	48,845	27.28
Gambia People's Party	13,937	4.93
PDOIS	4, 632	2.62
People's Democratic Party	9,291	1.30
Independents	15,331	5.62
Total	200,845	100

Source: Hughes and Perfect, *op. cit.*, p. 216.

The political tension that rivalry within the ruling party created coupled with Dawda Jawara continuous rule for thirty unbroken years, resulted to the eventual overthrow of his government in 1994. For Ajayi, catalogue of factors that paved way for his overthrow include, his thirty years in power, party patronage elitism, insensitivity to people's aspirations, unchecked corruption and embezzlement of state funds (Ajayi, 2003: 20 – 23). Following his assumption of power, Yahya Jammeh, a young lieutenant, who headed the Armed Forces Provisional Ruling Council (AFPRC), promised to improve the socio-economic conditions of the people and to institutionalize accountability, transparency and probity in the governance of the country. His regime promulgated several decrees and established numerous commissions of enquiries for alleged corruption of the Jawara administration for greater economic discipline and transformation. However, like all military governments, it did not take long before the junta came out in its own true colour. The AFPRC

suddenly censored the media, banned political parties and their activities and forbade public gatherings (Ajayi, 2003: 47). In his first address to the nation on July 26, 1994, Yahya Jammeh announced a two-years transition plan at the end of which, he promised AFPRC members including himself would not participate in the election but return to the barracks. However, at the end of the transition period, he reneged on this promise as he resigned from the army, formed a political party and declared himself a candidate for the general election. Expectedly, he won the September 1996 general election with 52 percent of the votes (Nnaocha and Bojang, 2018: 441).

After winning the 1996 election, he sought popular validation for his rule by holding and winning elections in 2001, 2006, and 2011. Each time he secured more than 50% of the vote cast but election observers described them as ‘tainted’ and ‘lacking in legitimacy’ (French, 1996; BBC News, 2011). In December 2016, he sought for a fifth popular mandate but could only muster 39.6% of the vote and was defeated by the candidate of a coalition of opposition parties, Adama Barrow. Former President Jammeh initially called Barrow to concede defeat to him by accepting the results. Shortly after, he changed his mind citing ‘abnormalities’ and called for the results to be cancelled and fresh one conducted. After more than a month of protracted negotiations with leaders of ECOWAS led by the Nigerian President, Muhammadu Buhari, and with the threat of regional military action looming, Yahya Jammeh hurriedly left The Gambia for exile in Equatorial Guinea on January 21, 2017 (Salaam and Usman, 2019: 632). Thus, ending his 22-year autocratic rule with coordinated human rights violations ranging from enforced disappearances, unlawful arrests and killings, torture, sexual and gender-based violence, and persecution of real or perceived political opponents.

Socio-Economic Challenges up to 1994

According to Jaiteh and Saar (2011: 8), The Gambia, unlike other Anglophone West African countries like Nigeria, Ghana, and Sierra Leone, did not have significant natural resources, and its climatic condition is subtropical with eight months of dry season and four months of rain. To Wiseman (1996: 921), over 70 percent of Gambians depend on agriculture with traditional patterns of subsistence agricultural practices. According to Sallah (1990: 624), the inherited colonial economic structure encouraged the growing of subsistence food crops and the cultivation of groundnuts for cash. Saine (2008: 28) reported that The Gambia’s economy had experienced several economic shocks in the first two decades of independence, which included global economic recession joined with drought witnessed among countries within the Sahel belt in the 1970s. Moreover, there was increase in population, high migration rate, adverse terms of trade in world market and high scale borrowing to finance the budget deficit. In the mid-1970s, the government drew a five-year Economic and Social Development Plan 1975–80, to attract financial and technical assistance in the development of the economy through agriculture, health, education, tourism and transport. Presenting the plan in October 1974, President Jawara highlighted the objectives to include, elimination of poverty, reduction in inequality and prosperous transformation of the nation. Saine (2008: 21) further stated that the expected budget for the plan was 144,000, 000 Gambian Dalasi distributed to priority areas as shown below.

Table 3: Budget of Development Plan for The Gambia, 1975-80

Priority Areas	Investment Budget (million Dalasi)	Percent of Budget
Agriculture and animal husbandry	22.0	14.9
Forestry, Fisheries/mineral resources	10.3	6.8
Manufacturing and commerce	3.1	2.2
Building and construction	4.5	3.1
Tourism	4.7	3.2
Transport	29.9	21.1
Public utilities	23.7	16.6
Education	4.8	3.3
Health	13.5	9.5
Housing and social welfare	1.10	1.3
Central government	11.6	8.1
Quasi government	1.7	1.1
Local government and Rural Areas	5.4	3.6
Environment and Urban Centres	7.7	5.2
Total	144.0	100.0

Source: Horeja Mamu Saine, *The Gambia's Economic Crisis Since Independence*, Kanifing, Grafix Telecoms Ltd, 2008, p. 23.

While presenting the 1975 budget, I. M. Garba Jahumpa JP, Minister of Finance and Trade, informed the parliament that the country was expecting assistance from several agencies to finance the five years development plan (*National Archive Sessional Paper No. 8, 1975: 9*). He disclosed that among the development agencies, funding the government investments in education, agriculture and health were the Arab Development Fund (ADF), the Islamic Development Fund (IDF) and the special World Bank Development Fund (WBDF). He highlighted that the development plan could not be funded by the home government because of The Gambia's domestic resource constrains and limited incentives for investors.

Table 4: Statistic for Loans and Grants to The Gambia in 1975

Country/Agency	Loans	Grants	Dalasi
United Kingdom	X		7,150,000
United Kingdom		X	200,000
Islamic Development Bank (Rice and Tourism)	X		1,680,000
Africa Development Bank (Cotton/Electricity)	X		1,535,000
United Nations (Housing)		X	570,000
Local funds (Gambia Produce Marketing Board- GPMB and government)	–	–	5,000,000
Libyan Funds (Offices and Buses	X		900,000
Sahelian Drought Fund (CILLS)		X	615,000
Federal Republic of Germany (Water supply and ferry)		X	500,000
People's Republic of China (various)	X	X	1,200,000
Islamic Solidarity Fund		X	100
Not yet known		X	100
Total	5	7	19,350,000

Source: Sessional Paper No. 8 of 1975

The Gambia's major income earnings in 1980 depended on three key sectors namely, agriculture, tourism and re-export trade. To boost agricultural production, the government established the Agricultural Development Bank in 1981 to create soft loans for farmers. However, the bank failed to achieve its planned lending to farmers as loans were granted to senior civil servants and top businesses owners instead. They failed according to repaying plans and this led to its eventual collapse by mid-1980s (Saine, 2008: 23).

As the second important source of income after agriculture, tourism employed five percent of the labour force on periodic basis mainly in the Winter Season when European holiday visitors flooded the country from November to February. However, D'Almeida and Manneh (1998: 8) revealed that coastal erosion decimated the tourism industry, with low tourist attraction, which affected the employee turnover resulting in decline in economic output. The re-export of goods to other West African countries was another area of income generation for The Gambia. The export trade was however affected by frequent Senegalese border closures, bribery and corruption of border officials, road harassment by security forces and long and costly delays in transit (Saine, 2008: 3). By mid 1980s, the economic performance of The Gambia had adversely reduced due to budgetary difficulties caused mainly by high debt, and subsequently retarded economic growth. This development put the country's economy in crisis situation justifying government's Economic Recovery Programme (ERP) in 1985 (ICA, 1987). The economic recovery scheme underlined stringent structural adjustment programmes (SAP) aimed at sectoral reforms, for long-term economic growth. Consequently, the government was forced to reduce spending on social services like health and education, devalued the local currency, Dalasi and Butut, resulting in 120 percent depreciation, and loss of about 20 percent jobs in the civil service (Saine, 2008: 35). In 1990, the ERP produced significant gains in the economic reforms with a growth rate of 3 percent, inflation rate was reduced to 5 percent, the budget deficits per GDP reduced from 17 percent to 4 percent and the country reserves strengthened from

two months to three months import coverage. Afterwards, The Gambia government came up with the Programme for Sustained Development (PSD), a policy for continuous adjustment to growth (Saine, 2008: 37, 40). The government's Economic Growth Blueprint (EGB), the Programme for Sustained Development (PSD), was to ensure equitable distribution of the gains, from economic growth to development with a "human face" (GGDSW, 1990).

According to the Annual Trade Review, a major weakness of The Gambia's economy was the heavy reliance of its national budgets on donations. This has limited its fiscal flexibility and made the economy inherently vulnerable to both internal and external shocks. It also had adverse consequences on recurrent expenditures on education, health, infrastructure and other social services. Arguably, these factors combined, propelled the military to overthrow the government and replaced the existing programmes with the AFPRC's agenda (UNDP, 2012). The military regime promised to improve the economy, social services such as health and education, establish strong judiciary and promote accountability, transparency and probity. The economic and political framework the military council promised to implement were suspicious to donors like the European Union, the United Kingdom and the United States. These donors suspended most of their aid and urged the military to return to civilian rule as quickly as possible (French, 1994: 4; Ajayi, 2003: 98).

CONCLUSION

The paper historicizes the post-colonial challenges faced by The Gambia during its formative years as newly independent country specifically from 1965 to 1994 and how these challenges hinder the country from achieving the desired sustainable development for its citizens. It establishes that post-independence travails that the country went through was multidimensional ranging from the boundary disputes with its only Francophone neighbour, Senegal, in the areas of diplomatic, socio-economic and political engagements including absence of sustainable development. However, it reveals that even though there exerted so much pressures and, in some instances, constituted serious snags on the development trajectory of the country, impressive progress in multiparty democracy and respect for human rights continue to be recorded notwithstanding intolerance of perceived opponents by the elites as demonstrated during the 22-years of Jammeh's presidency that ended in January 2017 after he lost December 2016 presidential election and to a lesser degree, during the one-party autocracy of Jawara's leadership. It is our contention that Gambia's use of diplomacy to navigate through the labyrinth of politics hostility between some western countries, particularly, Britain, considered as a traditional ally and the OAU member states successfully without offending, so to say, any side, was unique and pragmatic. This is so given that the size, economy and the quest for sovereign identity including but not limited to security, sustainable development and international cooperation, dictate that the country needed to tread softly. Nonetheless, we conclude that the country's economy during the period under review could not attract much of foreign direct investments to facilitate sustainable development through sustained economic assistance, technological facility transfers and creative plans to explore available resources autochthonously.

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Oral Interview

Interview with Dodou Fall, Sabach Sanjal District's Chairman of the then Gambia's ruling People's Progressive Party (PPP) on June 18, 2018, 11 a. m. to 12 p.m.) in Bakoteh, Kanifing Municipality, Sabach Sanjal District, Republic of The Gambia.

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