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A DISSERTATION

11

Presented to the Higher Degrees Board

University of Cape Town

Topic:

**POLICY IMPLICATIONS OF THE ECONOMIC
COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES (ECOWAS)
IN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

In fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (Ph.D)

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DEDICATION

To my late father – Mr. Gmamboah Bindal who was an innocent victim of the 1994
Ethnic Conflict in Northern Ghana.

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DEFINITIONS OF TERMS & CONCEPTS

Community: The sense in which Community is used is based on Etzioni's definition as comprising a political community which possesses three kinds of integration: it has monopoly on the control of force, it has a single centre for decision making, and it is the dominant focus of identification for members.

suggests a voluntary alignment of specific national (project) investments whether public or private in various sectors of activity. It may even involve an alignment of policies at the *meso* or *sectoral* level in such key areas as power, transport, communications, water resource management and so on. It is the level at which several regional integration arrangements (RIAs) in the developing world actually function at the moment.

Cooperation: The term regional cooperation is a loose construction, which embraces several levels of integration. It denotes a willingness on the part of countries to work together in achieving regional economic interests on the assumption that, in the long run, this will result in enhancing national economic interest and welfare even if national interest might need to be subordinated in the short run.

Developmental Regionalism: Is the concerted efforts of State and non-State actors within a geographical area to increase the economic efficiency and development of the region as a whole and to improve its position in the world economy.

Economic Development: Increase in the level of economic activity in a nation, often measured by growth in GDP or per capital GDP. Generally, economic development involves structural changes, with populations moving from agricultural (*primary sector*) to manufacturing (*secondary sector*) to service (*tertiary sector*). The concept is rooted in the experiences of Western nations, especially Britain, the United States, and Germany.

European Union: The European Union (EU) is the successor organisation to the European Community as defined by the Maastricht Treaty. As of 1995, the European

Community became the European Union. The European Union now has a common currency called the “Euro” enabling it to accomplish all aspects of integration but short of a political union.

Integration (RI): In Haas’ definition, integration is a process whereby political actors in several distinct national settings are persuaded to shift their loyalties, expectations and political activities toward a new and larger setting (Haas in ‘Beyond the Nation State’. 1964). In this context, ‘integration’ means ‘trade integration’. It requires members of a regional integration to cede sovereignty over particular economic functions and activities as well as policies and instruments to an authority, which exercises its policies and instruments and power at the regional level. Integration thus means formulating and applying regional trade, exchange, labour market, fiscal and monetary policies at the regional level. Integration also implies the development of a common currency and a single central bank or monetary authority which regulates the monetary – and indirectly the fiscal – parameters within which national governments function. It implies free movement of factors of production and technology across borders within the region or the sub-region. In its ultimate form of political union it would require a regional legislature.

Interdependence: Interdependence is defined in a number of ways however, it is most commonly used to refer to a state of affairs of mutual dependency; the negative effects of a disruption of two or more States’ relations that is fairly and equally distributed among them.

International Regimes: A set of co-operative arrangements, of greater or lesser formalisation and institutionalisation, to enable States to cope with issues in international relations that affect them jointly.

Monetary Union: A group of nations that actively co-ordinate their monetary policies

Nation-state: Synonymous with the term “country”.

“New Regionalism”: The concept is characterised by multi-dimensions, the complex nature of things, the flexibility of things and its non-conformity. In the mainstream

economics 'new regionalism' is also called 'open regionalism' to indicate its compatibility with the hegemonic doctrine of trade liberalisation and free capital flows.

North-South: The relationship between developed, industrialised countries (the North) and less developed countries (the South). The concept is often associated with *core-periphery* analysis in economics.

Political Economy: The social science that examines the dynamic interaction between the forces of *Market* and *State*, and how the tension and conflict between them affects the world.

Political Integration: Implies accompanying high levels of economic and social interactions among nations

“Regionalisation”: Economic integration or co-operation.

Sub-Saharan Africa: Unless otherwise specified, the term sub-Saharan Africa (and the abbreviation “SSA”) refers to all countries in Africa other than South Africa and the countries in Northern Africa (Algeria, Egypt, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Morocco, and Tunisia).

Supra-nationalism: A recognised interest within a political grouping of several nations, which is different or distinguishable from the interest of any one of them.

Sustainable Development: A pattern of economic development that is consistent with the goals of non-degradation of the environment.

Glossary of Acronyms

ABN	Niger Basin Authority
ACHPR	African Charter on Human and People's Rights
ACM	Arab Common Market
ACMS	African Centre for Monetary Studies
ACP	Africa, Caribbean and Pacific
ADB	African Development Bank
ADILG	Liptako Gourma Integrated Development Authority
AEC	African Economic Community
AG	Action Group
AHSG	Authority of Head of States and Governments
AIRD	Associates for International Resources and Development
AMCE	African Ministerial Conference on the Environment
AMU	Arab Magreb Union
AOF	<i>Federation de l'Afrique occidentale francaise</i> (French West African Federation).
APPER	African Priority Programme for Economic Recovery
ARCT	African Regional Centre for Technology
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
ASECNA	Agency for the Safety of Aerial Navigation in Africa
BCEAO	<i>Banque Centrale de Etats de Afrique de L'Quest.</i>
BCEAO	Central bank of West African States
BEAC	Bank of Central African States
CACEU	Central African Customs and Economic Union
CACM	Central American Common Market
CAF	Community Armed Forces
CAMES	African and Malagasy Council on Higher Education
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CARIFTA	Caribbean Free Trade Association
CARRICOM	Caribbean Community

CCCE	<i>Caisse Centrale de co-operation economique</i> (Central fund for Economic Cooperation).
CEAO	<i>Communaute Economique de Afrique l'Quest</i>
CEAO	West African Economic Community
CEC	Commission of the European Communities
CEMAC	Central African Economic and Monetary Union
CEPGL	Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries
CERPOD	Development Centre for Study and Research on Population
CFA	<i>Communaute Financiere Africaine</i>
CMEA	Council of Ministers of External Affairs
COM	Council of Ministers
EEC	European Economic Community
EAC	East African Community
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECOMOG	ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring and Observer Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States.
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FUGI	Future of Global Interdependence (model)
GATS	General Agreements on Trade in Services
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
GSP	Generalized system of preference
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LAFTA	Latin American Free Trade Area
LDCs	Less Developed Countries
MRU	Mano River Union
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Area
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
OCAM	Afro-Mauritania Common Organisation
PTA	Eastern and Southern African Preferential Trade Area
REI	Regional Economic Integration
RI	Regional Integration

RIA	Regional Integration Agreements
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
SADCC	Southern African Development Co-ordinating Conference
SAI	Special Agencies and Institutions of ECOWAS
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
TNCs	Transnational corporations
UDEAC	Central African Customs and Economic Union.
UN	United Nations
WABA	West African Bankers Association
WACH	West African Clearing House
WAUA	West African Unit of Account.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is a critical examination of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) since inception, the institutional protocols, and the operational procedures on regional integration. The study argues that ECOWAS is a transplant of the European Union's neo-functionalism model of regional integration and has been a misapplication. Far from relieving the economic, social and political conditions of West Africa, typical of developing countries, it has contributed to the defeat of the goals and objectives of its Founding Fathers.

The chief consequence has been the lack of unanimity among the countries, resulting in the non-implementation of policies. Similarly, the treaties adopted by ECOWAS for a development model are increasingly divorced from the policies applied by member states at the national level because the member countries do not factor the interest of the sub-region into their domestic planning.

The study reviews the institutional protocols in the light of the actual practice of regional integration in West Africa. The result is that varying conflicts have compounded the policy inconsistencies resulting from the gap between the formal and informal modes of integration. The failure to address these directly is a primary cause of the slow pace of integration.

The study suggests that an iterative planning process grounded in the political realities of one of the continent's most fractured and conflictual sub-regions would have allowed ECOWAS to evolve as an effective regional institution. As it is, ECOWAS operations continue to be fatally undermined by the failure of ECOWAS' institutions to understand the nature of African bureaucracies and to craft policies and instruments which are properly shaped to fit the underlying economic, social and political realities of its environment.

The study concludes that the political, economic and social measures so far adopted by ECOWAS have not had a major impact in West Africa and cannot be said to have contributed to the formation of a self-reliant economic grouping for regional development. Like many other regional organisations in Africa, the Community has adapted an "alien model" without regard to the prevailing conditions and realities of the West African sub-region.

Regional integration is an absolute necessity for West Africa. But it has to be built from the bottom up, with institutions in each national state reflecting the key constraints of its particular polity. It is only on this basis that regional plans can be devised, into which local plans can dovetail.

CITATIONS

*“The desire for regional economic co-operation among African states is a **sine qua non** for the achievement of national socio-economic goals and not an extra to be given thought, after all, the process of development is well advanced”(Adebayo Adedeji, 1991:85)*

“The case for regional economic co-operation in West Africa is self-evident. It serves to play a fundamental role in the development of the countries of the region and the welfare of the peoples of West Africa”(Ibrahim Gambari, 1991:14)

“If an organisation is to strive towards the achievement of set objectives, the possibility lies in breaking down outmoded structures and creating an organisation that can thrive in tomorrow’s uncertainty. The process in doing so is grounded in values, shaped by vision, guided by a strategy that is rooted in the critical processes of the organisation”(Gordon Sullivan and Michael Harper, 1996:84)

Chapter I

Introduction

Regional Integration (RI) is a concept that has acquired new significance in the last few years as policymakers attempt to grapple with the numerous, apparently intractable problems that have impacted the world. With the long, drawn-out world economic recession, and the increasing scale and incidence of political conflicts and violence characterising the African continent, policy makers have been convinced that regional cooperation and integration are viable paths to effectively tackling mounting problems (Obiozor 1994, 2).

Against this backdrop, the formation of regional integration schemes among developing countries became imperative to overcome the practical, political, economic and social difficulties arising from the balkanisation of Africa in the 1880's. The formation of integration schemes was to put in place Africa's long-term interests ahead of the European imperialist countries who were the beneficiaries of the scramble for, and partition of, Africa. In this respect, regional integration and co-operation efforts in the early post-independence period were characterised by pronouncements made decisively within a pan-Africanist philosophical base and orientation (Asante 1984, 65).

Most schemes were formed as a result of disillusionment with the international political and economic systems, which were viewed as being unfavourable to developing and emerging "democracies." Other regional integration schemes such as the East Africa Community (EAC) and those in the CFA Zone were formed by or with the assistance of former colonisers, particularly France with regards to CEAO and others within West Africa, with the view to maintaining closer links (Lyakurwa et al. 1997, 12-75).

The formation of these schemes also coincided with the era of export pessimism in Africa around the 1960s. There was a school of thought that argued at the time that the world trading system was not favourable to developing countries as a result of declining

commodity terms of trade against Less Developed Countries (LDC) exports. There was instability in the export earnings of the LDC; the LDC experienced low elasticity of trade and the unfair protectionism against their (LDC) primary goods exports by developed countries. Such arguments led to the conclusion by most developing countries that their trade could not promote development, hence the justification of the use of Import Substitution Industrialisation (ISI) policies (Lyakurwa et al. 1997, 63).

On the basis of these strategic policies (ISI), the countries in Africa hoped they could widen their markets, as well as protect their important sectors, which would result in 'economies of scale' and would ultimately lead them to increased intra-union trade and the promotion of overall development. But history has shown that the import substitution industrialisation policies did not only fail in individual countries, but also in the regional groupings that were formed (de Melo and Panagariya 1993, 12). Despite the failures, the glamour of regional integration in Africa did not diminish.

There has also been much discussion of the impact of the end of the cold war on African development. In particular, there has been concern about the effect on sub-Saharan Africa of the decided shift of emphasis in resource transfer, in terms of investment funds in favour of Soviet Union and Eastern Europe (Onitiri 1997, 12). Africa's share in the global total inflows of foreign direct investment has remained at an average of 2 per cent since 1986 (Eichengree and Irwin 1999, 4).

The share of all developing countries in the global total in 1992 was 32 per cent (de Melo and Panagariya 1993, 16). According to the *Global Coalition for Africa*, Africa has been largely left outside these fast growing capital markets. Since 1980, foreign direct investment in Africa has remained below US\$1 billion, in a period in which direct foreign investment in Latin America has ranged between US\$3.5 billion and US\$ 14 billion. Global Coalition reveals that only US\$570 million of direct foreign investment flowed into Africa in

1990, compared with US\$2.7 billion in China and US\$964 million in Indonesia (UNCTAD 1993, 3). During the 1980s, direct foreign investment in Africa was about 1% of the world total, and in 1991, Africa received only 6% of the private investment flows to developing countries (UNCTAD 1993, 4).

Equally disturbing figures show that Africa's relatively small share of foreign investment inflows to the developing regions declined from an average of 12.9 per cent for the period 1981-85 - already a strikingly low figure when compared with the 37.6 per cent share for South, East and South-East Asia - to 5.9 per cent in 1992. Comparatively, the share of South, East and Southeast Asia increased from 37.6 per cent to 57.1 per cent during the same period. A continuation of these disparate trends will be certain to translate into wider disparities in future rates of economic growth between Sub-Saharan countries and particularly West African countries and most of the developing world (World Bank 1995, 216).

World Bank projections for 1995-2000 reveals that the average growth of real GDP in West Africa and surrounding countries of 3.8 per cent during this period will be lower than the 4.95 per cent for all other developing countries (World Bank 1995, 12-18). To this end, a UN report has underscored the efforts to be made by African countries in need of direct foreign investment and the many profitable opportunities waiting to be explored in terms of the relatively high rates of return on foreign investment in Africa (United Nations 1995, 17). While it is not easy to quantify the effects of these variables on development, especially as they impinge on ECOWAS' regional development, several observers have drawn attention to some of the consequences. Edward Joycox of the World Bank notes that in the course of the world-scale political and economic changes currently underway, Africa risks being marginalized, and that obtaining aid and foreign investment has become an increasingly competitive process and is much more unpredictable than in the past (1993a, 34; 1993b, 19).

The United Nations magazine, *Africa Recovery*, has also reported that evidence is mounting that the international strategy to boost aid to Africa is in crisis (World Bank 1993, 16). The situation has since 1993 not improved. Both the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have reported downturns in lending to Africa during the financial year (1993), and the subsequent years. The above sources have also noted that the fall in Bank lending to Africa has coincided with a large surge in commitments to Eastern Europe, which have increased from \$US1.7 billion to \$US3.8 billion (Onitiri 1997, 17). Henry Louis Gates aptly sums up the current situation:

Africa.... is probably worse off after the cold war. With the loss of socialist allies in international organisations, Africa has become more marginalized, the resources available for solving its problems are beginning to decline in the face of competing claims on the West and on international lending institutions - claims from the former members of the Warsaw Pact and, increasingly, from Vietnam. (Gates Jnr. 1993, 1).

Similarly, sub-Saharan Africa has fallen behind the rest of the world in terms of its participation in the global economy in the general view of both researchers and policy makers alike. The general conclusions are the results of trade liberalisation and economic integration, which have so far been disappointing. Consensual decision-making arrangements, overlapping and often conflicting integration scheme memberships, lack of regional monitoring of the implementation of decisions, unwillingness of governments to cede authority to regional bodies, and the subsequent lack of power by the regional secretariats to take initiatives have significantly reduced the effectiveness of regional integration schemes. The absence of effective compensation arrangements in many regional integration schemes has further hindered implementation of certain trade liberalisation measures.

Documented evidence suggests that the Sub-Saharan African region has been experiencing economic decline since the 1960s. Because of that co-operation in terms of development has become the alternative means for these West African states to achieve the

goal of economic self-reliance. The Sub-regional development in terms of economic integration as will be argued in this study has been ECOWAS' cardinal objective. The belief is that integration will inevitably lead the way towards economic development in the sub-region of West Africa (ECA 1980, 46)¹.

For these reasons, the Founding Fathers of Africa, in their quest to place "unity of purpose" above everything else, unanimously agreed in the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) that "the effect of unfulfilled promises of global development strategies had been more sharply felt (and still is) in most of Africa than in other continents. They added that "rather than resulting in an improvement in the economic situation of the continent, successive strategies have made the continent, and particularly the sub-region, to stagnate and become predisposed more than other regions. This clarion call by concerned African leadership was intended to take a closer look at the decades (1960s and 1970s), which were declared by the United Nations (UN) as "development decades" devoted to the "development of the developing countries." The declaration was also in the context of the fact that the social and economic situation in Africa has not been as satisfactory as was expected and therefore there was the need to design a comprehensive regional strategy.²

Globalisation presents yet another form of challenge as it has atomised consensus building by ECOWAS member countries. By its nature, globalisation is an affront national sovereignty, and the more it is entrenched, the more national leaders succumb to the dictates of the executives of global conglomerates. The impact of globalisation is making it difficult for African leaders to employ concerted efforts on issues of relevance to the continent. Issues such as the wanton degradation of the environment by these multi-national conglomerates from industrial countries in the mining fields of Africa, drug trafficking and narcotics, cross-border crimes, dumping of toxic wastes, and many other problems, are now globally dictated.

¹ Held in Lagos, Nigeria, April 28-29, 1980, by the ECA for Economic Development of Africa, 1980-2000.

The inability of leaders to agree on measures to deal with these emergent problems continues to balkanise the countries in Africa and has had tremendous implications for public policy in the rest of the continent.

Again, globalisation explains the increased importance of these issues. Like other countries, African states face growing pressures both to decentralise and to adapt to emerging global governance structures and standards. Globalisation brings risks of increased economic instability, which can lead to social institutions from mediating conflicts and promoting social co-operation. The ideal of globalisation is not a singular condition, a linear process, or a final end-point of social change in which African countries are a part. Globalisation is such that it is not yet in a universal state of equal integration in worldwide economic activity, which can benefit African countries (Manboah-Rockson 2000, 47). The increased interconnections of economic activity throughout the world accentuates uneven development between different countries, and exaggerate the dependency of 'peripherals' in developing countries such as those in West Africa (Manboah-Rockson 2000, 49). It is in light of all these that the economic plight of the poorest countries of the international community (such as most members of ECOWAS), has never been more desperate.

Attempts through various economic, social, and political measures by individual countries to uplift the living conditions of the people have not yielded any fruits, as policy upon policy is experimented and abandoned. The pursuit of structural adjustment programmes by individual countries has also not been of any benefit, and inflation, unemployment, abysmal growth rate, trade, etc still characterise the economies of most members of the sub-region. One may ask: Why has ECOWAS failed all these years to string together policies that can bail West Africa out of economic underdevelopment? What measures are likely to improve the condition of the people in this era of global competitiveness? What are the possible

² United Nations 1979.

implications of regional integration and the future development of the sub-region? In short, what is wrong with the West African economic and regional sub-grouping that took off with such good will and high expectations but has not been able to deliver after twenty-seven years of existence?

II. Background of the Study

The hope of pursuing economic integration in the West African sub-region was partially realised on 28th May 1975, when the final articles of association were ratified for the commencement of activity of ECOWAS. On that date, Heads of States and Governments of fifteen independent states, later joined by the sixteenth³, from divergent linguistic, political, and cultural backgrounds, signed the Treaty of Lagos establishing the Economic Community of West African States. With the completion of the signing of the protocols, about 180-210 million people in the sub-region became bound together to share a common destiny in one of the largest sub-regional economic groupings on the African continent. The creation of ECOWAS has been seen by a number of analysts and sub-regional observers as one of the boldest political initiatives ever taken within the second decade of post independence Africa.

The rationale behind the formation of ECOWAS has been predicated on three important goals of public policy. First, the formation of ECOWAS is to ensure success in the struggle against economic domination and subjugation by external forces. To ensure success in the struggle, small states need to co-operate as much as possible to effectively resist external domination. A strong regional economic base will no doubt be an effective weapon in making such resistance possible. Second, the co-operation and ultimate integration is meant to alleviate and eventually to eliminate poverty and to achieve a strong West African economy. And finally, economic integration would enable West African economies arrest national economic development limitations (*West Africa* 1985, 1055). The failure of

³ ECOWAS membership include Republic of Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Ghana, Gambia, Guinea,

economies of most West African States to develop during two United Nations Decades was due, among other things, to the fact that the pattern of development in the sub-region was isolationist (*West Africa* 1985, 1055). It was isolationist because trade among countries in the sub-region was based on small national markets within each country. It failed therefore to encourage the expansion of existing industries and the creation of new ones. Given this rationale, the general aim of ECOWAS as specified in Article 2(1) of the 1975 Treaty of Lagos is:

To promote co-operation and development in all fields of industry, transport, telecommunications, energy, agriculture, natural resources, commerce, monetary and financial questions; and in social and cultural matters for the purpose of raising the standard of living of its people. It is also aimed at fostering closer relations among its members and of contributing to the progress and development of the African Continent. (ECOWAS Treaty, 1975, as amended, Lagos, Article 2)

The Treaty makes provisions for the creation of a common market among the member countries of the sub-region in the initial stage, and later to cover the whole continent. The Treaty aims at trade liberalisation by eliminating customs duties and other quantitative and administrative restrictions on trade in the sub-region, the creation of a common external tariff wall and common commercial policy towards countries outside the union. The Treaty also aims at the elimination of obstacles to the free mobility of persons, services and capital within the sub-region. The Treaty guarantees the mobility of persons, services and capital within the sub-region as well as the harmonisation of agricultural and industrial policies and the promotion of development projects in several sectors (ECOWAS 1975, 4-5). Besides, the Treaty also aims at the evolution of a common policy in the area of industrial incentives, the elimination of regional disparities in whatever form, and the establishment of a fund for co-operation, compensation, and the financing of development projects in the sub-region. Given these ambitious aims, the objective of forming ECOWAS can be summarised as 'fostering

rapid and balanced development of the West African sub-region' through integration (*West Africa* 1985, 1055).

In addition, the challenges propelling the need for integration in Africa is further compounded by the transformation of the world into a global village. The large economic zones that have been established in Europe (the European Union), in North America (NAFTA), in Asia (ASEAN), and elsewhere, give a preview of the world in the 21st century: a world divided into large blocs. No longer merely a desirable goal, regional integration (RI) has today become an imperative for countries in West Africa.

Also, the challenges posed by the third millennium make integration imperative for West African countries to strive to achieve a speedy integration of their individual economies. By doing so they would be able to effectively put an end to poverty and to ensure the smooth integration of the West African sub-regional economy into the world economy. The sustained pace of integration in the developed world has now mandated developing countries, such as those in West Africa, to deal with partners which are themselves integrated. The glamour by these countries to integrate will be the only way that developing countries can satisfy the criterion of size that will be dictated by world trade from this time forward.

In the case of Africa, the end of colonialism was one of the most important achievements of the century. It, however, did not lead to the take-off of the African economies, although some countries have made significant progress in terms of urban development, infrastructure development, life expectancy, and school enrolment rates. Despite tremendous improvements in the standards of living in most of these countries, ECOWAS member countries continue to embark on new political, economic, and social transitions in one form or another. Such transition is often rendered difficult by the economic crisis, which the transition attempts to eradicate in the first place. In West Africa, poverty is more pronounced than anywhere else in the developing world. More than half of the

population in West Africa survives on less than one dollar a day. The most vulnerable are the rural dwellers, the young, and the female population.

The West African problems are further compounded by problems of good governance, democracy and human rights, which constitute the foremost preoccupations of most countries. In the majority of other countries, the old political order is disappearing, with single parties giving way to a multiparty system, while the market economy is taking over from government-dominated economies. On the other front, the political economic reforms going on concurrently in West Africa have generated tensions within government machinery that are quite fragile in terms of their destabilising effects. Never before in the history of the world had countries with such low levels of revenue per capita attempted to liberalise their political machinery and their economies at the same time. But such a process has been rendered inevitable, taking place, as it is, at a time when such countries are no longer required to choose between two blocs on the international scene. The notion of a West African sub-regional bloc is embedded in these facts, and the earlier realisation among these countries, namely:

- (i) That no one-state in West Africa can achieve economic independence in the region without the collaborative support of the other neighbouring states.
- (ii) That the size and resource bases of the sub-region make integration the immediate alternative for economic development.
- (iii) That integration in one area of the economy will obviously lead to integration in other areas.
- (iv) That the recent economic history of the West African sub-region can thus be considered to have been, for the most part, a period of often acute economic crisis.

The sub-region since 1975 has acted to reverse this situation. But the debate about regional integration and cooperation has long centred on the choices that must be made between growth and social development, and between stringent management and economic recovery.

- (v) That the common challenge by the creation of trade blocs in other regions of the world, and globalisation which risks marginalizing Africa makes it necessary to accelerate the transition towards an autonomous and self-financed development within the framework of African integration.
- (vi) That the harmonisation of the programmes of ECOWAS and UEMOA in connection with the acceleration of the process of integration in West Africa is imperative (Bundu 1997, 76).

In response to this trend, Africa's development partners stressed the continuation of present structural reforms with particular emphasis on regional integration, an increased role for the private sector, and liberalisation of macroeconomic policies. These prescriptions, including the need for good governance and peaceful resolution of conflicts, featured in the Tokyo Declaration on African Development - "Towards the 21st Century." This declaration was adopted by the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) on October 5 and 6 of 1993 to underline the role of the private sector, the importance of regional co-operation and integration and the lessons Africa as a whole should draw from the development experience of East and Southeast Asian countries (Onitiri 1997, 45). The conference emphasised the role of regional integration in West Africa and its response to current world trend, as particularly important. In an increasingly competitive world, where it will be ever more difficult to resort to protective measures, ECOWAS needed a high level of productivity as the key to improved competitiveness of their products in the world market.

There was the need to secure a greater regional co-ordination and harmonization of policies in several spheres within ECOWAS to accelerate the process of development and provide greater incentives for foreign investment.

Another important area, which needs mentioning is the impact of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) on the economies of ECOWAS individual countries, and which has in several ways contributed to negate their effective participation in the integration process. The deterioration of West African economies through the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (IBRD) structural adjustment programmes can be singled out as a serious dilemma to ECOWAS' sustainable development since 1975. Major reforms have been introduced, and the international community has mobilised to provide necessary support. It all began when between 1980 and 1998, when all the ECOWAS member states undertook economic reform measures. They carried out more than a hundred stabilisation and adjustment programmes combined with the assistance of the Bretton Wood institutions. However, these reforms were often not fully implemented by the various governments because the directives by experts from these institutions were "alien" to the conditions prevailing in those countries (*West Africa* 1985, 1055).

In terms of their effectiveness, Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) were implemented in countries with markets too narrow to create the economies of scale needed to sustain economic growth. Particularly missing in the chain of events within the SAPs was the failure to take adequate account of the regional dimension of development in the West African sub-region. In many West African countries, Gross Domestic Production (GDP) growth rates, which are below 2 per cent in many cases, are still below the rates of population growth. Large fiscal deficits and high rates of inflation are still the rule rather than the exception in almost all West African States. In addition, the terms of trade have continued to deteriorate; interest on foreign debt continues to climb (World Bank 1993, 23). The

assessment of all the structural adjustment programmes extended out by the Bretton Woods institutions to the countries in West Africa reveal that they exhibited a combination of inappropriate directives, and miscalculations, and transplanted on to a developing and fragile economic framework prevalent in West African economies (ADB 1992, 16).

Because little attention was given in the early years to the social consequences of the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs), deteriorating social situations in many adjusting countries did not create a favourable environment for the implementation of the programmes. Therefore, special programmes have had to be designed to alleviate the impact of SAPs on the poor. The recent report on adjustment in Africa by the World Bank has drawn attention to some of the pitfalls in the adjustment process and suggested the paths to faster progress (World Bank 1993, 24). It is evident in this study that serious economic integration requires the harmonisation of national macroeconomics policies and the establishment of regional mechanisms for purposes of effective integration. In particular, are the movement towards greater convertibility of currencies by ECOWAS, which requires co-ordination and consultation as useful tools to ascertain exchange experience, reduce uncertainties, and increase mutual confidence among the member countries within ECOWAS.

In all these and many areas, much progress has not been achieved because of the lack of co-ordination of fiscal and monetary policies among the member countries. The experience so far leads to the conclusion that more conscious efforts are necessary to ensure the harmonisation of fiscal policies and to allow integration objectives to reinforce each other. This is because the improvement of the regional dimensions of the sub-region has wider implications, which are well too known.

At the close of the twentieth century, all of Africa and in particular, ECOWAS is being shaped by a great variety of dynamics. It is not only the pluralism of regionalism and regionalisation, but simultaneous interactions in a complex game with other processes. In the

case of Africa, the choice is an increasingly stark one between continued incorporation into the world system and disengagement from it, that is, between the perpetuation of outward-looking growth and the adoption of some form of self-reliant strategy for development as envisioned in the LPA (1975) and the Abuja Treaty of 1992.⁴ As with any integration attempt, there are problems ranging from the distribution of benefits to the ability of member states to incorporate their national plans with those of the integration arrangement. The difficulties arising from past integration attempts elsewhere should serve as case studies for ECOWAS since it is a parallel transplant.⁵

There are also implications of the concern about the environment for countries within West Africa, which needs the attention of policymakers. For the rest of the 1990s and beyond, environmental concerns will be major factors in world development and will have major implications for development at the national and regional levels. Environmental concerns are a problem for ECOWAS in pursuance of sustainable regional development as their cardinal goal. By their very nature, environmental issues require very close co-operation on the regional level, and several inter-government organisations would have to work in close harmony to carry out the programmes and projects identified in Agenda 21 agreed to at the World Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.

The unprecedented drought in Africa in the 1980s and the untold hardship and misery that it brought to the populations of several sub-Sahara African countries kindled great interest in the protection and preservation of the environment. For millions of people who had already been affected, famine had become the order of the day; tens of thousands died of starvation in Niger, Ethiopia, Liberia, Mali and Sierra Leone and millions of those who survived were destined to endure lifetime scars from the effects of famine. There was

⁴ Reference is made to the ECA document, serving Africa better: strategic direction for the Economic Commission for Africa, May, 1996, E/ECA/CH.22/2. Addis Ababa.

⁵ Bundu 1997, studies conducted by a former Executive Secretary of ECOWAS, p. 5.

awareness that the drought was the result of misguided policies and the misuse and abuse of natural resources that were dangerously altering the ecological balance in many areas. In most of Africa, millions of hectares of forest covers are being destroyed daily and culminating in desert acreage annually, and the Sahara Desert continues to expand southward and has since gained by a belt of at least 150 kilometres wide (United Nations 2001, 34).

Toward this end, the 1993 United Nations World Investment Report states that economic developments make it more important than ever for developing countries to build up their own human and physical infrastructure. In addition to providing the basis for industrialization and development of the domestic economy, it would allow national enterprises to join up with Transnational Corporations (TNCs) on a more equal basis. It would raise the quality and sophistication of the foreign direct investment (FDI). A host country would attract and would strengthen the prospects for technology acquisition. It would also enable host developing countries to build up supplier capabilities which are sometimes a precondition for the location of TNC activities and which, moreover, add to the economic and technological spill over from affiliates. The building up of such facilities has been an essential feature in developing countries, including those in Asia and Latin America that have succeeded in restructuring both their international and domestic production sectors towards higher-value-added activities. In another related and important aspect of developmental integration, and as demonstrated in "*the project Conflict Prevention in West Africa*:" Dakar, 1998, the West African sub-region possesses a multitude of actors and institutions that are active in the containment, if not prevention, of violent conflicts. The political status of these actors and institutions vary considerably; while they operate on different levels and in different contexts, each has its mandate. The global interests in peace efforts have increased remarkably since the late 1980s; so have peace efforts being violated in many regions of the world. The West African sub-region is not an exception in this regard.

The end of the Cold War and super power retrenchment and withdrawal from many parts of the developing world, and the post-Cold War redefinition of security have impelled regional and continental organisations as well as the United Nations to widen their peacekeeping role because of the increase in the scope and intensity of ethno-political violence in particular. As a result of this twist, regional organisations are forced to focus greater attention on their defence protocols, while some peace scholars are calling for the need for a new paradigm in peacekeeping. The ECOWAS sub-region has had its share of wars of recent and takes this view seriously.

The Liberian civil war - a war underlined more by ethnic animosity, erupted and coincided closely with the end of the Cold War. In response to this overtly ethnic war, ECOMOG forces landed in Liberia on August 24, 1990. Coined "Operation Liberty" by the ECOWAS Heads of state, this humanitarian peacekeeping intervention was deemed necessary because of the death and destruction, ethnic bloodletting, and starvation rampant all over Liberia as a consequence of the escalation of the war. The ECOMOG experiment underscores the power of Community expectations and the practices of co-operation through which a number of states from the same sub-region could form and sustain a collectivity that possesses an effective authority with respect to the goals and survival of the Community. The Liberian peace process poignantly demonstrates the enormous difficulty of organisational adaptation to new circumstances, and the complexity of fashioning compliance and co-operation habits that has endured in the context of clashing domestic and regional objectives. Given this conception of ECOWAS and the ECOMOG experiment in the Liberian civil war, one can briefly elaborate on three different but interrelated perspectives. These perspectives are directly applicable to the purpose or the rationale of ECOWAS, particularly why ECOWAS must be sustained and by which strands to approach discussions about regional integration within the sub-region. The first perspective is founded on domestic politics – the

inabilities of one state in the sub-region to achieve full industrialisation because of the small size of its economy. The second is based on the power of regional and global interdependence – where each state within the sub-region needs the other, in terms of security, intra-state trade and peaceful co-existence; and the third is on the effectiveness of adaptive mechanisms or the adaptive reflex of communities whose members are nation states.

In short, West African States, in the establishment of ECOWAS, realised that, while independence had been the primary goal, their frontiers were largely an artificial by-product of still a colonial scramble due to the weaknesses of their individual economies. With this in mind, an integral politico-economic reconstruction of their countries was urgently needed (*West Africa* 1997, 1015-1155). They decided that ECOWAS was it; and that it was going to be based on functionalism, a model of integration of the European Economic Community (now the European Union). But the formulation of plans, the modalities, and the way forward based on the European model was doomed from the start. The establishment Treaty of ECOWAS failed to initiate models from an African perspective. It is against this background that this study examines the policy implications stemming from the false starts, the inconsistencies and the problems associated with integration within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The examination is necessary as a contribution to the questions of why ECOWAS cannot resolve the numerous institutional and policy inconsistencies, to effectively promote economic co-operation in the sub-region, as well as, to enhance the development of these countries in all fields of economic activity.

III. Rationale of the Study

The rationale of this study is to justify why West African states came together to form ECOWAS and to discuss areas where policy inconsistencies and lapses have impeded progress and how important, coherent, and pragmatic policies can facilitate the integration process. The need for this study at this time is to examine policy implications within

ECOWAS, which have kept the transformation of the countries in West Africa at a snail's pace toward regional development. In particular are the treaties and protocols establishing the economic integration of West African States and the lack of potential they exhibit for accelerated regional development in the sub-region.

The various studies on ECOWAS since its inception in 1975 have been centered on the critical appraisal of problems emanating from co-operation and attempts at integration within the sub-region. The studies have not paid much attention to the inconsistencies and limitations of the establishing Treaty of 1975, as well as the Revised Treaty by the eminent personalities of 1992, which purports to move the cooperation of countries in West Africa towards a regional integration. The contribution arising from this study will illuminate the impact of a combination of flawed policies, conflicting policies, or the inconsistency of policies, on the efforts of West African countries' attempt to transform a cooperative endeavour into a regional integration for the development of the sub-region.

From this premise, the success or failure of ECOWAS can only be measured by the extent to which the intended objectives or targets envisioned have been achieved or met by its member countries. More importantly, focus is placed on the regularity of technical and policy harmonisation and implementation arising from the protocols at which resolutions and declarations are adopted. The failure of any of these mechanisms from the critical appraisal of the achievements of ECOWAS should address the extent to which such mechanisms have failed to make a contribution to regional development in the Community's current form.

The questions then are how have the existing economic communities fared in policy harmonisation or integration? Have the necessary policy guidelines and programmes for sub-regional industrial development been put in place? Have most communities in Africa been able to establish major multinational industrial projects so pertinent to their development yet? In view of the above, the research question guiding this study is: *To what extent can the*

Treaties of ECOWAS be blamed for the lack of synergy to tackle planned strategies towards a sustainable regional development in West Africa?

The contribution from this study is to determine to what extent the imposition of the European model of integration lacks an “African content”, in terms of iterative planning process. The study will also contribute to the lack of “home-grown” ideas about the changing political and economic realities, which takes cognisance of the environment. Against this backdrop, the significance of this study and its contribution to the discipline are enumerated as follows:

First, the study will identify the policies within ECOWAS that are divergent from the European Union due to the varying economic, political, social and cultural underpinnings. The attempt to integrate anglophone, francophone and lusophone countries, with the aim to break a common colonial legacy of political and socio-economic barriers is flawed with inconsistencies and realities.

Second, the study will illuminate the fact that the attempt to establish a community encompassing sixteen (16) countries,⁶ from West Africa, with differing political and economic backgrounds, could have been achieved if the harmonisation of policies has been done along the lines of *co-operation*, rather than *integration*.

Third, to contribute to an existing void that exists in the disciplinary sector of this study, which usually deliberate on the problems stemming from the lack of commonalities among the member countries of ECOWAS rather than the bad policies. Unlike other studies which fail to incorporate both empirical as well as theoretical policy dimensions impeding ECOWAS’ integration efforts, this study will bridge that gap by highlighting the major policy issues and inconsistencies that must be resolved in order for the community’s efforts to materialise.

⁶ Reference is made here to the sixteen countries before the withdrawal of Mauritania.

Fourth, the study has specific concerns for West African states within a continental perspective to revive the idea of an African Renaissance. The significance of the study is also to demonstrate that, despite daunting problems, there is still an enthusiasm by ECOWAS member states to integrate their economies for regional development.

Finally, this study is significant in order to recognise the changes and the dimensions currently taking place within ECOWAS. This assessment is necessary in order to incorporate ECOWAS' latest invention, ECOMOG (ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring and Observer Group), which has come to symbolise that economic integration is to a large extent, conditioned amongst other factors by political stability in the sub-region.

In view of the above, certain trends and dynamics are noticeable in the study of regionalism as it affects the convergence and coherence of states in the West African sub-region. The analogy here is that certain streams within International Relations (IR), and International Political Economy (IPE), and in combination with Bureaucratic Politics, affect the sustainability of sub-Saharan African countries in their intended integration as coherent regional blocs. As Fawcett and Hurrell point out, these theories can be understood in two ways: when the entire region plays a defining role in the relations with the rest of the world; and when the sub-region serves as the organising basis across a wide range of issues within the region (1995, 97). Such strands provide a base from which to start theorising regional economic integration.

IV. The Central Hypothesis of the Study

The establishments of the articles of association giving birth to ECOWAS in 1975 marked the fruition of a noble idea of ECOWAS Founding Fathers. While independence had been the primary objective in the 1960s of most African statesmen, their frontiers were still largely artificial by-products of a colonial economic scramble. The creation of ECOWAS was a realisation by West African countries that no one country in the sub-region could

achieve economic independence without the collaborative support of the other neighbouring states. There was also the realisation that the overall size and resource base of the sub-region and the proliferation of small, non-viable political entities made integration the only realistic option for economic development. The ultimate goal was that sub-regional integration in West Africa would be a major step towards the integration of the entire region. But ECOWAS from an institutional, a functional, and an operational perspective has been and still remains inappropriate in form. This is so for a number of reasons.

It is first and foremost a direct transplant of the European Union model, and not a product via iterative processes of a homegrown concept. Secondly, the creators of ECOWAS failed to take into account the crucial political distinctions between the member states; hence, it has been unable to accommodate their political aspirations. Thirdly, ECOWAS failed to marry its economic propositions with the political ideologies prevailing in West Africa. Deliberations on economic development through integration need to have been subordinated to consideration on the key political realities of the sub-region, namely that it was highly politically unstable, and was characterised by a constant stream of coups d'état, threats of military take-overs, and the assassination of key leaders. Fourthly, the creation of ECOWAS failed to take into account the nature of African bureaucratic processes and the likely interaction between the organisation and the political leaders of the weaker states, where inter-state relations were peculiarly fraught. This failure to understand the forces for and against bloc formation, and shape ECOWAS accordingly, lies at the core of the problems that prevent ECOWAS from making a success of the integration process in West Africa.

The core of this hypothesis is then that the founding fathers of ECOWAS falsified the vision and aspirations of Pan-Africanism by adopting the European model of integration and crafting a regional integration from the blueprints of the European Union. This study sets out to demonstrate that regional integration in West Africa might have worked better through an

iterative planning process, crafted within the context of the problems predominating in the social, political and economic areas of the sub-region. It is argued that integration in terms of the objectives set for ECOWAS will work best if the models are home-grown, reflect an African perspective, and take account of priorities for action significantly different from those of other areas.

In summary, it is not the static pursuit of the standard goals of regional integration, such as the development of custom unions, the creation of a common market, and other such steps towards regional integration, that matters within ECOWAS. It is the identification of key political priorities; the need to anticipate and allow for major areas of sensitivity (such as the lowering of national barriers to population movement); and perhaps most importantly, the enhancement of the authority and effectiveness of ECOWAS's key body, the Secretariat, to ensure it has the real capacity to implement the policies and projects of ECOWAS. At present the programmes are alien to African realities, and ECOWAS in its current form and dimension is destined to fail. If ECOWAS is reconstructed the benefits will not be limited to the West African sub-region. They may have great significance for the wider debate on globalisation, and the manner in which regional groupings of less developed countries may organise under politics and economies in a co-operative and co-ordinated manner in order to articulate with, and compete in, the global economy.

V. Limitations of the Study

This study is not intended to be the definitive history of all co-operative or integration efforts in West Africa. Neither does this study intend to recapitulate fully the many economic and other policy justifications for integration as opposed to national approaches to development. Both of these issues have been dealt with extensively elsewhere, and there is little need to repeat these findings here (Asante 1984, 77). This study is concerned with the practice of regionalism, recognising that all practice, whether explicitly or implicitly, is

guided by theory – and in the case of ECOWAS, their strategic policy implications. The study is limited to the failures in terms of the planning process and the parallel transplant of Functionalism or Neo-functionalism as the path for development in West Africa without paying attention to the social, economic and political dynamics prevailing. Academic theorists of regional integration, especially of the neo-functional persuasion, initially ignored “the external causes and effects” and have only belatedly incorporated them within their analytical frameworks. It is now widely recognised that processes of regional change are not autonomous or self-generated, but rather they are responsive to a context of internal factors, as well as to global interdependence and interaction.⁷

Finally, the study will distinguish between *integration* agreements (that focus on trade and factors of production) and *cooperation* agreements (that involve selected policy harmonization or joint infrastructure projects). It makes a further distinction between the objective of economic integration and the specific mechanism of a formal regional integration agreement. It does not evaluate monetary unions within the sub-region of West Africa.

⁷Global Coalition for Africa 1993, 14.

CHAPTER II

Review of the Theoretical Framework and Empirical Literature

This chapter presents the theoretical framework and also the literature guiding this study. The theoretical debate about ECOWAS is enormous, but it is also contextually uneven and fragmented. In studying the economic integration process within West Africa, Parsons (1995) argues that such a study should be about governments' organisation of ideas and concepts (23). The world generally, and ECOWAS in particular, is a complex place, and in order to understand issues confronting the integration process, we need to simplify such issues (Parsons 1995, 23-24). When we simplify issues, we can comprehend the multiple of factors and forces, which shape problems and social processes. The identification constitutes frameworks in which we can use to explain the impediments and implications confronting ECOWAS. The following frameworks provide a map and describe what conditions or arrangements should exist if the given goals are to be attained. This study will be guided by the normative theoretical approach, which is concerned with what ought to be rather than what is. Underlying the need, this study is framed around the following approaches:

(a). Functionalism/Neo-functionalism Theories of Integration

Traditional theories of integration are derived from nineteenth century models with the growth of functional international organisations. The goal of functionalism is to build a supranational authority in which the importance of the nation-state is either overridden or altogether eliminated. The Functionalists' theory assumes that progress in international and social co-operation is a pre-requisite for the elimination of political conflicts and war.

These models can amply explain the implications in the Treaties establishing ECOWAS and other areas of economic activity since the driving force of integration in West Africa is modelled after the European Union – an offshoot of functionalism. The theories serve as a comprehensive, and largely accepted, international integration theory, and remain

valid in explaining the kind of integration arrangement, whose objectives are, among others, the achievement of regional political integration and development. In order to test the neo-functional integration model, we have adopted the case study method, and ECOWAS integration arrangement has been chosen as the case.

Neo-functionalism is an integration theory proposing a model that can achieve an established political community at the end of the integration process (Haas 1958a, 45; 1964, 59; 1966, 65; Haas and Schmitter 1966, 78; Pentland 1973, 87; Puchala 1999, 98). In the model functionalism creates a linkage between economic and political integration.⁸ Similarly, neo-functionalists claim that after the creation of an economic integration within the framework of a supranational organisation, political integration would come into existence almost automatically. By pursuing this form of integration, the neo-functionalists anticipate a gradual transformation of their economies through supranational arrangements to attain a federal or a confederate State at the end.

To test the neo-functionalist integration model, we have applied its hypothesis to the ECOWAS integration process, and we have tried to observe especially the differences and similarities between this hypothesis and the changing dynamics of the relationships in the West African integration process. In a similar vein, we have tried to analyse the historical developments of ECOWAS relations and the economic and political issues stemming from this relationship in the theoretical framework of neo-functionalism. Thus, we have assumed to explain on the one hand, the dynamics of the ECOWAS integration arrangement, and on the other, the fragility of neo-functionalism as the international integration theory based on which ECOWAS was established.

⁸ Functionalism and neo-functionalism are the theories that most African writers on integration refer to when they are comparing the problems inhibiting transformation of ECOWAS.

In order to assure a better understanding, we have analyzed the ECOWAS integration process in two phases. The first phase commences with the establishment of the integration process in the mid-1970s (Chapter V), and the relationship between ECOWAS as an institution charged to provide a way-out of compressed markets and the limitation imposed by (effects of SAPs) and the near absence of intra-trade among the member states. The second phase starts in the 1990s, (Chapter VI), and extends to the present day, showing the inconsistencies in policies, regardless of the revisions made to the establishing Treaty to correct them in 1991-1992. The changes that have taken place in the ECOWAS integration process and within the two phases are matched against the hypothesis of neo-functionalists integration theories, which forms the central issues of this study. We will then attempt to analyze the areas where there are contradictions between the neo-functional theory and the changing dynamics of ECOWAS integration. In short, the study attempts to revise neo-functionalism as an international integration theory and to determine the aspects, which are lacking in this theory within the establishing Treaties of ECOWAS. This will help shed light on the falsification of policies by the Founding Fathers of ECOWAS, in terms of the plans or actions that failed to take into consideration the prevailing conditions of West Africa.

Neo-functionalism is a relatively new approach to many of the international integration theories. In the writings of Ernst B. Haas (1958a), especially through his book *Uniting of Europe*, but perhaps most clearly by Lindberg (1968), neo-functionalism has found its primary foundation. This approach has its origins in the critique of functionalism and has been structured on the initiative of the passage from the European Coal and Steel Community to the European Economic Community. In this context, it would not be wrong to say that neo-functionalism is one of the best theories that can be used to theorize the West African integration movement.

As a comprehensive theory, neo-functionalism aims to reach a political community larger than a nation-state and looks for the conditions in which this new type of political community will evolve. With this characteristic, the neo-functionalist theory resembles federalism. Both project a model of the end product, a purposeful transformation to a supranational state or political community. However, neo-functionalism differs from federalism by virtue of its method reaching that ultimate goal. The method of integration pursued by neo-functionalism is taken from functionalism. Contrary to federalism and similar to functionalism, neo-functionalism proposes a step by step method starting from economic sectors and spreading through political fields for creating a supranational political community. We can thus conclude that in the light of these characteristics neo-functionalism is an amalgam of federalism and functionalism (Lindberg 1963, 71).

Neo-functionalism started to build up its theoretical construction with the description of "political community." Haas (1958a), as the founding father of neo-functionalism, describes the political community as "a condition in which specific groups and individuals show more loyalty to their central political institutions than to any other political authority, in a specific period of time and in a definable geographic space"(Haas 1958a, 44-72). According to this description we can say that Haas views central political institutions and loyalty to them as the landmarks of a political community as a set of conditions in a given period of time and in a definable geographic space. To sum up here then, those conditions, given in a specific time frame, shape the loyalty of groups and individuals bestowed to their central political institutions. Having said that, the set of conditions, which shape the loyalty of a population, can change in a different frame of time, resulting in the loyalty of a population to shift from one central political institution to another which can cause the formation of a new political community in a different frame of time. In using the neo-functionalist theory, an attempt

would be made to conclude that ECOWAS might have drifted away from the imposition of functionalism or neo-functionalism as a theory to drive her integration process.

(b). Iterative Planning Processes (“Muddling Through” Theory)

Another interesting theory that has been developed for the transformation from the tools of the analytic (rational) tradition towards the conceptual models for societies and organizations and will be employed in this study is “muddling through.” The tradition of “Muddling through” is a descriptive theory for continuous adaptation, often used as a strategy in public planning situations (Johansen 1977, 14). The theory is invoked here as a model because it can function in situations with a high degree of uncertainty. The principle behind the theory is the *use of many small steps in an adaptive and learning process instead of making larger and more fundamental changes* (Popper 1964, 1). Because of the interplay between effects and various goals, such as those proposed by the cardinal goals of the establishing Treaty of ECOWAS, a mix of various initiatives will emerge. The underlying goal here is that one cannot expect all desired effects to show at once, but because effects can be countered by other changes in society, new initiative or changes in the existing policy must be implemented to move towards the desired effects. The desired effect will change due to the development of new or changed goals. The decision maker thus will have to be prepared to repeat the process continuously and make corrections as he goes along.

Thus “Muddling Through” can be a useful tool if we have long-time goals and visions (such as the motives of ECOWAS) to support them, or at least an understanding of what kind of future situations we want to avoid (CEPS 2000, 1-4). At the same time the “control” over the means may be low in terms of resources. The model is often used to describe the tactics one has to follow to reach the long-term goals. The model presupposes a strong and centralized management, managing through the larger lines and leaving the adaptation to

subordinate levels like what takes place between ECOWAS and its institutions when “substitutes” are sent to the Conference of the Authority summits. The characteristics of the model are presented here:

- (i) Problem formulation: Defines time-scope: a cyclic and rolling way of planning (e.g. the relationships between yearly budgets to yearly programs). The systems of multiple time-scopes e.g. long, medium and short range time-lines in planning.
- (ii) Information Gathering: Implies the strengths and weakness, opportunities and threats. The attempt is to describe the situation at hand as far as existing knowledge can go. It can take the form of responses from the civil society, local and regional organizations, as well as inhabitants.
- (iii) Vision Building: Is the expression of the desired outcome(s). Using the involvement and the description to formulate understandable visions/goals for the future and suggest how to get there. The support of stakeholder (like the civil society within ECOWAS) is also crucial to the success through “internalizing” the vision.
- (iv) Strategy Forming: Is to allow for flexible and dynamic organizations, responsibilities; that are to do what and when. Equal power for participation or agreement on the distribution of power or incentives is provide, in this case, the distribution of benefits.
- (v) Implementation: The power of the participants to implement actions is crucial; the need for partnership forming and individuals as well as collection actions must have visible activities and “rewards” for achieving goals and finally;
- (vi) Evaluation: A need exists for active reporting systems that should enable the assessment of results and formulation of new goals and changes in framework, ensure open and democratic processes and information system, and enable changes of attitudes as well as actions according to experiences.

(c) The Bureaucratic Politics Approach

To further guide this study, the Bureaucratic Politics approach will be used due to the fact that leaders, who sit on top of organisations like ECOWAS, are not a monolithic group. Rather, each is, in his or her own right, a player in a central, competitive game (Viotti and

Kauppi 1995, 29-34). The name of the game is "Bureaucratic Politics;" bargaining along regularised channels among players positioned hierarchically within the government. The behaviour of institutional bureaucrats can thus be understood according to this model not as organisational outputs (the organisational model), but as outcomes of bargaining games amongst them. The Bureaucratic Politics model sees no unitary actor but rather many actors as players, who focus not on a single strategic issue but on many diverse intra-national problems (Viotti and Kauppi 1987, 30).

As Allison and Halperin have explained, the Bureaucratic Politics model is centred on the basic assumption that the maker of government policy is not a single calculating decision-maker as the rational actor model suggests (Allison and Morton 1972, 40-72). Rather, they are conglomerate of large organisations and political actors who differ substantially about what their government should do on any particular issue and who compete in attempting to affect both governmental decisions and the actions of their government. Therefore, the use of the model leads the analyst to an examination of the influence of an organisation's behaviour on the processes of foreign policy, decision-making, and implementation.

Decision-makers, who converge on ECOWAS at any given time, may have some shared images of their society, but they may also have different interests and priorities. Many of them may be preoccupied by events at home and have to deal with events abroad only as those events interact with, and affect their ability to pursue their interests at home. Consequently, what any government does in any particular instance can best be understood not as a consciously planned and carefully directed effort to influence other states but as a result of bargaining among "actors" or "players" positioned hierarchically in the governments of ECOWAS. A foreign policy action in this case, from outside the government, which looks like a methodically orchestrated attempt to achieve a well-defined national interest, may, in fact, represent a shaky compromise between rival elements in the bureaucracy. The outcome

of such a transaction is that each participant is in the process, pursuing its own distinct organisational or personal interest. In this manner, each rival stresses that both the bargaining process and the results are affected by a number of constraints, including those arising from the organisation's processes or procedures as well as those of the individuals' shared values. The model consists of three sets of questions and, therefore, three sets of tentative answers. Correspondingly, there are three stages in which the model can be used. The questions commonly employed are the following: (i) who "plays;" that is, whose interests and behaviour have an important effect on the government's decision and actions? (ii) what determines each player's stand and his or her perceptions and interests, which lead to a stand? And (iii) how are the player's standing aggregated to yield decisions and actions of government?

To provide answers to these questions, the analyst has to proceed in stages. The first stage involves identification of the bureaucratic units or organisational groups sharing the policy-making process, their roles, and shared images as well as their organisational, personal and political interests. The Bureaucratic Politics model postulates that the mix of players will vary depending on the issue and the type of game (Viotti and Kauppi 1987, 79).

The second analytical stage in the Bureaucratic Politics model entails a determination of the various organisational interests and the various manoeuvring techniques used by the bureaucratic groups. In general, the interests that affect the players' actions are classified under four categories: national interest, organisational interests, domestic political interest, and personal interest (Viotti and Kauppi 1987, 114). The third stage consists of analysing what happens after the government has made a decision; that is, the processes by which decisions become actions. The main finding here is that "action games" which follow from "decision games" involve maneuvering. Players manoeuvre to get an issue into the channel - an issue that they believe offers the best prospects for getting the desired results. An example

is the use of a number of techniques to influence the nature and content of decisions in the course of policy implementation during ECOWAS meetings (Viotti and Kauppi 1987, 89). Some of the techniques are the following: (i) evading or disregarding instructions by deliberately taking actions contrary to specific instructions (ii) delaying taking action (iii) obeying the *letter* but not the *spirit* of the instructions and (iv) taking actions in the absence of specific instructions, etc. The idea here is that the above techniques tend to widen the gaps between policy decisions and policy implementation, and the Bureaucratic Politics model is interested in accounting for such gaps when employed.

(d). International Political Economy (IPE)

Here the IPE would be employed to support the analysis of ECOWAS, relying on the work of Moravcsik and Matlary, in their critical review of integration theory and international relations theory (Moravcsik 1993, 78; Mitrany 1975, 15). Moravcsik seeks to ground integration theory in theories of international political economy, arguing that we need two types of theory: one of national preference formation, and one of interstate bargaining (Moravcsik 1993, 482). The former is referred to as 'intergovernmentalism'- modified in other works, where an attempt is being made to determine state strength or autonomy as well as optimal state strategy (Mitrany 1975, 17). Moravcsik proposes to look at interest groups and governments and the bargaining that takes place over the formation of 'national interest'. Thus we may arrive at state strategies when we make reference to the presence of such interest or the lack of it within ECOWAS. The analogy by Moravcsik with regard to the EU is that there was no European-level energy policy at the time; what emerged of such a common policy came in time after the formation of State interests. In a theory, however, we need to take into account how interests are influenced by factors exogenous to the State. The literature that deals with this link between the State and the international environment arises from theorising about interdependence, especially economic interdependence (Cooper 1968,

67; Keohane 1989, 41; Nye 1971, 89).

The central concern here is how interdependence affects State interest formation as well as State action within countries in West Africa. The common term for policy in this sense is State strategy. The emphasis is on how to manage interdependence, in the most advantageous way to State interests, and also on how to use international level opportunities domestically. The sources of State action are thus partially domestic (e.g., the effects of cross-border activities) and partially international (e.g., the shocks from world trade or impacts from Structural Adjustment Programmes). In short, the theory is in reality the assumption that international relations and domestic politics are intimately related, and that “they should be analysed simultaneously” (Katzenstein 1977, 67; Gourevitch 1978, 90).

For, in attempting to explain events or cases, such as the lapses in policies, as well as the non-implementation of numerous protocols of ECOWAS, one cannot simply describe the full state of the events without a purposeful combination of the functional/neo-functionalist theories, the International Political Economy theory, the lack of vision (iterative planning), as well as the Bureaucratic Approach. The tying together of all these theories underscores the logical explanation of phenomena, such as the personalities within the Bureaucratic Approach, and singles out the nature of their relevance, and the important determinants of the occurrences. Nevertheless, the theory most relevant to the impediments hampering development within ECOWAS is functionalism and neo-functionalism – theories that offer a broadly plausible rationale for explaining past experiences. The objective is to make adequate conclusions about the identification of policy challenges, the setting of targets, and the signing of declarations and agendas, which are one thing; and showing how translating them into concrete programmes on the ground is another.

I. Review of Related Literature

One of the most important tasks of a literature review is to structure the material in order for it to be systematic and coherent with the formal organising framework of the study (Baldwin 1994, 15). The complexities of the political, social, economic and cultural dimensions of the West African sub-region have been acknowledged and highlighted by previous writers on this subject.⁹ First of all, we need to state at the onset that the regional economic grouping in West Africa is unique. What makes ECOWAS unique is that the countries came together because they realised that as long as member countries are, in terms of resource endowment, too small to be self-sufficient, they needed to act together or be swallowed by others. The strategy of sub-regional interdependence they envisioned will lead to a more competitive international trade with industrial countries. In this situation there was an implicit emphasis within the Treaties establishing ECOWAS on intra-regional trade. By pooling the regional resources and creating wider territorial markets, the regional grouping removes some of the major constraints of industrial development within the sub-region.

Chiselebwe Ng'andwe, Chatal, and Mandaza (1987), point out that in the absence of a formal regional trade agreement, member countries could easily be tempted to buy from outside the regional grouping and thus deny the new industry the market it needs to survive. Thus, in a situation of mutual trade agreements, the regional efforts at industrialisation are well rewarded, in terms of a higher pace of industrial progress. However, in the absence of political union, the distribution of benefits tends to be biased in favour of a country with a superior economic base (de Melo and Panagariya 1993, 21). In addition to national investment resources, the major influences on industrial location are market concentration,

⁹ See, to a large extent, the work of S. K. B. Asante, 1976, 1986, 1991, 2001; Abass Bundu, 1997; Okolo 1997, Okolo and Wright (eds) 1990; and others.

and economic and social infrastructure. All these factors will tend to favour the country with a superior economic base. Towards this regard, mounting literature on regional economic co-operation with particular reference to Africa, and in the context of European integration, suffices as a model for African integration schemes.

When the Organisation of African Unity was established almost four decades ago, there were many fewer international and regional organizations, and their mandates and tasks were much more limited. In the intervening years, matters have changed substantially. Within Africa, a range of sub-regional organizations has developed in response to specific challenges. But most of them are today at a crossroads due to various economic, political and social problems. The scale of poverty and suffering on the continent is daunting. According to an Oxfam report, three hundred million people live on less than US\$1 per day.¹⁰ Life expectancy is 48 years and falling. More than one-third of all children are malnourished; more than 40 per cent have no access to education. Twenty-eight million people live with HIV/AIDS, and for over 100 million people, war is a part of daily life (Oxfam 1993, 1). And yet, in spite of these grim statistics, there are grounds for optimism.

In parallel to the increased emphasis on regional economic integration in the industrialized world, or among the latter and some developing countries, there has recently been a revival of regional initiatives among other developing countries and a strengthening of trade within their regional groupings. Since the wave of independence movements in the 1960s, African leaders have time and again spoken of the importance of regional cooperation and unity. In fact, there have been more regional integration and cooperation agreements consummated in Africa than on any other continent. But, with few exceptions (notably SACU and possibly the franc zones) these agreements have yielded disappointing results. They have not led to increased trade within the region, or between the countries of the region and the rest

¹⁰ Oxfam is an international charitable organization with offices in Africa.

of the world. Moreover, except for the franc-zone monetary unions, they have had little success in actually integrating the economies of the member countries. Basically all analysts agree that the great amount of time, effort and resources expended to date in the name of regional integration in Sub-Saharan Africa has had little payoff.

Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) has a long history of regional integration and cooperation agreements. The South African Customs Union (SACU), for example, evolved from an earlier union that was established in 1910. Similarly, the countries of the recently resurrected East African Community (EAC)--Tanzania (then just the mainland of Tanganyika, Uganda and Kenya), first established a common internal market early in this century, and the Congo Basin Treaty emerged from the Berlin conference of 1884. Yet the enthusiasm for regional integration remains. The other examples are the Southern Rhodesia Customs Union established in 1949 between South Africa and present day Zimbabwe; the Ghana-Upper Volta Trade Agreement between Ghana and Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso) in 1962; the African Volta Common Market linking Algeria, United Arab Republic (Egypt), Ghana, Guinea, Mali and Morocco in 1962; the Equatorial Customs Union and Cameroon composed of Central African Republic, Chad, Congo and Gabon in 1962 and which formed the origins of the present Customs Union of Central African States.

Other schemes, outside Africa are the Caribbean Common Market (CARICOM) established in 1973 to succeed the Caribbean Free Trade Association of 1965. CARICOM provides for the establishment of a common external tariff and a common commercial policy towards third countries. The member countries include Antigua, Barbados, Belize, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguila, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and Trinidad and Tobago.

Also in January of 1989, Canada and the United States of America established the Free trade Agreement between them (CUSTA) to eliminate tariffs by January of 1998. The

agreement has a dispute settlement mechanism covering diverse areas such as energy, investment, government procurement, automobiles, wine and spirits. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) followed the success of CUSTA with the inclusion of Mexico in 1991. The agreement involving the U.S.A., Mexico and Canada, covers areas such as the elimination of tariffs and non-tariffs barriers, co-operation in a number of fields including the environment, and most importantly immigration between the U.S and Mexico on drug trafficking (NAFTA 2001, 1-7).

Similarly, today's global economy is the growing tendency towards regional economic and trading blocs. The pioneering endeavour and the most successful one to date, and virtually the role model for all subsequent integration projects, is the European Union (EU). The EU started in 1952 as the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) following a plan by its founders to create a united Europe after World War II that would establish conditions for economic growth and social cohesion among European peoples and for greater political integration and co-operation among governments. Over years thereafter, the ECSC became a framework for pooling resources and co-ordinating and harmonising industrial policies and activities in coal, iron ore, and the steel sectors of France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg. It served as a single economic market, that is, a customs union and a free trade area for these limited economic sectors and, thus, operated free of national tariff or quota restrictions (EEC 1979, 16-97).

In 1957, the treaties of Rome brought the six ECSC member countries together to establish the European Atomic Energy Community (ERATOM) and the European Economic Community (EEC or Common market). Again, ERATOM served as a framework for greater co-operation and harmonisation in the field of atomic energy and nuclear research common to the countries. The ECSC extended the concept of the common market and free trade to most of the other sectors of the countries' gradually. By 1965, the common institutions (i.e. ECSC,

ERATOM, and the EEC) for the three communities were brought together. The Merger Treaty as it is often referred to, resulted in the establishment of the Council of Ministers, the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Court of Justice, and the European Council (Merger Treaty). Over a period of two decades, the stage was then set to transform the merger into what is known as the European Single ACT (ESA), which dismantled all remaining barriers towards the attainment of a Community-wide unified market by the end of 1992. Before the attainment of the Common Market, the Europeans signed another Treaty (Maastricht Treaty), to create with effect from January 1993, a single currency, a European Central Bank and a Community-wide freedom of movements for people.¹¹

The EU's common market objectives have been fully achieved giving way to the total movement of goods, capital and people within the national borders of the fifteen member states of the Community. The economic and monetary union have also been achieved in which common policies in foreign trade, agriculture, fisheries, transportation and fiscal and monetary activities are all being pursued. The European currency (ECU), a denominator for the weighted average of currencies linked in the European Monetary System (EMS) has been successful as a primary unit of exchange for EU transactions. Also, the EU has common rules and joint programmes in the energy and environmental sectors, education research and development, and technology, making the EU the only integration scheme that has transformed from joint harmonisation and co-operation to a union of states short however of a political one.

The Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) is yet another integration scheme that was established in 1967 by five member nations namely Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. Brunei became the sixth member in 1984, and Vietnam joined some years afterwards. The objectives of ASEAN are to strengthen regional cohesion

¹¹ The EU now comprises fifteen members: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece,

and promote regional peace and stability conducive to national development. ASEAN was never from the beginning conceived as an integration scheme. It was set up to manage conflicts and to provide an atmosphere of tranquillity for the region, but it soon evolved in the industrial sharing and resource pooling of mechanisms which allowed ASEAN to liberalise intra-ASEAN trade in intermediate products fabricated in the ASEAN region. By 1994, other joint ventures culminated into the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) and from then on, the regional integration scheme has made progress in economic liberalisation including deregulation as part of the key features of ASEAN economies and can be described as a showcase that others like ECOWAS can emulate.

The Latin American Integration Association (LAIA) is an offshoot of the Latin American Free Trade Association (LAFTA). It was established in 1981 to liberalise, on a more flexible basis, trade among its member nations of Uruguay, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela. When its predecessor LAFTA was established in 1960, the intention was to reduce trade restrictions over a 12- year period. But an amalgam of factors such as (i) high transportation costs (ii) economic nationalism and protectionist tendencies and (iii) feelings of unequal benefits among the member states greatly impeded progress. LAIA has since encouraged within it the establishment of other sub-regional arrangements. These include the Common Market of the Southern Cone (MERCOSUR) established in 1991 and comprising Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay, and the Group of Three nations of Colombia, Mexico and Venezuela created in 1993. The achievement of LAIA is minimal because the philosophy of economic co-operation and integration within LAIA is the fact that members have the liberty to pursue bilateral and sub-regional initiatives. The underlying principle for this approach is that because of the different levels of development and economic problems, the LAIA member

states cannot be expected to advance at the same speed of progress in the integration process.

The Common Market among the Central American nations of Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Costa Rica (CACM) is another example of regional integration. CACM was formed in 1960 with the objective of liberalising regional trade mostly in agricultural products. From the 1950s, it began as the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA), which provided the framework for achieving a wider market to permit efficient industrialisation within Central America. By 1960, their focus shifted to free trade objectives at the prompting of more industrialised members within the sub-region (Guatemala and El Salvador). But problems associated with the sharing of benefits (conflict between Honduras and Nicaragua), of the integration process soon led to the realisation that the free trade objective as the principal focus of the integration process had ignored any effective mechanism for the equitable distribution of such benefits.

In West Africa, there are a number of peculiar features, which have definitely influenced trends in integration. Not only does the area have some of the densest populations in Africa, it also contains the largest number of individual nations, fifteen,¹² and embraces three different agro-ecological zones; versus the one or two zones of other African regions. West Africa has the largest variation of mineral ores, and the topographic relief is generally flat, thus making it conducive to the development of railways and roads. Within West Africa, only three of the countries in the sub-region are landlocked. Despite its natural wealth, the sub-region contains some of the world's poorest countries, such as Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Cape Verde and Burkina Faso (ECOWAS 2000a, 19).

The West African sub-region nurtures a large number of inter-governmental organizations, which are active on integration issues. Despite the "natural instinct" for integration, most of them have performed poorly. Few governments have shown the political

¹² This is a reference to the countries encompassing ECOWAS in the West African sub-region after the exit of

will to surrender sovereignty to supranational bodies. Many countries have been involved in several different arrangements at the same time, sometimes with conflicting goals and strategies. Up until the 1990s, the closed nature of political and economic regimes have also run counter to any expectation that regional integration could contribute to better governance and more fruitful insertion into the world economy.

Among the several schemes in West Africa competing for attention, investment funds, donor support, and the limited other economic variables of effective integration are three other economic communities whose emergence occurred within a span of three years. The first was *Communitate des Etats de l'Afrique de l'Ouest* (Community of West Africa States (CEAO), now called *Union Economique et Monetaire des Etats de l'Afrique de l'Ouest* (Economic and Monetary Union of West African States (UEMOA) in 1973. The second was the Mano River Union (MRU) in 1974; in fact, this occurred at the same time when the countries involved in this union were also ratifying the establishing protocols of ECOWAS (ECOWAS 1985). The third was the *Union Douaniere et Economique des Etats de l'Afrique Centrale* (Economic and Monetary Union of Central African States (UDEAC) which was given a new treaty in 1974 and the fourth was the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS) in 1975. The final establishment was the *Communaute Economique des Pays des Grands Lacs* (Economic Community of the Great Lakes (CEPGL) which started its business in 1976 (*Africa Recovery* 2001, 5).

Recently, there have been great expectations that the political changes in South Africa can pave the way for increased integration and cooperation around the southern rim of Africa, and in turn, that the South African economy can be an engine of growth for the entire sub-Saharan region. Several initiatives are under way, including an attempt to expand the agenda of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) to include trade policy, the Cross

Border Initiative (established in 1991), and the Common Market of East and Southern Africa (COMESA), which was established in 1993. The resurgence is not limited to Southern Africa: the East African Community was re-inaugurated in March 1996, nineteen years after it was disbanded (*Africa Recovery* 2001, 6).

In addition to these explosions in agreements of co-operation or integrations schemes in sub-Saharan, the early 1980s was also marked with the adoption of the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) and often referred to as the Final Act of Lagos. The LPA re-emphasised the promotion of economic integration as a prime mover of all Africa's individual and collective socio-economic transformation and called for an impetus for the formation of integration in the various forms of integration: preferential trade areas, common markets, free trade areas, custom unions and even economic communities. The results of the LPA culminated in the establishment of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) in 1983; the Preferential Trade Area for East and Southern Africa (PTA) in 1983 and which was later (in 1994) changed to the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA); the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) created in 1985; and the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA) which was established in 1989 by the North African countries (ECOWAS 1990, 55).

The 1990s has witnessed a greater interest in pursuing formalized private cross-border capital transactions, even if this phenomenon is still at a very early stage. The best example is the transformation of the Abidjan stock exchange into a regional exchange with trading floors in other Francophone countries, and one which even authorities in a non-Francophone country like Ghana have seriously considered joining (Aryeetey 1998, 45). Similarly, the interest in, and expected benefits from, initiatives to provide air transportation on a regional basis remain quite high, despite problems encountered by Air Afrique, a regional airline of the Francophone countries (Goldstein 1999, 36). During the 1990s, there has been a revival of the establishment of another sub-regional airline with Nigeria and Ghana as the major

interested parties. Another joint project under development is the current gas pipeline project to link Nigeria, Benin, Togo and Ghana, which has been scheduled for completion at the end of 2001. West African governments have begun to discuss currency convergence and the establishment of a single currency zone within the context of a two-track approach that will involve non- UEMOA countries.¹³

In West Africa, Nigeria's lethargy has adversely affected the rest of the sub-region economies such as Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire and Senegal. These countries have sought to position themselves to take advantage of the weakness of this African "giant." Of particular interest is the nature, pace and outcome of reform in Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire, which are countries that share a 669 km-long border. Ghana pursued a very comprehensive economic reform programme between 1983 and 1992, after which it began to relax its orthodox approach while still arguing it had not abandoned structural adjustment (*Ghanaian Times* 1999, 1c, 7c). At the height of the Ghanaian reforms, the liberalization of all economic policies became a major strategy, pursued at relatively great speed. Ghana has performed better over the years in many sectors of the economy, including the trade sector, the exchange rate, interest rates, the organization of the financial market and the determination of monetary policy, and eventually, the labour market. In contrast, Cote d'Ivoire approached policy reform with a more circumspection, probably because its entry point was not as bad as Ghana's in terms of economic performance (Aryeetey 1998, 20). Senegal is also strategically positioned in many of these variables to transform its economy and to close the economic variables that it lacks for monetary convergence (ECOWAS 1998a, 99). Nigeria's economic position vis-à-vis the others in the sub-region is not at best because of several years of military rule coupled with corruption. In view of these, Easterly and Levine (1995), have analysed how much more difficult it would be for West Africa to achieve macroeconomic

¹³ This has culminated in the motivation and discussion of the second union, which will involve the non-

stability than other regions in the developing world, particularly the ASEAN economic community.

Also during the 1990s, ECOWAS leaders revisited two important protocols of 1978 and 1981. These protocols called for mutual respect and non-interference in internal affairs and the establishment of a regional mechanism for mutual assistance in defence matters. Uniquely, the protocols place equal emphasis on threats from without and within – domestic fissures and fission. The measures in Article 4 of the ECOWAS Protocols compels member states to intervene in “the internal armed conflict within any member state engineered and supported actively from outside and likely to endanger the security and peace in the entire sub-region.” The protocols further allows for legitimate intervention in internal matters of member states, unlike those (non-intervention clauses) within the charters of the United Nations and the Organisation of African Unity (now African Union).

In terms of shielding the integration schemes within the West African sub-region, these provisions have facilitated regional conflict resolution efforts initiated by ECOWAS when they were most needed. The ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) was established initially on an ad hoc basis as a multinational peacekeeping and enforcement force, and it was the first such group to be established by a regional body successfully. ECOMOG was principally responsible for the restoration of peace in Liberia and later in Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau as well as to address other conflicts in sub-region. The recent civil wars and other political unrest in some West African countries have forcefully revealed the need for social and political stability in the development process of those countries. With this success by the countries in West Africa, the ECOWAS Heads of State and Governments signed a protocol to reinforce peace with a Mechanism to ensure lasting means of conflict prevention, management, resolution, peacekeeping and security in

EUMOA countries with the intention of speeding up the entire process.

December of 1999 (ECOWAS 1988, 99).

III. Concept of Regional Integration

The concept of regional co-operation can be defined as the move to establish linkages between and among a group of countries within a given geographical area or space. The countries are said to be motivated by a common and shared interests to co-operate in the areas of trade and other economic sectors, with a view to achieve a Free Trade Area and subsequently to establish a Custom Union. In contemporary economic theory, economic co-operation is also used to mean "regional economic integration." The stages in classifying the degrees of integration schemes in this study are based on the framework of Balassa and Javanovic, and provide a more useful way of evaluation and analysis of the policy implications regarding ECOWAS in regional development. Regional economic integration schemes are classified in stages and interpreted by scholars as the degree of how deep and wide such schemes can evolve. A brief discourse of the stages of economic integration is necessary in this regard (Jovanovich 1992, 72; Balassa 1961, 19).

(a) Preferential Tariff Agreement

At this initial state of regional integration, customs duties on trade among the participating member countries are reduced relative to those on trade with non-members. In the African context, a preferential tariff agreement is in existence among states of the Preferential Trade Area for Eastern and Southern African States (PTA), which was reconstituted into the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) in 1993.

(b) Free Trade Area (FTA)

Member countries in this situation remove tariffs and quotas on trade in goods originating amongst them. They retain, however, control over their own restriction on trade with non-member countries. The tariffs and other restrictions applying to external trade will vary from one country to another. They normally embrace "rules of origin" agreement in this

situation. Within two years of its existence, UEMOA, an organisation comprising eight (8) out of the 15 ECOWAS member states, was able to create a free trade zone in 1996. The UEMOA also established a common external tariff and harmonised their macro-economic policies in 1998.

(c) Customs Union (CU)

Within a customs union, member states do not only abolish restrictions on internal trade (as in the FTA), but also impose a Common External Tariff (CET), on trade with non-member states. In this situation the rules of origin are no longer necessary and cease. The integration effort of the Southern African Custom Union (SACU) is an example in this regard in the African context.

(d) Common Market (CM)

A common market exists within an integration scheme in which there is also a customs union. Apart from this, a Common Market entails the free movement of factors of production. There are, however, restrictions on the movement of factors of production with non-members states. In sub-Saharan Africa, ECOWAS was intended to achieve a common market at this stage of its integration efforts, but its intended objective of doing that is still in despair.

(e) Economic Union (EU)

In an economic union, major economic policies such as fiscal, monetary, and industrial, are co-ordinated, and monetary union in some member states of the European union. In the African context, there are monetary zones of a special nature like those in the West African French-speaking member states of France-dominated *CFA* and the South Africa dominated *Rand* zone in southern Africa. The monetary arrangements in this respect do not in itself qualify these countries as reaching the stages of a truly economic union like the European Union.

The realisation of integration schemes in Africa stem from the lack of the attainment of several of these stages of integration, and that is troubling. As opposed to the proposed levels of integration stages of regional integration schemes in Africa, it can be generally agreed that most have not gone further than level (c). An exception to this evaluation is the East African Community, which has ceased to exist (Onwuka 1990, 14). The next sub-section is a focus on the relationship of the above stages, and an account and subsequent analysis of the policy implications of ECOWAS in its bid to achieve levels representing the most general of (a), (b), and (c) above, and as representing the case which has been analysed in most detail in the theoretical integration literature of integration schemes in sub-Saharan Africa.

IV. Varieties of Regionalism

The problem of defining regions and regionalism attracted a great deal of academic attention in the late 1960's and early 1970's but yielded few clear conclusions (Russett 1967, 2-7). Regionalism was often analysed in terms of the degree of *social cohesiveness*: language, race, ethnicity, religion, culture, history, consciousness of a common heritage; *economic cohesiveness*: economic complementarity and trade patterns; *political cohesiveness*: ideology and regime type; and *organisational cohesiveness*: the existence of formal regional institutions (Wallace 1990). Attention was particularly given to the idea of regional independence. The range of factors that are implicated in the growth of regional integration is very wide and includes economic, social, political, cultural, and historic dimensions (Fawcett and Hurrell 1995). There are no "natural" regions, and definitions of region and indicators of "region ness" vary according to the particular problem or question under investigation. It is how political actors perceive and interpret the idea of a region and notions of "region ness," that is critical, because all regions are socially constructed and hence politically contested (Fawcett and Hurrell 1995).

(a) Regionalisation

Regionalisation describes the growth of societal integration within a region, and often, undirected processes of social and economic interaction. Early writers on regionalism described such a process as informal integration and what some contemporary analysts refer to as 'soft regionalism' (Russett 1967, 2-7). The term lays emphasis on autonomous economic processes, which further leads to higher levels of economic interdependence within a given geographical area than between that area and the rest of the world. This geographical area is rarely affected by state policies, and the most important driving forces for economic regionalisation come from the markets, from the private trade and investment flows, and from the policies and decisions of companies.

This kind of regionalisation forms strategic alliances between firms and creates inexorable momentum towards the further integration of economies within and across such regions. This kind of regionalisation process has become a particularly important feature of Asia-Pacific regional integration that is driven by complex, market-based imperatives of international specialisation and organised around transnational and Japanese firms and regional business networks (Hormats 1994, 34).

Regionalisation can also involve increasing flows of people, the development of multiple channels, and complex social networks by which ideas, political attitudes, and ways of thinking spread from one area to another and the creation of a transnational regional civil society. Regionalisation is therefore commonly conceptualised in terms of 'complexes,' 'flows', 'networks', or 'mosaics'. It is often referred to as undermining the monolithic character of the state, leading to the creation of cross-governmental alliance, multi-level and multi-player games and to the emergence of new forms of identity both above and below existing territorially defined states (Wallace 1990).

(b) Regional awareness and identity

Regional awareness, regional identity and regional consciousness are inherently imprecise and fuzzy notions. Nevertheless they are impossible to ignore and, for many, they have become more central to the analysis of regional integration. According to Emmanuel Adler, all regions are to some extent subjectively defined and understood in terms of “cognitive regions” (Adler 1994, 1-4). Regional awareness is the shared perception of belonging to a particular community and defined in terms of common culture, history, or religious traditions.

It can also be defined against some external other which may be understood primarily in terms of a security threat; for example, Europe’s self-image defined as against the Soviet Union or Latin American nationalism against the threat of the US hegemony. It can also be defined in terms of external challenges such as the long tradition by which Europe was put in opposition to the non-European, especially, Islamic world; or, more recently, the revival of notions of an Asian community, such as the ASEAN integration identity in contradistinction to the West (Neumann and Welsh 1991, 3-37).

(c) Regional interstate co-operation

Interstate co-operation refers to the negotiation and construction of interstate or governmental agreements. This kind of co-operative activity can be formal or informal and high levels of institutionalisation are no guarantee of either effectiveness or political importance. Oran Young pointed out that: ‘though all regimes, even highly decentralised private-enterprise arrangements, are social institutions; they need not be accompanied by organisations possessing their own personnel budgets, physical facilities and so forth’ (Young 1989, 29). The awareness in Young’s study of formal organisation led the focus instead on the broader concept of “regime,” which entails the explicit or implicit principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures around which actors’ expectations converge in a given area of international relations (Krasner 1983, 1).

Regional co-operation may therefore entail the creation of formal institutions, but it can often be based on a much looser structure, involving patterns of regular meetings with some rules attached, together with mechanisms for preparation and follow-up from meetings. There are two strands of interstate co-operation that one can serve as a means of responding to external challenges and of co-ordinating regional positions in international institutions or negotiating forums. The other can be developed to secure welfare gains, to promote common values, or to solve common problems, especially problems arising from increased levels of regional interdependence.

In the security field, such co-operation can range from the stabilisation of regional balance of power, to the institutionalisation of confidence-building measures to the negotiation of a region-wide security regime (Garuba 1997, 45). Unlike some other forms of regional integration, co-operative arrangements are very clearly static, designed to protect and enhance the role of the state and the power of the government. They involve a reassertion and extension of state authority as part of a process by which states are increasingly willing to trade a degree of legal freedom of action for a greater degree of practical influence over the policies of other states and over the management of common problems (Robson 1993, 45).

In developing countries, economic considerations loom high on the integration agenda. Through this process, the countries aim at establishing a wider economic and market space which allows them to diversify production and reduce or minimise their dependence on the export of a few primary commodities. This improves economic growth rates, and raises employment and the living standards of member countries' citizens. Regional co-operation and integration arrangements generally set forth a series of binding obligations relating to the fulfilment of the different phases of the process such as the establishment of a free trade area. But in reality, these "binding" obligations are never respected or adhered to by some of the member states. This lack of adherence has often led to the lack of credibility, limited

application of the policies and instability of some regional integration arrangements and contributed to their complete paralysis.

Most issues surrounding regional integration in developing countries are about perceptions that they are not reaping equal benefits or balanced development from the integration arrangement and even that the regional integration is a causative factor. For instance, a group of less developed countries involved in the integration process may feel that others are benefiting more from trade liberalisation programmes by virtue of their relatively developed industrial base. In that situation the need for a balanced development and a fair share of the benefits of integration among the member countries often becomes an issue for contention, especially where the integration process involves countries with much disparity in their levels of development. In most cases, particularly within the EU, appropriate mechanisms need to be put in place to ensure that, to a large extent, the lesser-developed members are given special treatment to entice them to remain and contribute to the effective cohesion of the integration scheme.

V. Methodology of the Study

The purpose of this section is to describe the research methodology by which data was collected and analysed in this study. The study was conducted using the qualitative research method, which is the collection of extracts from documents, the review of literature, content analysis and interviews (Corey and Gerald 1987, 62).

The collection of qualitative data can occur in a variety of ways, such as in the form of transcripts, field notes, interviews, and documents in the form of pictures or in other graphic representations (Atkinson and Amanda 1994, 4). Researchers according to Strauss (1987) have different styles of investigating a problem as well as different talents and gifts, in drawing conclusion towards an analysis of a study. Towards this end, Strauss (1987) avers

that there is no single way of approaching a study because qualitative researchers have several ways of approaching the collection of research materials.

(a) The historical case study approach

In the application of historical case studies, several approaches are used in the collection of data. This study employs the Triangulation Approach because of the sensitive and complex problems associated with co-operative efforts within the West African sub-region. The triangulation method is conducted around multiple sources of data collection. The understanding arising from the use of a triangulation methodology in a research is that, it allows for the inclusion of data from different sources or from different methods in an effort to produce a fully rounded, more authentic portrayal of the socio-political phenomena under study. In doing so, the method allows the researcher to apply different data types, or different analytical strategies, in order to approximate with the increasing fidelity of a single, valid representation of the subject under study (Strauss 1987, 4-14)

The policy implications of any entity in regional development, like ECOWAS necessitate a critical analysis of the past and present circumstances under which it operates, so as to present a sound analytical grounding to the study; hence, it is a historical case studies approach. The rationale behind the use of this approach is because the institutional structures, which make up the integration of the economic community of states in the sub-region, require trends of the past in order to formulate perspectives on the present and future directions. According to Kerlinger (1986), historical case study implies “the critical investigation of events, developments, and experiences of the past; it is also the careful weighing of evidence of the validity of sources of information on the past, and the interpretation of the weighed evidence” (Kerlinger 1986, 14).

With the study’s objective of investigating and illuminating the nature and dynamics within the institutions of ECOWAS, a historical case study approach is reliable to investigate

such sets of grouping as the one encompassing the community of states in West Africa. In cognisance of Willer's (1976) assertion that no generalisation can be said to be valid from a single case study, the differing sets of communities within ECOWAS in the midst of their contractions require statements to describe why certain variables such as economic, political, or social, have contributed to the dismal pace of integration in the sub-region. This does not, however, mean that generalisation would totally be ignored, since the nature and diversity of the member states in the sub-region calls for such an interpretation of events (Willer 1976, 7). It is logical that the procedure used be a fruitful combination of the past, the present, and the future to explain achievements in a way that minimises the method's weakness and maximises its strength (Willer 1976, 19).

To attempt to provide answers to the methodological complexities of this study, such as contentious policy and politically laden issues, three methods of data gathering. First, *primary data*: mainly the result of in-depth discussions or interviews as well as documents that were collected through field investigations into some ECOWAS countries. In the countries visited, valuable information was extracted from a partially structured pool of extremely important primary sources such as *original Treaty Documents, the Executive Secretary's semi-annual or annual reports, the series of the Community's Official Journals, ECOWAS Policies and Programmes Series, and the special studies* sponsored by the ECOWAS Secretariat itself. The use of these primary sources provides a refreshingly deep insight into the general operations and fortunes of the integration. A need exists for a comprehensive review of such primary documents to be able to present historic analysis of the Treaties setting up ECOWAS.

In order to achieve many of the objectives set in this study, a field research trip to the ECOWAS Secretariat and diplomatic missions within West Africa became necessary in April of 1998. Documents, mainly those from primary sources, were collected in Nigeria, Togo,

and Ghana, which are, in that order, the seat of ECOWAS since its inception in May 1975, and the anchor state within the community. The visit to the Republic of Togo was necessary because of its role as a member state that hosted a summit meeting to review the activities of ECOWAS in which they decided the location of the Secretariat. It was also in that meeting that the appointment of the first Secretary General and the approval of other practical arrangements for operating the Community organisation were made. Ghana was also visited because it is a member state that has always played a supporting role to Nigeria in championing the cause of integration in the sub-region (Gambari 1990, 31-63). The second method employed was to collect and systematically analyse the *secondary* data in the form of books, and articles - *published* as well as *unpublished*, including, for example, *government or official publications; ECOWAS Official Reports from 1975-2000; parliamentary debates, national and private newspapers*. Also collected were the *Executive Secretary's reports*, the series of the *Community Official Journals*, the *ECOWAS papers* (at the Library of the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, Lagos), as well as, the *special studies* sponsored by the ECOWAS Secretariat.

The third method was that of *tertiary data* collected through journal articles, viewpoints, and analysis of ECOWAS by various scholars about issues pertaining to regional economic integration and development. Other documents were in the form of articles from the *Internet, news broadcast, political commentaries* and analysis of scholars about the political, social and economic underpinnings within ECOWAS.

In sum, the present study is thus based on both existing records and documentary materials, opinions of scholars emanating from their own research, and on an opinion survey of two eminent personalities in Abuja, Nigeria and Accra, Ghana.¹⁴ Such documents may be

¹⁴ An informal interview conducted by the author in Lagos with R. B. Asante of the ECOWAS Secretariat during a research field trip. Another interview was conducted in Accra with Professor S. K. B. Asante at his home in Accra, Ghana, in December of 1997.

helpful in verifying the correct spellings and titles of names of organisations that might have been mentioned in an interview. Also, such primary documents can provide other specific details to corroborate information from other sources. If the documented evidence is contradictory, the case study investigator has sufficient reasons to inquire further into the topic by reviewing the original documents. Finally the use of primary documents is to enable inferences to be made from documents requiring further research.¹⁵

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¹⁵ See Robert Yin (1994) regarding case studies research.

Chapter III

The historic outcome of Regional Economic Integration WA

The Outcome of REI in WA

In the 1960s and 1970s, most African countries served fundamentally as sources for raw materials for their metropolis. Even after they gained their sovereignty on paper, it was soon to be realised that they still relied heavily on colonial powers for trade and economic survival. In order to disengage most of these countries from what was later termed neo-colonialism, by some scholars (Matossian 1958, 217-18; Udogu 1996, 189), it was incumbent upon them to do business with each other. This philosophy was generally attractive and welcomed by some of the political actors who believed that economic sovereignty was a *sine quo non* for political sovereignty (Udogu 1996, 188). But how were these newly independent nations ready to pursue their objective of continental economic autarky after independence? The initial strategy was the creation of regional economic integration schemes.

Numerous students of integration have posited that the existence of various background conditions or prerequisites will greatly facilitate the process of economic and other types of integration.¹⁶ In another view, the lack or absence of these background conditions or requisites is an obstacle or hindrance to integration efforts. The overall evaluation of the achievements of ECOWAS in terms of integration towards development can therefore be described as a West African experience still to gain its developmental momentum. The literature by most scholars on integration schemes in SSA, and the lack of success in many areas and economic development, has been attributed to the following: (i) the existence of numerous other organisations in the region (in particular, the francophone *Communaute economique de l'Afrique de l'ouest*, replaced by the *Union economique et*

monetaire ouest-africaine in 1994, q.v.); (ii) differences in ideology and approach; (iii) the fear of domination by Nigeria; (iv) the burden of certain institutional and economic structures inherited from colonial era; (v) the economic crisis that has plagued the region since the early 1980s; (vi) member governments' lack of commitment, shown by their reluctance to implement policies at the national level; (vii) the absence of national links with the Secretariat; (viii) the failure of member countries to provide the agreed financial resources; and (ix) the lack of political stability in the region in the 1990s as ECOWAS activities were increasingly dominated by its efforts to secure peace in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea Bissau (Aly 1995, 43).

The establishment of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was the outcome of several efforts intended to close the ranks of the countries and to create an economic community in West Africa. The initial efforts to jump-start co-operation in West Africa began with a proposal by President William Tubman of Liberia of an initial organisation of a free trade arrangement with Liberia and its neighbours.¹⁷ The development of an economic integration scheme and the first major bold step at the contemplation of pulling their resources to form an economic community embracing the three language groups¹⁸ in West Africa can be traced to 1963. The first free trade idea in West Africa was convened in 1964 at a meeting encompassing representatives from Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone to establish the framework around which the proposal was to take effect amongst them. The persistent efforts of President Tubman in 1965 resulted in an initial agreement to create an interim organisation for economic co-operation to remove trade barriers and to encourage the harmonious development of their respective states through joint trade (ECOWAS 1975, 56).

¹⁶ See in particular Abangwu, 1975.

¹⁷ Founding Fathers of ECOWAS are William Tubman of Liberia, Yakubu Gowon of Nigeria, and President Eyadema of Togo.

¹⁸ The anglophone group (English), the francophone group (French), and the lusophone group (Portuguese), are

The necessity for regional integration from this time on in West Africa has never been in doubt. The need to revive President Tubman of Liberia's idea of sub-regional unity was then given an impetus by United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. The process was rejuvenated when the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) sent a mission to the West African sub-region to assess the possibilities of industrial development with primary emphasis on development projects that were intended to benefit two or more countries (ECA, 1970). The end result of the mission was a proposal to meet in Lagos for the Conference on Industrial Co-ordination in West Africa. After this conference, intellectual activities inside and outside the West African sub-region focusing on the subject resulted in an avalanche of scholarly and policy literature but the spotlight naturally culminated in recorded failures. The momentum was present but the procedures, as well as the resources to put the plans to work, were eluding the efforts of these countries. Besides the resource problems, the sub-region was prone to political instability such that leaders, who were active in the formation of ECOWAS, were often overthrown in a coup d'états or forced into exile. There was no consistency of leadership and initiative directed to the efforts of President Tubman and particularly President Eyadema of Togo. As a result, there was no consensus because every leader in the West African sub-region was more concerned with how to survive or solidify his grip on the throne rather than talk about sub-regional co-operation or integration. But the reason why West African countries wanted to create ECOWAS in spite of their differences has been partly explained by economic and political considerations. Conscious of their potential collective economic strength, they visualised that in order to enhance industrial development they must have access to a regional market. It was in fact the presence of economic underdevelopment that infused the leaders with what Ernst Haas calls "a shared conception of *how* and *why* they need one another." Under the whip of external dependence, economic integration becomes, in

the three main groups in West Africa.

the words of Joseph Nye, the way to “*get out from under*” (emphasis added) (Haas 1958, 50-57). Put in a more explicit sense, the main political objective for the establishment of ECOWAS was an institutional instrument to maximise the bargaining position of the smaller and weaker West African states. This was necessary to enable the West African countries to compete better against the bigger and more powerful industrialised nations of the world, and particularly, to extricate the region’s economy from Western neo-colonial control and manipulation (ECOWAS 1975, 16).

The final bold move to bring about the birth of ECOWAS was taken at the conference for Economic Co-operation in West Africa held in Niamey in the Niger Republic in 1966. The expectations of the Niamey meeting materialised in yet another momentous United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) sponsored conference held in Accra between April 27 and May 4, 1967, which agreed upon the setting up of a permanent West African Economic Community (ECA 1993, 33-41). According to the then Executive Secretary of UNECA, Robert Gardiner, the need for an economic community in West Africa was because many branches of economic activity were closed to majority of West Africa states owing to their small economic size. In this situation the countries of the sub-region could better compete in the global market if they consolidated their economies into more viable units. Gardiner emphasised that the integration initially did not need to involve the formation of full-fledged common markets, although increased trade was important for any kind of regional economic co-operation. Gardiner also cautioned that it was probably premature at that stage to envisage that all West African Governments would immediately agree to arrangements entailing a high degree of co-operation of important elements of economic policy with all their neighbours in the sub-region (ECA 1967, 56; ECOWAS 1988).

The Accra Conference brought together 12 out of 14 countries, which after numerous

days of deliberations signed the adoption of the Articles of Association for the establishment of the Economic Community of West Africa States.¹⁹ However, the duly signed-up protocols by those countries in April of 1968 came to a standstill as progress and enthusiasm amongst the states to rejuvenate the community died down considerably. But in 1972, General Yakubu Gowon, then Head of State of Nigeria, together with General Gnassingbe Eyadema, president of Togo, initiated new diplomatic moves aimed at reviving the 1967 idea of ECOWAS. Subsequently, by 1974, Togo and Nigeria had succeeded in bringing to the table fifteen participating states, which made the establishment of ECOWAS a reality in 1975 (ECOWAS 1975, 2). Shortly afterwards Cape Verde joined, bringing the total membership of ECOWAS to sixteen.²⁰

The ECOWAS Treaty containing 65 articles and arranged into 14 chapters has as its central objectives the promotion of co-operation and development in all fields of economic activity. The overall objective of ECOWAS is to promote co-operation and integration in order to create an economic and monetary union for encouraging economic growth and development in West Africa. To accomplish these objectives, the following actions were planned over a period of time ranging from 1975 to the year 2000, when the initiation of a common market for Africa would have been attained: (i) the suppression of customs duties and equivalent taxes (ii) the creation of a monetary zone (iii) the establishment of a common external tariff and (iv) the harmonisation of economic and financial policies, among others. However, the functional basis on which ECOWAS was established, requiring the accomplishment of certain objectives, and in a timely manner, were ignored resulting in the dismal transformation of the regional integration.

¹⁹ The countries were: Republic of Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Cote D'Ivoire, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and the Republic of Togo. Only Guinea and Gambia were absent.

²⁰ Mauritania has since dropped out of ECOWAS.

I. The establishing Treaty

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is a state-promoted integration. The Treaties of ECOWAS since its inception involves specific policy decisions by governments designed to reduce or remove barriers to mutual exchange of good, services, capital and people. Modelled after the Treaty of Rome that established the European Economic Community, the ECOWAS Treaties are based on functionalism, which requires the transformation of the integration adopting the classical approach of passing three stages: a free trade zone (FT), customs union (CU) and ultimately a common market (CM). The functionalist and neo-functionalist theses argue that, integration is achieved through a gradual and incremental process. European integration served as a model for ECOWAS integration. The EU Treaty is particularly explicit on trade promotion, with the elimination of tariff and non-tariff barriers between member states and the establishment of a common external tariff (or creation of a customs union), as its central theses. The process to achieve integration within ECOWAS was planned along these lines and was to be achieved in successions over the years. But the practical approach in terms of the allocation of adequate resources, technical skills, and the commitment for the achievement of all these grand goals was not indicated in the initial Treaty. The approach in the initial Treaty, rather, employed the integration of countries within ECOWAS to achieve the objective of integration in a “flexible and pragmatic manner” but not in stages as the case of the development of the European Union (Bundu 1997, 29).

The ECOWAS Treaty of 1975 recognised that the development of adequate institutional machinery to effectively manage and co-ordinate the diverse nature of development policies is imperative. In this vein, the Treaty made extensive provisions for institutions charged with administering and with directing the affairs of the community. To

ensure the effective implementation of its aims and objectives, the Treaty provided for the setting up of the following institutions with clearly defined spheres of authority and functions: (a) Conference of Heads of State and Government (b) the Council of Ministers (c) the Community Tribunal (d) The Executive Secretariat and, (e) six Specialised Commissions (ECOWAS 1992a and 1998b).

(a) Conference of Heads of State and Government

The Conference, the highest authority of ECOWAS, meets once a year. The Chairperson is drawn from the member states in turn (ECOWAS 1992a). It is responsible for the general direction and control of the performance of the executive functions of the Community. Its decisions are binding on all institutions of the Community, and it ensures the progressive development and realisation of Community objectives. The Authority: (i) determines the general policy and major guidelines of the Community, and gives directives; (ii) harmonises and co-ordinates the economic, scientific, technical, cultural and social policies of member states; (iii) oversees the functioning of Community institutions and follow-up implementation of Community objectives; (iv) appoints on the recommendation of Council, the External Auditors; (v) delegates to the Council, where necessary, the authority to take such decisions as stipulated in the Treaty; (vi) refers where it deems necessary any matter to the Community Court of Justice when it confirms, that a member state or institution of the Community has failed to honour any of its obligations or an institution of the Community has acted beyond the limits of its authority or has abused the power conferred on it by the provisions of the Treaty, by a decision of the Authority or a regulation of the Council; (viii) prepares and adopts its Rules and Procedures; (ix) appoints the Executive Secretary in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty; (x) requests the Community Court of Justice as, and when necessary, to give advisory opinion on any legal questions; and (xi) exercises any other powers conferred on it under the Treaty (ECOWAS 1975 and 1992a).

(b) The Council of Ministers

The Council consists of two representatives from each country: a chairperson is drawn from each country in turn. It meets twice a year, and is responsible for the running of the Community (ECOWAS 1992b, 162). The Council (i) is responsible for the monitoring, functioning and development of the community; (ii) makes recommendation to the Authority on the efficient and harmonious development of ECOWAS, and supervising all subordinate institutions; (iii) appoints all statutory appointees other than the Executive Secretary; (iv) approves the work programmes and budgets of the Community and its institutions; (v) requests the Community Court of Justice, where necessary, to give advisory opinion on any legal questions; (vi) carries out all other functions assigned to it under this Treaty and exercises all powers delegated to it by the Authority.

(c) The Tribunal

The Treaty provides for a Community Tribunal, whose composition and competence are determined by the Conference of Heads of State and Government. The Tribunal interprets the provisions of the Treaty and settles disputes between member states that are referred to it (ECOWAS 1992a, 174). The Authority decides the composition, competence and other matters of the tribunal. The Tribunal interprets the provisions of the Treaty, settles disputes referred to it, and ensures “the observance of law and justice” (ECOWAS 1992a, 12-15). The Tribunal is charged with the functions of authoritatively interpreting the Treaty provisions on conflict resolution and management in the sub-region. It is not clear, however, how the tribunal, given its other charge to ensure the observance of law and justice, makes its interpretation binding on member states in the absence of a supranational law-enforcement agency.²¹

²¹ See ECOWAS 1999b, concerning “policy implications of this function in the analysis.”

(d) The Executive Secretariat

The Executive Secretariat is elected for a four-year term, which may be renewed once only. ECOWAS is undergoing a process of reform, which has seen the post of financial controller being scrapped, while two positions of deputy executive secretaries have been created for economic co-operation and policy harmonisation respectively. The restructuring of the Executive Secretariat was approved at the summit in December of 1999 (ECOWAS 1999b, 173).

The Secretariat initiates and proposes policy measures and programmes to the Community's technical commissions. The Secretary is appointed jointly by the Authority and Council for a term of four years and can be re-appointed only for another term of four years. The Authority upon the recommendation of the Council can remove the secretary from office. The Council appoints the two Deputy Secretaries of ECOWAS and the determination of their terms and conditions of service, and those of other officers of the Executive Secretariat.²² The Council shall, "subject to the paramount importance of the highest standards and of the desirability of maintaining an equitable distribution of appointments spread such posts among citizens of member states."²³ The officials of the Secretariat are regarded as international civil servants and accorded the privileges and immunities of foreign diplomats. The Treaty expressly specifies that officers of the secretariat owe their loyalty entirely to the Community.²⁴ Thus, they are expected to function according to the accepted rule of international secretariats, as uninstructed bureaucratic and technical experts whose positions are insulated from the politics and diplomacy of their states of origin. This means that the independence accorded officers of the Secretariat is expected to enhance integration by

²² See ECOWAS 1985, regarding the "development of the community." Lagos, Nigeria, 12-15.

²³ A Deputy Director heads each department within the Secretariat.

²⁴ See ECOWAS, Article 8, Section 9.

allowing technical issues to be removed from politics, depending, of course, on the general attitudes of member states and the skills, their decision-making style,²⁵ dynamism, and overall outlook of the Secretariat officials.

(e) The Specialised Commissions

There are six of them. (i) The Trade, Custom, Immigration, Monetary, and payments commission; (ii) The Industry, Agriculture, and Natural Resources commission; (iii) The Transport, Communications, and Energy commission (iv) The Social and Cultural Affairs commission; (v) The Administration and Finance commission; and (vi) The Information commission (ECOWAS 1998d, 16). Also, the following institutions have been created as Specialised Agencies and Institutions within ECOWAS (SAI): (i) the West Africa Monetary Agency (previously the West African Clearing House) – the institution responsible for administering an ECOWAS exchange rate system and for establishing the single monetary zone, restructured in 1992; (ii) The Ecobank Transnational Inc - a private regional investment bank, established in 1984; (iii) The Organisation of Trade Unions of West Africa, established in 1984. (iv) The West African Youth Association, established in 1987; (v) The West African Universities' Association, established in 1987; (vi) The West African Women's Association, established in 1987; and (vii) The West Africa Health Community, established in 1987 (ECOWAS 1974, 1975-1987; ECOWAS 2000a, 188).

(f) ECOWAS Fund for Co-operation, Compensation and Development

This fund has a staff of 100, and the chief executive of the fund is the Managing Director under a Board of Directors. The authorised capital of the Fund is US\$500 million, of which \$100 million has been called up, and \$68.5 million is paid up as of October 1994. In 1998, agreements were reached with the African Development Bank (ADB) and the Islamic Development bank (IDB) on co-financing of projects and the joint training of staff. Efforts

²⁵ See Haas and Schmitter, 1966.

are currently under way to enhance the Fund's financial resources, by opening its capital to non-regional participants. In addition, it was agreed at the ECOWAS summit in December 1999 to transform the fund into a holding company to be known as ECOWAS Investment and Development bank with two subsidiaries (i) ECOWAS Regional Investment Bank and (ii) ECOWAS Regional Development Fund (ECOWAS 1999b, 172).

The Fund is made up of one minister each from member states of the Community. The Fund has six departments: Administration, Operations, Legal Affairs, Finance, Studies, and Office of the Secretary. Each of the specialised and technical commissions is made up of experts from all member countries, and their duty is to draw up programmes and supervise their implementation. The Commissions prepare reports and submit recommendations to the council through the Executive Secretary. In addition to the Office of the Financial Controller who does the internal auditing, there is the office of the External Auditor responsible for external auditing of the finances of the community.²⁶

Soon after the establishment of the Fund, the Secretariat and the Fund saw themselves in conflict. Initially, the conflict was about the degree of independence to which the Fund was entitled. The conflict later escalated into personality clashes between members of the Fund and Secretariat. The controversy was primarily a result of the mandate and responsibilities of the Fund vis-à-vis the other ECOWAS institutions (ECOWAS 1998a, 76). The problem was whether the Fund was created as a temporary 'special feature', whose operation was to be limited to the initial years of the development of the Community, or whether it was to be institutionalised to function independent of others in the Community. The issue was resolved during the 1979 summit by the Authority when it was decided that the Executive Secretary heads the administrative structure of the Community. It was also stipulated that the Fund is an operations unit for the proper management of fund resources and the financial instrument for

the implementation of Community policies. The Treaty was accordingly amended to include the Fund as one of the institutions of ECOWAS.²⁷

The establishment of the Fund for Co-operation, Compensation, and Development is charged as a facilitator for the “equitable distribution of cost and benefits” and the adoption of a common strategy towards foreign investors. Such a move is seen as the most important factor for determining the prospects and future cohesion of ECOWAS. Articles 25 and 26 of the ECOWAS Treaty provide for compensation for loss of revenue from tariff reductions and for safeguard measures. In pursuit of the objectives toward a common market within the Community, serious imbalances/disruptions can occur within the economies of member states to warrant remedies. Also, article 2 of the protocol on the assessment of loss of revenue provides, among other things, “compensation to member states which have suffered losses as a result of the location of a Community enterprise.” In addition, article 2 provides for the promotion of “development projects in the less developed member states of the Community” as a way of spreading development to jumpstart development within the entire sub-region.

However, there are member states that are less developed within the community and were dissatisfied with these provisions. They claim that the distribution provided by the ‘loss of revenue clause’ is unequal because the assessment is based on the “co-efficient that takes into account the gross domestic product and per capita income of all member states.” On the basis of the provisions, and to incorporate their demands, Nigeria in 1977 paid 32.8 percent of the total contributions; Cote d’Ivoire and Ghana paid 13 percent and 12.9 percent respectively to avert the situation. Similarly, Burkina Faso, Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde, which are noted as among the least developed members of the community, contributed 2.6, 1.5, and 1 percent respectively as a demonstration of the bigger states willingness to shoulder the burden

²⁶ The Authority designated Sierra Leone to nominate ECOWAS external auditors in 1978. In 1979 R. A. Dillsworth Company was nominated as the first external auditors of ECOWAS. See ECOWAS 1992b, 1998b.

²⁷ Ibid.

of the cost of running ECOWAS and taking care of the imbalances within the integration (ECOWAS 1999b, 173).

From this perspective and differences in members' contributions, there are often conflicts arising between beneficiaries of the compensatory scheme and regular contributors, who are not able to always qualify for compensation. But Okolo and Wright (1990) contend that members will have a positive view of such measures of the community as time passes by, and that the benefits are accruable to any of them. From a rallying perspective, Okolo and Wright (1990) assert that the compensatory scheme is an important equalising element in the integrative system (Ariyo and Raheem 1990, 16). But the reason why it may have become an equalising element is that within the initial stages of integration, the more developed member states were made to shoulder a heavier burden than the less developed ones. But in the long run, all are likely to gain more from trade liberalisation when the community becomes fully operational.

(g) Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, Peace and Security

The ECOWAS summit of December 1999 agreed on a protocol for the establishment of a mechanism for conflict prevention, management and resolution, peace, and security. The mechanism is to be established with the financial assistance of the European Union (ECOWAS 2000d, 41). The mechanism would involve a council of Elders, as well as a security and mediation council.²⁸ ECOWAS decided to establish a Court of Justice following a two-day meeting of Justice Ministers in Abuja in October of 1999. The court is expected to address complaints from member states and institutions of ECOWAS as well as issues relating to defaulting nations. The Court will have a president, chief registrar and seven judges, and it will be a permanent institution. The setting up of the Court was approved by the ECOWAS summit in December 1999 after years of failing to accomplish its

²⁸ The Security and Mediation Council are ten members who are the Foreign Ministers from the following states:

establishment. Although the establishment is still on paper, it has at this time, not yet been decided which country would host the Court. The Executive Secretary of ECOWAS was mandated to take the necessary steps to appoint the judges to the Court, which has yet to be done.

A Committee of Eminent Persons (CEP) revised the ECOWAS establishing treaty of 1975 between 1991 and 1992 first, to revise the establishing Treaty of 1975 and to stress the relevance in the accomplishment of set goals within the fields of economic and political co-operation among member states. Among other initiatives taken by the Eminent Persons (CEP) was to re-emphasise the achievement of a common market and a single currency as economic objectives requiring immediate attention. In the political sphere the establishment of a West African Parliament is envisaged to provide the consensus required for political leadership.

The CEP's provision in the Revised Treaty was the establishment of an economic and social council and an ECOWAS Court of justice to replace the Tribunal and enforce Community decision in a more effective manner. The Revised Treaty also employed the Community with the responsibility of preventing and settling regional conflict; the Treaty charged ECOWAS to endeavour to raise the living standards of its people, maintain and enhance economic stability, foster relations among member states, and contribute to the progress and development of the African continent. The Revised Treaty also charged member states to allow ECOWAS integration policies and programmes to be influenced by the prevailing economic conditions in its member countries and to ensure that they adhere to the principal provisions of the African Economic Community (AEC) Treaty in terms of the Treaty's relevance to continental development (ECOWAS 1993, 78). But despite the report of the Committee of Eminent Persons of 1992/1993, there are still problems with the way

policies are implemented because of a number of unchanged attitudes and miss-steps by member countries in their domestic policies vis-à-vis the regional framework from ECOWAS. In fact, the difficulty of implementing ECOWAS treaties is the most widely cited obstacle to integration (Aryeetey, 1998; ECOWAS 1998b and 1999a, 2000d; Bundu 1997; Shaw 1990), however, no reasons are given for such difficulties. The other relevant sectors often mentioned where ECOWAS's vision does not match the procedures put in place to transform a co-operation ideology to an integration process include the following areas of activity.

II. Infrastructure - Travel, Transport, and Communications

The significance of developing the infrastructure cannot be over-stressed and remains one of the important objectives of ECOWAS. Indeed, without an efficient regional transport and communication network, economic integration, and later, a political union would have little meaning.

Regarding travel, communications, and transport, the Conference of Heads of State and Government signed a protocol in 1979 for the free movement of the region's citizens and the rights of residence and establishment of commercial enterprises. A programme for the development of an integrated regional road network was adopted by the 1980 Conference. Under the scheme, two major Trans-regional roads were to be completed: the Trans-coastal highway, linking Lagos, Nigeria, with Nouakchott, Mauritania (about 4,767 km); and the Trans-Sahelian highway, linking Dakar, Senegal, with N'djamena, Chad (about 4,460 km). By mid-1993 about 88% of the Trans-coastal route was completed, and about 78 % of the Trans-Sahelian route was also completed. (ECOWAS 2000b, 39). With respect to the trans-Sahelian highway, results are that out of the 4,460km; a total of 3,894km or 87% has been completed (ECOWAS 2000b, 39). Also, the status of implementation of the priority

programme showed that about 83% or 3,777km out of the 4, 560km of the trans-coastal highway has been completed.

To complement air travel, in terms of connecting member states to each other, the Authority of Heads of State and Government ratified the proposal to have an airline company to be named, "ECOAIR," and a coastal navigation company to be created by the private sector. The two projects are at an advanced stage at the present time. Another important dimension with regards to transportation is a study on the interconnection of railway networks, which is receiving attention of donors (ECOWAS 2000b, 39).

One of the cardinal goals of the Revised Treaty of 1991/1992 is the anticipated outcome to move from a regional economic integration to the union of West African States, as well as to the eventual union of the African continent (ECOWAS 1992a, 15). The dream of achieving this feat is reinforced by Article 27 (1 and 2) of ECOWAS Treaty, which states that: (i) citizens of member states shall be regarded as Community citizens and accordingly member states undertake to abolish all obstacles to their freedom of movement and residence within the community; (ii) member states shall by agreement be regarded as Community citizens from holding visitors visas and resident permits and allow them to work and undertake commercial and industrial activities within their territories; and finally, (iii) social intercourse is extremely important in any kind of politico-economic relations (ECOWAS 1975, 1-5). But by 1980, the first phase of the provision for the right to entry without a visa, arising from the establishing treaty came into force, but could not be implemented. The second provision, allowing unlimited rights of residence, was signed in 1986 (although Nigeria indicated that unskilled worker and certain categories of professionals would not be allowed to stay for an indefinite period); it came into force in 1989, but again failed to pass implementation. The third provision concerning the right to establish a commercial enterprise in another Member State was signed in 1990.

Notwithstanding the challenges, Article 27 (1&2) provided the groundwork for economic integration in West Africa and was to serve as a model for a future continental union. The optimism is even expressed that ECOWAS working together with other regional groupings could further the 1991 African economic Treaty aimed at establishing a common market in A.D. 2025. Indeed, it is also hoped that like in Europe, the ECOWAS Treaty could lead to the inauguration of an elected African Parliament with a supranational character (Ihonvbere 1996, 264).

Regional integration of the various areas of economic activity within a sub-region is a process; but it is one thing to formulate policies and quite another to implement them. The quest to address the problem of underdevelopment in the sub-region is without doubt very urgent. Unfortunately, it is over two decades now since ECOWAS was created, yet the area has not come close to satisfactorily resolving the fundamental issues contain in its establishing Treaty. First, the intercourse in the past and up until the present time has been mitigated by the non-implementation of such minor protocols as the free travel of people, capital, and goods among the member countries (ECOWAS 2000c, 54). Second, the Trade Liberalisation Scheme (TLS) is not in operation because member states have failed to print the harmonised documents and have not yet removed the tariffs. Third, there is also high cost of compensation and the fact that the ECOWAS TLS and EUMOA coexist. Fourth, there is the absence of measures to enlighten economic operators about the ECOWAS TLS, and many others. Lastly, and not the least point, is that the people on the streets are not aware of what is happening in terms of involving them in the planning and execution of Community projects.

III. Trade Flows

In the area of trade flows between member nations of ECOWA, there has been a minimal increase since the Community's inception in 1975. But arguably, the volume of trade flows between ECOWAS member countries and industrial countries is proportionately

much larger than the intra-regional trade flows. For ECOWAS members as a whole, the average annual volume of imports from industrialised countries during the 1981-1992 periods was US\$13.22 billion. According to Deme (1995), for the same period, the average annual volume of imports from African countries was merely US\$1.59 billion, of which US\$1.24 billion is from ECOWAS member countries" (Deme 1995, 117-18). In Table 1, the 1981-1992 Average Annual Volume and Rate of Growth of Import by each ECOWAS member country is as follows:

Legend for Chart: Table 1

A – ECOWAS

B – Imports from Partner countries Rate of Growth (%)

C – Imports from Partner Countries (Millions \$)

D – Imports from Industrialised Countries Rate of Growth (%)

E – Imports from Industrialised Countries (Million \$)

A	B	C	D	E
1. Benin	13	30	16	341
2. Burkina Faso	9	118	2	235
3. Cote d'Ivoire	14	323	-1	1,350
4. Cape Verde	[*]	[*]	[*]	[*]
5. Gambia	-1	6	7	113
6. Ghana	3	215	6	740
7. Guinea	7	8	16	55
8. Guinea Bissau	12	0.5	5	342
9. Liberia	22	22	24	1,209
10. Mali	8	129	2	245
11. Mauritania	16	20	-2	298
12. Niger	-3	58	3	232
13. Nigeria	8	82	-3	6,099
14. Senegal	8	82	-3	746
15. Sierra Leone	45	7	1	118
16. Togo	23	55	-1	360

Source: Mamit Deme 1995, 119.

Arguably, the above dismal statistics in import-export figures of ECOWAS' is not the lack of efforts; it is based on both internal and external conditions prevailing in the sub-region. Internally, the area has been faced with numerous civil wars, military coups, and counter coups, and the impact of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) conditions.

Externally, the international lending organisations have made the region completely dependent on the creditors, such much so that a majority of member states of ECOWAS lack the major elements of sovereignty (Ihonvbere 1996, 245-67).

IV. The Later Years

ECOWAS in its later years (1990s) was expected to have transformed West Africa into a Free Trade Zone and promoted industrialisation and economic development among the member states. It was expected to be a complete customs union within fifteen years (by the year 2000), of coming into being after the Treaty (1975) established it. Trade within the Community was to be fully liberalised by 1989, and a common external tariff was to be in place by 1994.

The Dakar agreement of 1979 was signed by all member countries to allow for the free movement of the factors of production across ECOWAS member states. But almost all of the above-mentioned objectives of ECOWAS have not yet been met (ECOWAS 2001, 67). The failure to harness economic cooperation is compounded by the dynamic interaction of the socio-economic and political factors as they impinge on members' commitment to the ideals, aims, realities, and objectives of the Treaty that purport to forge their integration into a whole, toward regional development. These problems are indeed related, and they have retarded progress toward integration on several fronts within the process. The most dismal performance by ECOWAS has been in the area of market economic integration, which involves trade liberalisation, and requires a high degree of harmonisation of economic policies, as well as the establishment of a common external tariff.

In its twenty-seventh year (1975-2002), ECOWAS has not achieved any of its market integration objectives. In comparison to the rest of the Community member of ECOWAS,

UEMOA, an organisation within two years of its existence and comprising eight out of the fifteen member states, was able to create a free trade zone by 1996. UEMOA went on to establish a common external tariff by 1998, and harmonised the macro-economic policies of its member countries. The success of UEMOA can be attributed to the active involvement of donors (mainly France) in the preparation and execution of its programmes, and the fact that these programmes are incorporated into the members' national economic programmes (ECOWAS 1998a and 1999a, 63).

Similarly, the ECOWAS preferential trade mechanism, which was instituted to promote intra-regional trade, has failed mainly because of the high cost of compensation for loss of customs revenue occasioned by intra-Community trade liberalisation. Even though the elimination of tariff barriers may be viewed as short-term losses, particularly in a situation characterised by poor inflow of budgetary revenues, the ECOWAS mechanism in effect transfers the financial burden of compensation to the exporting countries, which are not always willing to bear such a burden (ECOWAS 1998a and 1999a, 65). Because of these drawbacks, the Conference of Heads of State and Government decided in 1980 to establish a free-trade area for unprocessed agricultural products and handicrafts from May 1981. From this date tariffs on industrial products made by specified community enterprises were also to be abolished. However, the implementation was delayed due to difficulties in defining such enterprises (ECOWAS 1998a, 23-67). In such a situation, the Community grouping cannot be said to reflect that of a free trade zone because of several constraints.

This lack of implementation suggests that the total liberalisation of intra-community trade remains a problem issue even to the present time (ECOWAS 1998a and 1999a, 64). Aryeetey and Oduro state the problem with the lack of harmonisation, among others, as the unwillingness to make regional objectives the priority of the countries (Aryeetey and Oduro 1996,16). Others include the fact that national perspectives of trade policies are at odds with

the requirements of regional integration. An example is the Community Protocol on the Free Movement of Person, Residence, and Establishment. Even though it has been implemented, it is contravened when it suits the interest of the member countries, making its unilateral application a problem.

V. Compensation Mechanism

One of the impediments in any integration scheme is how to agree among member countries to pay out money or allocate a particular industry to a member country to compensate for that member country's loss of benefits that may have accrued to others because of the integration. Compensation mechanisms have been a problem in many schemes, are complex and, require ground rules to guide such a process. Compensation Mechanisms within ECOWAS is not in operation to usher in a "free trade area" within the sub-region as promised in the establishing treaty. The anticipation of intra-regional trade to bring about a dramatic increase of revenue to implement such a mechanism has not been realised because clauses within the compensation documents to safeguard the interest of the weaker countries has not yet been introduced. Evidence from the year 2000 ECOWAS Document is that from 1990 to 1997, the total estimated compensation budget was UA 58,100,000, about 75 million US dollars. In comparison to other regional integration schemes, this amount is negligible compared to the ECOWAS regional GDP but it is high in relation to the recurrent expenditure budgets of some member states. Under Article 39 of the Revised Treaty, trade deflection occurs when "imports of any particular product by a member state from another member state increase (i) as a result of the reduction or elimination of duties and charges on the product..." and "this increase in imports causes or could cause serious injury to production..." It is expected that as trade barriers are eliminated between member countries exports will increase from those countries, which have a competitive edge in a particular industry and contract in countries, which do not. But the requirements that the

Council of Ministers "...take such decisions as are necessary in order to deal with causes of this deflection," seem to go against the objective of strengthening region-wide economic relations. Article 39 of the Revised Treaty therefore makes the occurrence allocation difficult. A notable absence in the Revised Treaty is the lack of what is meant by "serious injury"; therefore, no one knows when a country is seriously injured or slightly injured and can qualify for compensation under this mechanism.

VI. Other ideological constraints

(a) Economic and Industrial Development

Given the diversity in languages, nationalities, culture, legal and regulatory environment, the mobilization of capital for the establishment of Ecobank presented a major challenge. The inability of the various institutions within ECOWAS to mobilize capital in any form was a realization from the revision made to the establishing Treaty of 1975. In order to close the gap, a bank was established to forge and support initiatives of ECOWAS institutions to be able to revive entrepreneurs among the civil society in the sub-region. The establishment of Ecobank was unprecedented because never before had capital been mobilized on a regional scale, which witnessed the support of various West African governments and monetary authorities. The mobilization also included the tireless efforts of various individuals who worked hard to establish a landmark in the history of West African co-operation and enterprise. The founders of Ecobank sought to fill this gap by creating a private sector regional banking institution. With the support of the Federation of West Africa Chambers of Commerce & Industry and the Economic Community of West African States, Ecobank Transnational Incorporated was established in 1985 as a bank holding company (ECOWAS 1999a and 2000b, 34)

A Head Office Agreement was executed with the government of the Republic of Togo in October 1985 under which Ecobank Transnational Incorporated, the parent company, was

granted the status and rights necessary for it to operate as a regional institution, including the rights of a non-resident financial institution. The first banking subsidiary opened for business in Togo in March 1988. New subsidiaries were opened in Nigeria and Côte d'Ivoire in 1989, in Ghana and Benin in 1990, and in Burkina Faso in 1997. Twelve years on, the Ecobank Group is now a full-service regional banking institution with 42 branches and offices in 12 countries across West Africa (ECOWAS 2000a, 177). The newest subsidiaries in Mali, Niger, Senegal and Liberia were opened in 1999, and Cameroon in 2000. A Technical Services Agreement executed with Citibank of the United States of America (USA) provided the initial technical know-how and expertise for the establishment of the Group's banking operations. In the early 1980s, foreign and state-owned banks dominated the banking industry in West Africa. There were virtually no commercial banks in West Africa owned and controlled by the West African private sector. ECOWAS has also established the West African Monetary Institute (WAMI), under the agreement of the West African Monetary Zone. Its functions are to carry out and perform activities in accordance with the West African Central Banks leading to the establishment of a Central Bank for the sub-region.

The ECOWAS programme for the development of village and pastoral water resources involves the creation of 3,200 water points throughout the sub-region: 200 water points per member state. The first phase was to commence in 1992-1996 and was to be concentrated in ten (10) member states most seriously affected or threatened by drought and desertification such as Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo (ECOWAS 2000a, 56). Another facet of economic and industrial development in West Africa was taken by Decision A/DEC.1/12/99, in which the ECOWAS Authority adopted a sub-regional action programme (SRAP) to combat desertification in West Africa.

The ECOWAS Agricultural Development Strategy (ADS) was formally adopted in

1982. The aim of ADS was to empower member states in the sub-region for selecting seeds and cattle species for industrial production and to become self-sufficient in such methods by the year 2000. Towards this regard, there was a joint agro-industrial forum in November of 1995 by ECOWAS and the European Union in Dakar, Senegal to facilitate co-operation between companies in the two regions to develop and promote business opportunities in West Africa. The 1982 strategy has since been abandoned because of new changes and challenges in the economic environment in West Africa, which favour the development of the private sector (ECOWAS 2000d, 45).

In the area of industrial development, there is an existing forum for West African Industries sponsored by ECOWAS every two years to promote regional industrial investment. There agreement is also an agreement for the construction of a 400-km gas pipeline to connect Nigerian gas supplies to Ghana, Togo, and Benin since 1995. The agreement is still in the works for the construction of such a gas pipeline, which will make it possible for the four countries to utilise natural gas from Nigeria for the generation of energy. This is in fulfilment of the August 1997 call by the Conference of Heads of State and Government for all member states to co-ordinate their long-term development programmes in order to formulate common objectives and to encourage greater economic growth in the region as a whole.

(b) Trade and monetary union within the Community

On trade and monetary union of the community, the elimination of tariffs and other obstructions to trade among member states, and the establishment of common external tariffs were planned over a transitional period of 15 years. At the 1978 Conference of Heads of state and Government, it was decided that from 28 May 1979 no member state should increase its customs tariff on goods from other members. This policy was regarded as the first step towards the abolition of customs duties within the Community. The first two years were set

out to experiment, the maintenance of import duties on intra-community trade and then for such duties to be eliminated in phases over the next eight years. In the first ten years, from 1975-1985, quotas and other restrictions of equivalent effect were to be abolished then in the next five years (1985-1990); the remaining obstacles in external customs tariffs were also to be abolished.

By 1990 there was an agreement by the Conference of Heads of State and Government for a single monetary zone and to remove obstacles to trade in goods that originate in the Community. The removal of such barriers according to earlier reports of the Authority (1985-1990) impeded the creation of a monetary union within the Community and also retarded investments that facilitate trade with foreign countries. Tariffs of twenty-five manufactured items listed within ECOWAS member states were lifted as of January 1, 1990; the number had increased to ninety (90) by mid-1991. The tariffs on other industrial products were to be eliminated over the ensuing decade as follows: (i) the 'most-developed' countries within the Community (such as Nigeria, Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, and Senegal) were to abolish tariffs on 'priority' products within four (4) years and on 'non-priority' products within six years. (ii) The second group (Benin, Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Togo), were to abolish tariffs on 'priority' products within six years, and on 'non-priority' products within eight years; and (iii) the 'least-developed' members (Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, The Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania and Niger), were to abolish their tariffs on 'priority' products within eight years and on 'non-priority' products within ten (10) years (ECOWAS 2000a, 45). However, all these measures have not been implemented yet.

As part of similar goals, ECOWAS in 1992 restructured the West African Clearing House to be known as the West African Monetary Agency (WAMA), as a specialised agency. WAMA was to be responsible for administering an ECOWAS exchange rate system (EERS) and to establish the single monetary zone. There was also the mandate by the EERS to put in

place a credit guarantee scheme and a traveller's cheque system. The agreement to jump-start the EERS was signed by the Governors of the Central Banks of ECOWAS member states in Banjul, The Gambia in March 1996. By December 1992, ECOWAS Ministers agreed on the institutionalisation of an ECOWAS trade fair, in order to promote trade liberalisation and intra-community trade. The first trade fair, which was held in Dakar, Senegal in May/June 1995, was attended by some 400 private businesses from the 16 member states. The trade fairs have since become an annual affair and rotate among Community member countries in the sub-region. In July 1996, the Conference of Heads of State and Government agreed to impose a common value-added tax (VAT) on consumer goods, in order to rationalise indirect taxation and to stimulate greater intra-community trade. In August 1997, ECOWAS heads of state and government appointed an ad hoc monitoring committee to promote and to oversee the implementation of trade liberalisation measures and the establishment of a single monetary zone by 2000. Similarly, the Conference authorised that a regional traveller's cheque scheme should be made operational by early 1998.

(d) New initiatives

The twenty-second ECOWAS summit adopted a double-track approach to integration; six non-UEMOA member states took the decision to establish a second monetary zone by 2003. This second zone would then be merged with the CFA zone to form a single ECOWAS monetary zone by 2004. Considerable progress has been made in this regard since the mini-summit held in Accra on April 20, 2000, which was attended by the then ECOWAS chairman, Mr. Lansana Kouyate, and the six countries concerned: Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone. Also, an evaluation meeting of the convergence Council was held in Conakry on July 5, 2000. A work group was established in May of 1999, made up of representative of the six Central Banks and the Secretariat, acting as coordinator. It is charged with preparing the technical documents after consultations with and working visits to

the relevant institutions within and outside the sub-region, mainly BCEAO, BCE, European Union and EDF. The experts' group prepared the documents for consideration by the technical committee of the convergence Council, which met in Banjul in November of 2000 (ECOWAS 2000d, 189).

(e) Political stability in the sub-region

In the sub-region during the 1990s, ECOWAS activities were increasingly dominated by its efforts to secure peace in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea Bissau (Aly 1995, 43). The term "security" in terms of its application has sometimes assumed sinister overtones in the sense of "national Security." National security can refer to safety, the likelihood of the absence of war, and the likelihood of negotiations rather than belligerence, but it can also refer to the preservation of peace as the normal condition for some people within society. National security as a term has also come to denote all purposes of defence, including preparations for belligerence, pre-emptive strikes and even any presumed "vital" interest to preserve a concept as integration. As a result, policies of national security may precipitate insecurity rather than security by being the exclusive tools of those in power. Because of the distressing events in several of its member countries, ECOWAS found out that an environment of relative peace and stability was imperative. It found that it had to involve itself in conflicts in member states to ensure that the environment it so cherishes is conducive to the implementation of its economic programmes.

At the time of the outbreak of hostilities in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau from 1989 to 2000, ECOWAS already had certain legal instruments that enjoined them to respect each other's territorial integrity, exist alongside each other in peace and harmony, and unite to ward off both any external attack, armed threat or aggression directed against a member state and internal armed conflicts engineered from outside. These instruments were the Protocol on Non-Aggression of 1978, and the Protocol on Mutual Assistance in Defence

of 1981.

However, these Protocols lacked in-depth provisions for effective prevention, military intervention and management or resolution strategies that might be employed to end conflict. As a result, ECOWAS had to resort to ad hoc mechanisms such as repeated mediation initiatives by high-powered committees, usually made up of foreign affairs ministers of member states or their defence ministers. ECOWAS sent a multinational West African military force made up of troops volunteered by West African states with the sole purpose of restoring peace in Liberia and Sierra Leone when the conflicts erupted. This was the beginning of the ECOWAS force, commonly known as ECOMOG (ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group). It is widely recognised and accepted today that ECOMOG has successfully discharged its mandate of peace-keeping and peace enforcement and West Africa will thus remain as the only sub-region in Africa to have successfully mounted a full peace-keeping operation to further the sub-region's integration attempts. Mauritania has since withdrawn its membership of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).²⁹

In summary, West Africa needs integration as much as any other region or sub-region, and has managed to achieve the difficult goal of at least sustaining the current scheme. The question arises, why has the integration scheme achieved so little progress and such faltering steps? The overall evaluation of the achievements of ECOWAS in terms of integration towards development can therefore be described as a West African experience which was hastily conceived with regard the problems of the sub-region; without regard to the circumstance of the ideologies pre-existing in the sub-region; without the need for a process where the planning will be reviewed in stages. More so, the process was planned without an

²⁹ Mauritania sent in its application to withdraw from ECOWAS in 1986 and by 1999 communicated this desire verbally in the Assembly session to the Heads of State and Government. Mauritanian has since withdrawn from ECOWAS.

input from the Founding Fathers, some of whom were overthrown in military coup d'états, had been assassinated, had died or were forced into exile shortly after 1975.

Simply put, the general belief that regional integration creates the potential for self-generating development considered by its instigators as a means of promoting collective self-reliance in West Africa, has from the outset, as this study argues, failed not only to promote regional economic integration, but also failed to promote regional economic co-operation. Whilst regional integration is still proclaimed as a prime objective of the community, its emergence reflects ECOWAS' pervasive concern with stabilising and controlling its internal and external environment in terms of policies to address these inequities as well as its member countries. Regional integration in its current form in West Africa can be seen, then, as a non-collective response to such a dilemma. The sub-regional economic integration and development problems of the sub-region include how to acquire, how to organise and how to utilise needed external resources whilst seeking to minimise external intervention in the development process. Regional integration in the orthodox sense and used by Mitrany (1975), is an approach to collective development, which simultaneously seeks to minimise foreign involvement in the affairs of states encompassing the West African Sub-region. But this has not been the case in the regional economic integration attempt by ECOWAS so far.

Certainly, progress in the direction of a viable economic development that would embrace the entire sub-region has been disappointing. Reasons for these failures, and at the risk of repetition, arise from problems in the process of integration. The next chapter will examine some of the key exacerbating factors that have substantially impacted the forging of a viable regional economic integration in West Africa.

Chapter IV

Setting the Stage for Analysis

I. The Critical Elements of Integration

The primary focus in this chapter is to set the stage for an analysis, and to illuminate critical elements that have culminated in the dismal pace of achieving the pursuit of dynamic policies towards regional self-reliance by ECOWAS. The complexity of these impediments are, indeed, highly critical elements of any integration scheme or attempt, which have guided effective integration schemes on the one hand, and caused the collapse of many, particularly in other Third World integration processes. In West Africa, apart from the continuous threat of military de-stabilisation, available evidence suggests that free trade areas, customs unions, and partial preferential trade areas that have been established at different times in different regions of the developing world have not performed according to set plans. Most have in their previous incarnations, generated only limited immediate, tangible benefits, and in the end, eroded political support for their continuation. Other areas that have been noted include poor sequencing and ill-chosen instruments and structures that contributed to their demise.

Similarly, and particular to this study, is that other integration schemes have been badly conceived and not crafted, bearing in mind the prevailing circumstances of the sub-region. This contention here regarding ECOWAS is based on the principle that what occurs in regional integration is a process by which a series of essentially functional economic and non-political decisions are made incrementally. The outcome of such incremental end products in West Africa is supposed to result in an inadvertent process of political as well as economic integration. However, in the case of an integration attempt within ECOWAS, purposeful behaviour has been ignored in their approach.

Regional economic changes were made within the EU to satisfy the requirements of an extended market that could create a need for political union. But such policies could not in themselves affect such a union, as Haas (1958) alludes, in the following assertion: ...“that the decision to proceed with integration within Europeans or to oppose it rested in part with decisions of the existing political actors.” In the above statement, Haas believes many regional economic problems involved in integration can be solved only through political measures. Moreso, the development and orientation of regional trade; the maintenance of full employment, the regulation of cartels and monopolies, the prevention of depression and inflation, and the co-ordination of regional economic plans require legal provisions, executive decisions and policies, and also require administrative harmony within the responsibility of the highest spheres of government.

In saying so, the aims and objectives of ECOWAS, regardless of whether such aims and purpose is the promotion of economic well being, or the promotion of human welfare, or its current role of the promotion of security, it's assumed that every policy taken is political in nature. Not only have political objectives motivated the establishment of ECOWAS, but political actions also bring them into being, and it is politics that characterises their functioning. As Cochrane argues about organisations like ECOWAS, they are marked by conflict among participants-actors over goals and over the distribution of costs and benefits just as it is politics at the national level. In terms of the problems inhibiting progress within ECOWAS, it is not going too far, then, to say that regional organisations are in reality political systems (Cochrane 1967, 14). The following are the impediments surrounding the transformation of ECOWAS to a coherent integration of West Africa in economic development.

II. The sub-regional Dynamics

The sub-region is a political-spatial identity consisting of a group of states, which are proximate and interdependent. It is generally characterised by geographical relatedness and other affinities. A sub-region may be defined as “a set of contiguous states with a level of interaction between them, such that a lack of trade and/or security within or between individual states in the region affects the economic or political security of the set of states as a whole.” (Buzan 1991, 188) Ghana for example, has obvious common interest, and somewhat similar problems to face, as Nigeria or Senegal. Moreover, there exist certain ethno-cultural and economic similarities within each sub-region, which are far more remarkable than the differences. These are enhanced by cross-border trading and free movement of people, which in West Africa pre-date ECOWAS. This does not preclude the members of the organisation having areas of conflict – for example over the artificial borders inherited from the colonial powers, and the rivalry over the relative weight and influence of member states, especially Cote d’Ivoire, the most prosperous of the West African francophone states, and Nigeria as the largest of the Anglophone states. Analysts³⁰ suggest that Cote d’Ivoire’s relations with Nigeria are based on rivalry because the country has a leadership aspiration in the sub-region and, therefore, see Nigeria as a stumbling block to the perceived cohesiveness that should have existed amongst the countries in the West African sub-region.

From this detailed background, the most important features of a regional configuration are the relative degree of balance and complementarity and the extent to which the component states are oriented to integrative behaviour (Feld and Boyd 1980, 3). It is argued that a relatively balanced distribution of economic capabilities ensures genuine

³⁰ Analysis by Professor Anthony Asiwaju on socioeconomic integration in West Africa, and by Siddick Soule, a Lecturer at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Abidjan, Cote d’Ivoire, on July 24, 1993. For more details about counter alliance in Africa on checkerboard pattern, see Zartman 1966, 65.

equalities and breeds mutual confidence while unequal capabilities cause apprehensions – real or perceived – among the weaker states because of their disadvantaged position economically and politically. In regions where there are a high degree of balance and complementarity, as in Western Europe, usually there are a number of core members and a gradation of economic power levels and a regional unanimity that protects the interests of the small members (Feld and Boyd 1980, 3).

On the other hand, marked contrast in economic power levels, degrees of complementarity and extent of integrative orientation exists in West Africa as this study indicates. It can be argued that the degree of complementarity is also very low in the sub-region. Apart from balance and complementarity, level of domestic political development and foreign policy orientations are important determinants of integrative or co-operative behaviour in a sub-region. Moreover, since conflicts with a predominantly bilateral and local relevance easily can escalate to the regional level, settlement of such conflicts is foremost a question of state-to-state relations. Thus, regional or sub-regional defence agreements or pacts are concomitant with regionalism as they are aimed at protecting the expected gains of their mutual co-operation and interests from being undermined militarily or through other, more subtle means.

III. The Road to Integration in WA

The *new regionalism* concept, which is emerging, appears to be built on the recognition that past failures must be avoided. ECOWAS can be counted among second-generation regional integration agreements.³¹ The second-generation regional integration schemes are different from those devised in the 1960s and the 1970s in various ways. Among the characteristics is the following: (i) the second-generation involved greater diversity among regional members. (ii) they are based on partnership among members, which

³¹ A classification of regional integration agreements from first generation, second generation, and third

have already carried out significant unilateral trade liberalisation. (iii) they are going beyond simple trade liberalisation in goods subject to GATT regulations to include liberalisation of trade in services, investments, technical and regulatory standards, customs formalities and government procurement practices. (iv) they have different objectives with an outward-orientation. (v) they develop a more North-south character instead of the North-North and South-South arrangements which characterised earlier integration schemes; and finally, are more outward-looking in aiming to achieve or maintain the global competitiveness of the sub-region as a whole and that of its members combined (Mistry 1995a, 66).

Regionalism as it applies to our study may be defined as attempts by neighbouring nation-states, reinforced by a sense of common purpose or predicament within a definite region or defined area, to foster economic or political co-operation among themselves, in order to lessen their dependence on others outside the region. It can be deduced from the above definitions that regional groupings are a continuum of three stages: co-operation, co-ordination and full integration with an ulterior motive in accommodating local conflicts. Economic integration, according to the functionalist model, contains a certain dynamic logic that bargaining collectively will fulfil the background functions of a 'pluralist political structure, similarities in economic and industrial development and ideological political structures with their inherent spill over.³² Spill-over implies that success in one integration sector will then lead to advances across a much broader front, just as the economic achievement of the European Union have since then generated additional political and strategic co-operation.

It should be pointed out that the functionalist approach looks at the regional co-operation process as a transitional stage of regional integration, rather than an end in itself. However, some important deductions follow from these premises. In the first place, the

generation (well grounded in terms of the *new regionalism* concept) can be found in Mistry 1995b.

approach appears to be an oversimplification in the sense that it ignores the primacy of politics in the co-operation process among the developing countries. It has been observed that even if co-operation starts in a few discrete and non-controversial areas, it soon gets over-politised negating the validity of a gradual politisation process.

Secondly, the functionalist approach also implies surrender of some elements of sovereignty to the regional body, which in turn, gradually attains some amount of autonomy and decision-making role. Empirically, however, it has been found that the member states are unwilling to share even the smallest degree of sovereignty with these regional institutions excepting where the member states explicitly agree to do so within an integration framework. Concrete real decision-making power lay with the government representatives rather than the bureaucrats of these organisations. This amounts to inter-governmentalism; that is government-to-government relations rather than what is known as 'supra-nationalism'.

Thirdly, the transitional status of regional co-operation as conceived in the very approach of functionalism may be questioned in the context of the developing countries. A regional co-operation process in most cases is an end in itself, intentionally stopping short of integration. Moreover, hardly any organisation in the Third World has been able to achieve economic integration, let alone political integration, even if it was so desired.

IV. Issues of credibility and political commitment in RI

An important outcome in the realisation of any regional integration depends on the exertion of political will by regional governments to co-operate in meaningful ways and to subordinate narrow, short-term national interests to the wide regional good and to the longer-term benefit of all members. The extent to which such benefits are realised depends on acknowledgement by members that the emergence of a regional community may transform completely the vista and scope of such cohesion. Whatever the economic potential for

³² Works in this direction include Onwuka and Sesay, eds. 1985 and Mitrany 1966, 167-98.

deriving benefits from the integration might be, it is the political importance attached to capturing such gains that will eventually determine the course and content of the regional integration. The mere acknowledgement of the case that the potential for such gains exist is not, by itself, enough. The fact that different types of gains can be derived from regional integration does not mean that, in any particular region, they will be achieved. The absence of coherence and consensus on the part of members as to the political and economic significance of the regional attempt would impede their progress whether in mature arrangements like the European Union or in less integration attempt like ECOWAS. In search of a regional integration, commitment to co-operation is widely expressed by member governments in developing regions where regional institutional frameworks exists, but intent is rarely translated into determined action.

Moreso, publicly expressed interactions or apprehension about the dominance of any one country in the region appear to be contradicted by the unseemly haste with which other like-minded governments informally agree to arrangements among themselves as an inner core, instead of making progress on a generally accepted regional framework within which all countries can participate constructively and in a non-threatening manner. In sum, the movement towards deeper integration depends on a national perception about gains or losses from regional integration and the political will that national governments are able to muster in favour of movement toward widening or deepening of the integration. The pace of regional integration is a function of the pace of domestic political evolution in the member countries concerned. The problem in developing countries, and particularly those in West Africa, is the unstable nature of the countries because of civil unrests, threats of takeover, coup d'états, which have overstretched the economic, social, and political systems. In most cases, the pressure results in an overload, culminating in setbacks, albeit temporarily, in the effective cohesion of the member countries in regional integration. Because the trend in regional

integration today is the advent of political and economic conditions, it has culminated in more democratisation and liberalisation demands of countries all over the world. The two forces have renewed the thrust in which regional integration schemes have taken dynamic pro-active measures to capture the benefits that an enhanced integration can offer them.

Similarly, where regional integration (and member governments) has lacked credibility investment has not occurred, especially in SSA. Experience has also shown that where the member countries have very dissimilar underlying economic and political strategies (as in WA), there is much smaller likelihood of successful integration. Integration between a state-centred economy and a more market-oriented economy can be problematic (as was the case in WA during the Cold War era), and as will be shown with Tanzania and Kenya in the East African Community in the 1970s. Also, countries with a history of political support, co-operation, and mutual global interests make better candidates for regional integration, whereas countries with antagonistic histories find it more difficult to negotiate and compromise. It is difficult to generalise about these issues within the context of SSA, as each pair of countries has a unique or mixed historical relationship. However, given the history of regional and domestic conflicts, and the difference in, and uncertainty about the basic economic strategies, negotiations on a multilateral trade agreement can be expected to be slow.

V. The inadequacy of Classical Theory of integration to ECOWAS

There are no simple recipes or models. The success or failure of any model hinges on the specific context and environment in which the co-operation is to operate. Care must be taken if a model needs to be transplanted or copied from a different context and circumstances. The model must be adapted to local needs and realities. Some of the approaches and mechanisms from Europe which ECOWAS has adapted may be useful to the African context such as the principle of subsidiarity, targeted policies to reduce welfare

disparities between countries, the role of small countries, and the gradual implementation of the integration at different speeds (variable geometry) (Laporte 1995, 15).

Within the constructs of Neo-functionalism, the nation-state is not a monolithic structure, and on the contrary, this approach perceives it as a combination of interests and issue-areas consisting of different groups, elites, bureaucratic officials and political leaders. In the neo-functional integration paradigm, those different groups create different types of co-operations and coalitions for maximising their benefits (Haas 1961, 76). They also interact with their transnational counterparts, a concept Haas describes as integration on the basis of shifting coalitions of convergent interests represented by government officials, interest groups and the elite. As the integration process proceeds, interests of different groups and elites forming a political community would be redefined in terms of a regional, rather than a purely national level. (Haas 1958, 13). It is in this phase that, for neo-functionalists, the shift from economic integration toward political integration would start. Haas defines his "political integration" concept as a "process whereby political actors in several distinct national settings are persuaded to shift their loyalties, expectations and political activities toward a new centre, whose institutions possess or demand jurisdiction over the pre-existing nation-states" and argues that "the end-result of a political integration process is a new political community, superimposed over the pre-existing ones" (Haas 1973, 16). In principle then, the neo-functionalists anticipate to reach a goal at the end of an integration phase, which has not been the case within ECOWAS.

The acknowledgement and the argument here is that if integration, such as ECOWAS is properly constructed, substantial benefits can accrue to members. Nevertheless, the benefits could pose a concern, as most of the gains will only benefit the larger or more industrially developed member countries. The assertion is that the larger (as in Nigeria, Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire), or more industrially developed ones are positioned to capture extra income benefits

from an openly accessible regional market. The problem associated with relative economic weight and capability of regional partners in terms of the ways benefits are supposed to be distributed has slowed down most integration processes (Andean Pact countries) and caused the collapse of others (East African Community).³³ In the developing countries, and moreso, with developed countries, measures are being taken to put in place effective equalising arrangements so that the gains from regionalisation can be equally distributed to enable the small countries to keep the commitment of the smaller, less developed economies to a regional treaty of integration.

VI. The basic outcomes of RI

What then are the basic outcomes of regional integration in developing countries? The answer in general, is that regional integration involving developing countries have sadly failed to promote trade or industrialisation, or to result in significant economic gains for member countries. Empirical evidence suggests that ECOWAS have had little, if any, impact on intra-regional trade, and the cohesiveness it needs to attain the goals that it has envisioned. In their comprehensive survey, Langhammer and Heimenz (1990) have found no case in which a regional integration made up solely of developing countries had made significant contribution to trade expansion or economic development. Most other analysts have come to the same conclusion. Notwithstanding, there are some regional initiatives in developing countries that have witnessed a rapid growth in trade among them (e.g., ASEAN, MERCOSUR, APEC), but in each case trade expansion preceded the regional integration. Also, only the South African Customs Union (SACU), with South Africa as the key player, has managed after Apartheid to secure an achievement of measures in the integration of goods (Foroutan 1993, 73). Within West Africa, the *Communaute Economique de l'Afrique de l'Ouest* (CEAO) appeared at some point to have made modest positive impact on intra-

³³ See, for example, Bhagwati 1995, in the arguments in favour of Mexico within NAFTA and what can occur if

regional trade immediately following its formation, but trade growth stagnated thereafter. Other regional integration schemes within sub-Saharan Africa have no discernable impact in terms of the aforesaid (Foroutan and Pritchett 1993, 98-102).

By contrast, the record in industrialised countries is somewhat better (such as the EU), where regional integration are considered to have stimulated increased trade and economic growth along the neo-functionalists theory of integration. There are several reasons for this different outcome (Oyejide 1986, 67). The first factor is that trade creation appears to have been relatively larger in industrial countries, at least partially because member countries were more integrated before they came together. The second factor is that, industrialised countries have exploited gains from intra-industry specialisation and product differentiation, which are more important in larger, high-income markets. In terms of the Neo-functionalists, expansion in intra-industry trade has been a clear outcome in the EU (Radelet 1990, 29). But in poorer countries like those in West Africa, where the market for different products is more limited, intra-industry trade has not increased. Finally, regional integration in high-income countries has a much better record of actually implementing agreed policy changes, often ahead of schedule than developing countries.

Furthermore, the basic outcomes of regional integration attempts in developing countries can be traced directly to their basic strategy of attempting to foster industrialisation based on import substitution. Inward-oriented regional integration has consistently failed to support the expansion of either trade or industry (Langhammer and Hiemenz 1990, 34; de la Torre and Kelly 1992, 65; de Melo and Panagariya 1993, 66). Trade diversion was an implicit objective of many regional integration schemes, with members aiming at expanding intra-regional trade as a substitute for global trade, rather than to foster competition (Langhammer 1992, 56). But most broke down as a result of internal conflicts over the distribution of the

costs and benefits of the agreement. Again, the East African Community (EAC), case is invoked. The EAC broke up in 1977 due to the problem of inequality in the operation of the common market, particularly the industrial allocation of new single-plan industries among other problems. Member countries in inward-oriented regional integration schemes have been tempted to develop high, and widely dispersed, levels of effective protection. In many cases, the high levels of protection led to excess capacity in the protected sectors. Like the case in the EAC, the solution was to either allow member countries to impose barriers to entry, or explicitly include complementation agreements that allocated specific industries to different member countries. Notwithstanding these agreements, conflicts often arose because there were no clearly articulated criteria on how the allocation was to be done (de la Torre and Kelly 1992, 45).

Other issues of importance to regional integration in developing countries are the limited size of the regional market, which often leads to many governments' perception (probably correctly) of pursuing inward-oriented regional integration as at best zero-sum games (Hazelwood 1967, 45). In this wise, inward-oriented regional integration schemes have tended to foster the creation of vested interest, rather than competition, where protected industries have been more likely to fight integration with the world economy, and are less likely to be able to eventually survive such competition.

By contrast, regional integration in industrialised countries has tended to be outward-oriented, with members generally aiming to ultimately expand the agreement and become more integrated in global markets (e.g., EU, NAFTA). Outward-oriented regional integration schemes have been far more successful than inward-oriented arrangements, especially when member countries adopt an open stance before the agreement (e.g., APEC, EU, NAFTA). Most countries in SSA continue to be inward-oriented and have only modest trade linkages. For example, the share of intra-group exports in total exports was less than 6 per cent for all

of the major regional integration schemes in SSA in 1990, with the exception of CEAO, where it reached 10.5 per cent (ECOWAS 2000b, 178). The comparable shares for ASEAN, NAFTA and the EU were 19, 42 and 61 per cent (Foroutan 1993). However, we must note here that the magnitude of actual trade flows in SSA is almost certainly larger than the official figures indicated because of unrecorded flows³⁴ (Husain 1993, 99; Barad 1990, 44); the basic conclusion remains that most existing trade takes place with countries outside the region. In view of these assumptions, Foroutan and Pritchett (1993) concluded that the “fundamental explanation for the failure of regional integration in SSA to increase intra-regional trade share is their inability and/or unwillingness of these countries to carry out the preferential trade liberalisation measures that represent the prerequisite for trade creation among integration markets.”

In summary, there have been many false starts within ECOWAS, and the attempt in the revision of the Establishing Treaty, as well as the failure to implement signed protocols, which all point to the case that market integration may be too ambitious to attempt immediately in the sub-region. Yet the immediate opportunities capable for investment coordination in specific areas within the sub-region can only be fully capitalised on if institutional structures emerge which enable progressive movement towards wider and deeper regional integration. Similarly, the opportunities can only be properly evaluated in the context of an overall rationale, which envisages less ambitious forms of economic cooperation in the short term leading eventually to full regional integration in the long term. In terms of ECOWAS, an appropriate strategy for the design of its regional integration should not have been based on only political and economic changes that must take place in that sub-region to fulfil the integration theory of functionalism, but also the rethinking that has taken place in other areas when progress towards cohesiveness has occurred. In assessing the

³⁴ This will be deliberated on as one of the impeding factors hampering policies of ECOWAS in regional

progress made by other integration schemes such as the EU, ASEAN, and to an extent SADC, it is becoming clear that the prism through which ECOWAS have traditionally been viewed in terms of its success or failure is one-dimensional, probably faulty, and imperfectly constructed. ECOWAS needs to be grounded in an integration theory based on the conditions and realities of the African continent. The following should lead up to why there have been both institutional failures as well as policy implications retarding ECOWAS in regional development.

VII. Issues of Co-operation and integration

The literature on integration has a strong consensus that the countries in SSA would be far more likely to gain by enhancing regional coordination in the areas of infrastructure construction, research and development, environmental initiatives, food security, energy management, improved flows of information, and mutual defence and security (Robson 1987, 21; Ravenhill 1990, 24; Mulaisho 1990, 14; Langhammer and Hiemenz 1990, 12; de Melo and Panagariya 1993, 66; Foroutan 1993, 88; McCarthy 1996, 23; Mytelka 1994, 19). It is argued that regional coordination can take the form of co-operation agreements rather than formal trade integration because coordination in such areas has fared better among developing countries. Developing countries that have pursued co-operation rather than formal integration have transformed systematically into cohesive regional markets and expanded trade amongst them. A notable example with SSA is SADC (formerly SADCC), which from 1980, have placed emphasis on specific projects and programmes and downplayed the explicit goal of integration of their regional markets (Mulaisho 1990; Foroutan 1993). The SADCC from the 1980s purposely did not establish a highly centralised and expensive bureaucracy but instead established a small secretariat, and leaving most of the responsibilities to the individual member states for various sectors of endeavours. Priority

development and the attempt of the countries to achieve a cohesive integration in the sub-region.

was centred on first strengthening infrastructure and communications linkages among member countries, to which a great deal of success was made. For instance, between 1980 and 1990, the percentage of transit traffic from the six landlocked member states moving through SADC ports increased from 20 to 60 per cent, despite extensive military activity in the region (de la Torre and Kelly 1992). One of the most successful projects at that time, and one which has contributed to trade expansion in the region, is the *Beira corridor* between Zimbabwe and Mozambique, which substantially reduced Zimbabwe's dependence on South Africa ports (Foroutan 1993). A similar example outside SSA is the ASEAN, which was not set out from the beginning to be co-operation in trade but rather to defuse conflict among member state and to forge a common voice on international matters of mutual concern. Regional trade was not the objective and took back seat to most deliberations because some members, especially Indonesia and Thailand, initially had high tariffs, and because member states initially mistrusted each other's motives (Radelet 1990, 15).

But as member states begun multilateral meetings, the dialogues and co-operation shifted from that of defence issues to trade and when security issues were no more urgent in their deliberations they considered strengthening trade ties. In all, co-operation initiatives among countries require a must less long-term commitment by member governments than formal integration arrangements. The requirements of a co-operation attempt are much less in scope and size and are rather flexible and limited to one project at a time and in time, expanded to several initiatives. The flexibility allows for iterative planning and can encompass many countries (like ECOWAS) or be limited to bilateral arrangements (individual basis). When this takes place the co-operation becomes less threatening to the ruling elite than formal trade agreements in terms of encroaching on national sovereignty (Ravenhill 1990, 66).

Co-operation among such countries tend to be low in profile, and are less risky to

politicians, dictators and autocratic leaders and likewise, require smaller secretariats and bureaucratic hierarchies. Most importantly, they are less demanding on scarce administrative and financial resources than formal trade agreements. It can then be concluded that co-operation can help facilitate the means toward increased trade within the region and beyond any region by improving communication and transportation links and by establishing dialogue between member countries, which are prerequisites in themselves for an effective future regional integration.

In view of the above, and given the limited supply of skilled administrators and policymakers in many of the countries struggling to integrate, such diversions of efforts do have large opportunity costs. Moreover, to the extent that regional integration in SSA are unsuccessful due to false starts, the lack of iterative planning, the lack of political and historical considerations, and the absence of most ingredients associated with traditional theories of integration, they could erode, rather than continue to solicit credible support from member states. Based on these factors and impediments, one could ask under what conditions ECOWAS would move from its current slow pace to a cohesive integration.

VIII. Issues of Orthodox Gains and losses from RI

This section is an attempt to assess the viability of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), in terms of its functional and pragmatic approach, in terms of gains and losses to integration. It is appropriate to show how the structure, objectives, sectoral coverage, and membership within the sub-region has contributed or negated integration bearing in mind that the establishment of ECOWAS was a parallel imposition at the time of the European Community.

Both economic theory and a vast body of empirical evidence state that the advantage of full multilateral, rather than a regional free trade area is the best strategy for a government to maximise national welfare (de Melo and Panagariya, 1993). In several of the conclusions

drawn about these paradigms, regional integration is considered the second-best arrangement and can contribute significantly to an ideal multilateral trade. In view of this assertion, one way to evaluate integration in West Africa in the following chapter would be to compare ECOWAS potential gains against losses from trade. Most models are measured, in terms of net benefits relative to the initial starting point, rather than against the standard of multilateral free trade. When this standard is used, it is often directed to both static and dynamic gains (de la Torre and Kelly 1992, 54; Robson 1987, 33).

The basic justification for encouraging regional integration in Africa, and particularly, in West Africa is rooted in the belief that developmental benefits can be captured by using certain policy instruments and investment opportunities beyond those that can be obtained by their unilateral use. Even though such analogy does not mean that such benefits will automatically be enhanced by a progression from co-operation to integration or from a looser harmonisation to a cohesive regional integration. Neither can it be a guarantee that *a priori* regional integration will automatically lead to welfare gains through enhanced efficiency, for the region as a whole, for its individual members or gains from world trade. In short, expected development within developing countries such as those in West Africa can be enhanced if (i) their efforts can achieve economies of scale; (ii) they take advantage of externalities associated with market expansion; (iii) they can achieve allocation through efficient trade creation; (iv) they can turn short-term diversion disadvantages into long-term trade creation with the potential of capturing dynamic efficiency, and so forth.

Viner (1950) was the first to show that trade creation is welfare enhancing, providing gains on both the supply side and the demand side. Supply side benefits accrue from the reallocation of resources away from protected industries and towards firms producing goods for the regional market (assuming full employment), once protection in other member countries is reduced. On the one hand, trade creation can accrue to non-member countries

whose firms have a physical presence in the sub-region concerned or may benefit from other inter-firm arrangements (technology licensing, cross shareholding, strategic alliances etc.) with firms inside the sub-region (see also de la Torre and Kelly 1992, 16; Balassa 1961, 92). On the other hand, the effects of trade diversion on non-member countries in which they are located might affect sub-regional firms with a large presence outside the sub-regional. Moreso, the mere presence of regional integration can generate direct and portfolio investment impulses with its own primary and secondary effects. Here, consumers benefit from being able to buy from the lowest-cost producer in the sub-region.

Regional integration theory and analysis continue to be underpinned by the two basic Vinerean concepts (1950) of *trade creation* and *trade diversion*.³⁵ These concepts emphasise the welfare effects of trade flows among nation states and the manner in which such flows might be affected by regional integration. The theory stipulates that trade creation takes place when a member switches from consumption of goods produced domestically (at relatively high cost) to goods imported from a lower cost first located in a partner country. For example, consider the case of Ghanacem, a cement company located in Takoradi, Ghana versus the West African Cement Consortium (an ECOWAS initiative located in Lome, Togo). The Ghanaian domestic cement company was protected from the days of Ghana's independence by about a 40-50 per cent tariff, which was sufficient to preclude cement imports into Ghana. But following the establishment of ECOWAS, Ghanacem was affected when the 40-50 per cent tariff on cement was eliminated. Since the West African Cement Consortium produced cement at a lower cost, entrepreneurs in Ghana began to import and sell the cement from Lome, Togo. In terms of the above, trade creation is said to exist; however, Ghanacem was forced to begin advertisement in the local newspapers and for the first time in several years,

³⁵ Use of trade creation and trade diversion can be seen from de la Torre and Kelly 1992.

begun to offer incentives if bulk purchases was made of Ghanacem manufactured cement.³⁶

The effect can have important distributional consequences: previously protected producers lose, while consumers and low-cost producer gains. If the analogy here is to go by in terms of the Ghana Cement story, then compensation should have come forth from the ECOWAS compensatory schemes to assist Ghanacem to survive and remain competitive. But as deliberated upon in the previous chapter, the compensatory scheme, which should have taken care of these imbalances, is non-existent. In this example, Ghanacem would either have to reduce its price or face shutting down operations, hence defeating functionalism as a model adopted by ECOWAS establishing Treaties for failing to recognise the impact of such deficiencies from the beginning and the mechanisms to control them.

IX. Integration in West Africa: a priority or just wishful thinking?

The evidence to date shows that despite continuing verbal commitments to regional co-operation and integration in West Africa, the results have been disappointing (Bach 1990, 13; Barad 1990, 34). The suggested reasons for this poor record, and which have been analysed in depth in chapters five and six, are historic, political, economic, and institutional. Historically, the colonial heritage left many Africans, particularly those in West African countries, dependent on their former metropolitan countries, and this factor tends to work against viable regional grouping. The dependence on industrial countries by African countries is not the problem of colonialism as often analysed by most writers about African problems. The problem is economic in diverse forms, in which conditions have not allowed the former African colonies the freedom to engage in "free enterprise" for fear of losing the coloniser's donor support at the grouping of the eight-richest countries in the world (G-8 meetings). Commercial and political links with Europe for example, continue to be more important than links within Africa, and for that matter, West Africa. The history of anglophone Francophone

³⁶ Community of West African States' initiative in Lome, Togo. *Ghanaian Times*, December 2001.

and lusophone divisions in West Africa have made communication and transportation networks oriented towards former colonial centres which impedes intra-trade within the sub-region.

Politically, regional co-operation is an intensely political process and, at the time when most Africans or West Africans states are still defining their national identities, it makes matters difficult to agree on co-operation that requires sovereignty in certain areas to be handed to a regional organisation. No matter what the rhetoric, political leaders jealously guard their sovereignty and are unwilling to reduce the power and authority of the State (Senghor 1990, 23). In this respect, co-operation or integration to any degree will depend on the perceived benefits that the governments or politicians believe can accrue to the country.

The least observed problem that is often left out of the agenda for most meetings in ECOWAS is the participation of the general public in discussion on regional initiatives. From the establishing documents of ECOWAS in 1975, co-operation agreements are often considered to be the "private property" of politicians and civil servants. Until of recent, no inputs are solicited from the general public on how they perceive integration despite the much civil unrest, tribal wars and other uncivil disturbances in many countries in the sub-region (ECOWAS 2000b, 167). The general public tends to see co-operation as bloated and expensive bureaucracies attending meetings, rather than opportunities for them to aid in the growth and development of the areas in which they live.

Economically, there are balance of payment difficulties, lack of complementarities, weak industrial structures, low productivity, heavy debt burdens, poor infrastructure and transport facilities, zero growth rates in some cases, and non-convertible currencies in the sub-region. With all these important factors to integration going against ECOWAS, it is questionable how useful market integration is possible under these current conditions.

Institutionally, there are weaknesses in most areas of the West African integration scheme. Among them are the existence of too many regional organisations pursuing the same objective; a tendency of the organisations pursuing top-heavy structures with many political appointments; many failures by governments to meet their financial obligations to ECOWAS Secretariat and the Fund; a reluctance by countries to hand over power and resources to regional executives; poor preparations before meetings, often participation by the wrong people (“substitutes”), and little internal consultation before official decisions are taken at regional meetings. Another critical issue which compounds matters is the lack of follow up by sectoral ministries on decisions taken at regional meetings by Heads of State and Governments and to audit their proceedings for content (Nomvete 1984, 16; ECOWAS 1998c, 67; ECOWAS 1999a, 87; ECOWAS 2000c, 87).

In view of the above, what can be said about the experience of ECOWAS in regional economic integration? West Africa can also be said to have suffered under the unfavourable international or domestic economic environment and their impacts have impeded the objectives of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) in the sub-region. All these and other associated problems can be said to be the main stumbling blocks to the effective regional development of countries in West Africa. While all these levels are important, it is striking that the literature on ECOWAS focuses on the roles, functions and strengthening of the integration attempt. Far less attention or emphasis is paid to straightening the ECOWAS integration along its intended vision and the need to formulate the institutional framework or the policy implications that will revamp the integration of ECOWAS. Moreover, the problem has been the failure of the Revised Treaty of 1992 to address trade liberalisation issues, harmonisation problems and rationalisation issues in an iterative manner at the national and sub-regional level to usher in regional development.

X. Prerequisites for regional integration

The lesson to be learnt in relation to the design of regional integration is not that organisation should be organised along supranational or intergovernmental as is the case with the European Union, but that whichever approach is taken, the institutions set up to manage the affairs of the integration should be realistic to carry out the mandate. The institutions should have available and adequate resources to fulfil this mandate and be sure that the resources are generated automatically, via, for instance, the process of common consensus by the member countries. From this perspective, it will involve the integration initiatives among countries to remain by and large intergovernmental to create the interdependence required for cohesiveness. Still, the complexity of integration and the institutions that are capable of formulating and implementing regional policies require the appropriate tools and the procedures necessary to transform the integration in a systematic manner. For example, the human resource capability should be in line with the objectives streamlining what steps need to be taken gradually and consistently with plans to ensure transformation. More so, there should be no conflict of the mandates of the institutions as is presently the case in most integration schemes in sub-Saharan Africa, which on several occasions have led to the inefficient use and waste of resources and resulted in the current problems impeding ECOWAS.

Finally, the principle of subsidiarity and variable subsidiarity principle implies that the responsibility for dealing with an issue should depend on the population concerned. The logic of this principle is very strong, as it is important that those decisions that can be taken by those that can make them most effectively be taken at a low level rather than the usual intergovernmental or supranational body. This principle may also offer some guidance a realistic and appropriate mandate for different regional organisations. In short, the framework for regional integration should allow enough flexibility for different speeds. If all member states of a regional grouping must move at the same speed determined by the speed

of the slowest moving member state then the rationale for doing so must be clearly articulated to all members. In contrast, the principle implies that, within a grouping, some sub-groups of countries may move faster than others in the integration objectives. Hence, variable geometry makes it possible for a grouping with slower member states to contain one or more sub-groups that have a more ambitious program with the same core programmes. The concept of variable geometry cannot occur in West Africa because the countries are not compatible due to overlapping within the same setting and the inconsistencies in the policies to be implemented.

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Chapter V

Policy Implications impeding Regional Development in West Africa

The word “policy” is the structure things should be done to accomplish set results. The policies meant to transform the sub-region of West Africa by ECOWAS institutions imply the coherent description of articulate, conscious choices, which decision-makers have approved. The choices are clearly set out so that everyone knows them. The job of the Authority of Heads of State and Government (AHGS) of ECOWAS is to make policy decisions. It is the onus of other entities such as the Council of Ministers (COM), and the Technical Commissions and the Secretariat, among others, to carry out the policy choices once the protocol for signing those decisions are achieved. Policies must be understood not simply in terms of officially proclaimed goals, but in terms of the way activity is structured among a wide range of participants (Colebatch 1998, 9).

Accordingly, the goal of statements such as the aims and objective of ECOWAS may be significant, but they are unlikely to tell the whole story. The “players” in the game must learn how policies are promulgated, and under what conditions (procedures) such policies are (can be) implemented. By invoking the Bureaucratic Politics model, one can explain how the Authority delegate’s policies down to the Council without the necessary resources or power to implement them and the problems such a relationship bears on the Technical and Specialised Commission of ECOWAS. What can make policies implemental? What is consistent with the expectations that others have of the integrations within ECOWAS? The following analyses are a number of key policy-related and conventional variables that have significantly affected the growth performance of ECOWAS.

To a large extent, the Bureaucratic Politics model portrays that the positive evolution of these variables have impeded the growth of the integration process. Because of the failure of those responsible to implement set objectives to recognise that there are problems requiring measures to correct the devastating impact on integration. Borrowing from Colebatch (1998, 74), politics is seen as what leads up to policy and administration, as what flows from it. Notwithstanding these assumptions, this chapter sets out to analyse the policy implications stemming from institutional inadequacies under which ECOWAS has operated since its inception. The analyses that follow are a combination of complications and limitations of the integration process, since the genesis and evolution of the ECOWAS.

I. The Establishment Problem

The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), established in April of 1958, and inspired by economic development in Latin America in the 1950s, (in turn modeled upon Western European experience of free trade), had insisted that functional economic co-operation among African countries was part of the overall strategy towards achieving industrial development on the continent of Africa. In fact, the ECA acted as a catalyst in the movements that led to the formation of integration in West Africa and other regions of Africa through a series of meetings in each of the four regions, to stimulate the governments concerned to practical measures of economic co-operation. ECA believed that integration measures like liberalization of international trade, adoption of a common tariff for member countries of a regional body, and the co-ordination of investment policies, theoretically would make the regionalization of import substitution policies more viable. As earlier noted the main objectives of ECOWAS were the eventual elimination of all tariffs and barriers between members, the establishment of a customs union, unified fiscal policy and co-coordinated regional policies in the many sectors and infrastructural facilities.

But integration or co-operation of member countries was doomed from the start primarily because of the lack of a state-to-state relationship par excellence. ECOWAS members developed and still maintain an increasingly intensive web of relations with developed countries characterized by what can be described as a structural imperialism relationship. The facts are, to say the least, very depressing when we look at the structure of community trade and ECOWAS trade with other regions in annex 4.

ECOWAS trade amounts to approximately 11% of the sub-region's total trade with the world. According to the ECOWAS handbook of International trade, 1998 data, intra-community trade stood at \$1, 813m for total imports and \$2,535m and \$8,114m respectively for 1997. Thus, the intra-regional trade, level of investment, and industrial development remains much undeveloped. To a certain extent, this has created dichotomy in ECOWAS co-operation. It can be argued that the leading industrial states in the sub-region – Nigeria, Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, and Ghana – believe that they can secure a better deal if they pursue their causes as individual countries rather than as a group (Annex 5). Many of them feel that they will be better served individually if they link up with developed countries (see); and the last group of these – landlocked countries (Niger, Burkina Faso and Mali) – are merely frustrated because they are rather too small to make any significant impact in the global arena.

II. Obstacles against ECOWAS

ECOWAS faces problems similar to other regional groupings in Africa. Although its main objective is to promote economic integration of the sub-region, it has spent the last ten years resolving political and social conflicts in some its member countries such as Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau and Niger. Nonetheless, since ECOWAS was established in 1975, West Africa has witnessed tremendous, far-reaching changes. On the political scene, the principle of democracy, free and fair elections, good governance and respect of human

rights have gained wide acceptance. At the economic level, states are relinquishing their stranglehold on the major enterprises, whose management once was the sole preserve of government. Privatisation is the order of the day as the countries prepare to meet the challenges of globalization to avoid being marginalized within the economic order. Paradoxically, twenty-seven years after its inception, ECOWAS finds itself confronted with the same developmental challenges and problems: corruption, mismanagement, low investment rate, falling prices of raw materials on the world market, foreign debt, and the burden of structural adjustment.

(a) Identity/similarity of SAP programs in the region

Most of the countries in West Africa pursued similar reform programs (at the same time) and faced the same conditions imposed by the World Bank and IMF. As part of SAP they all aim to reduce imports. If one country's imports are another's exports and the former are cut as part of the demand-management approach, this obviously affects exports. According to the African Development Bank report for 1988, Africa alone in 1988 recorded 30 countries implementing SAPs, almost all of them with the approval and active encouragement or actual involvement of the IMF and World Bank (ADB 1992b, 22). For example, SAP policy measures designed to improve the efficiency of the domestic economic system such as the elimination of price controls, subsidies and subventions, review of import licensing, abolition of the monopolistic practices for commodity boards and other state trading organizations, pitched the countries' development policies against each other.

Because of the similarity of these countries' domestic measures, the SAPs resulted in the erosion of the monopolistic power of Commodity Boards and State Trading Organizations as a means of encouraging export growth and negated the true prices of imports to be reflected on the domestic markets (Contact 1990, 23). SAPs were experimented by Ghana,

Cote d'Ivoire and Nigeria around this period but were soon abandoned because the countries' domestic policies were at odds with the sub-regional policy on intra-trade, the countries' inability to define for example, *goods or origin*, and the tax base and other economic variables for sustainable growth.

(b) Asymmetry of the adjustment process

A far more serious problem at the international level deals with what Woodward (1992, 148), describes as problems in the global adjustment process, specifically what he calls "the asymmetry of macro-economic adjustment." Woodward reminds us that the process of macro-economic adjustment centers around the pressure on countries such as those in ECOWAS with balance of payments (BOP) deficits to reduce them, without any equivalent pressure on surplus nations to reduce their surpluses. If Woodward's useful argument is taken - that one country's BOP deficit is by trade definition another country's BOP surplus, just as one country's imports are another country's exports - then the asymmetry is further compounded by the demand-orientation of IMF programs, requiring adjusting developing countries to reduce demand or imports as part of conditionality.

This situation tends to push developing deficit nations into reducing their demand as a means of external adjustment. However, surplus nations are under no equivalent pressure to allow an offsetting increase in their demand. When deficit nations like those in West Africa represent a large proportion of the world economy (as they currently do), the net effect is to slow down the growth of demand, and thus of income, in the world economy. The above scenario leads to a reduction in the rate of growth of demand for the exports, both primary and manufactured, of countries within ECOWAS that are trying to adjust.

The implication here is that the commitment of members to the coordination and harmonization of national economic and financial policies defeats the objective of enhancing

the effectiveness of national structural adjustment and economic reform programs within West Africa. As such, the timetable to facilitate the regional approach to economic development, and by implication the facilitation of the establishment of a monetary union has not been met. ECOWAS' monetary policy has the medium term objective of attaining regional convertibility of the francophone national currencies, and in the longer term, the creation of a single monetary zone. Despite these ambitions, the ECOWAS travellers' cheque was recently launched (in October 1998), to facilitate regional travel and commercial undertakings. It is also projected that a single currency zone would be operational in 2004; however, the implementation is further implicated by the current plans by other countries (particularly, Ghana and Nigeria) to form their own monetary zone to operate side by side with that of the Francophone.

III. NON-SAP Impediments

(a) Dependence on a few, primary, exports

Several factors present at the time most African countries gained their independence can be cited as contributory to the failure of integration thus far. Among these structural deficiencies are dependence on a few (and primary as opposed to value-added) exports; capital-intensive production; and underdevelopment of human capabilities. We discuss each of these in turn.

A major congenital rigidity of most ECOWAS economies is that their colonial masters encouraged the development and export of a few primary raw material products meant to service factories in Europe; a situation that has changed very little in the 1990's. Oxfam (1993) goes so far as to suggest that over-dependence on commodity exports on depression-prone world markets is at the heart of Africa's trade crisis. More than any other developing region, the West African sub-region depends on primary commodities - such as coffee, cocoa, cotton and groundnuts - to generate the foreign exchange needed to buy

imports. For historical or colonial reasons, West Africa's major export markets are also identical, a fact which causes its own problems. From 1973, agricultural growth has weakened; industrial output declined; export performance and export revenues tumbled; and external debts swelled about 19-fold. As a result social services deteriorated almost to a total extinction (Bundu 1997, 67).

Africa as a whole experienced a moderate growth from the mid-1960s until the end of the 1970s. While the average growth rate was well below the rate achieved by a handful of East Asian economies, it equalled or exceeded the growth rates attained by many developing countries in other regions. In particular there was a notable acceleration of growth in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) during the 1970s (table 2), supported by a boom in commodity prices and foreign aid. Investment in many countries in the region exceeded 25 per cent of GDP, and the savings gap remain relatively moderate.

Table 2

Average Annual GDP Growth in Africa, 1965-1999 (in percentages)						
	1965-1969	1970-1979	1980-1989	1990-1999	1990-1994	1995-1999
Africa	4.5	4.2	2.5	2.3	0.9	3.5
North Africa	5.3	6.7	4.2	3.1	2.1	4.2
SSA	2.4	4.0	2.1	2.4	0.8	3.9
Including S. Africa	4.2	3.3	1.7	2.0	0.4	3.2
Excluding Nigeria	3.5	3.9	2.5	2.3	0.3	4.2

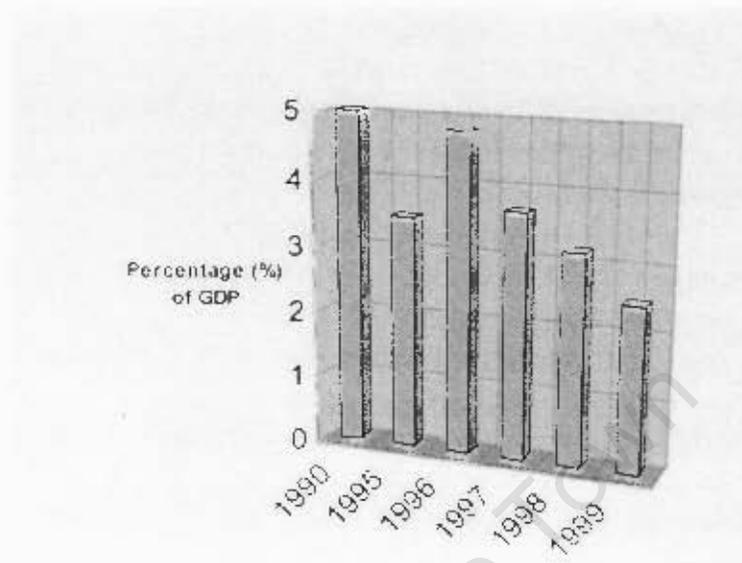
Source: For 1980-1999: UNCTAD Secretariat Calculations, based on World Bank, World Development indicators 2001. For 1965-1979: World Bank data as reported in the 2000/2001 Annual Report, Global Coalition for Africa.

Economic performance deteriorated rapidly in SSA in the late 1970s and early 1980s, whereas the slowdown of growth was relatively moderate in North Africa. Unlike many countries in other developing countries, which managed to restore growth after the lost

decades of the 1980s, stagnation and decline continued in SSA during the first half of the 1990s due to a combination of adverse external developments, structural and institution bottlenecks and policy errors (UNCTAD 1999, 4-9). As socio-economic conditions deteriorated and spilled over into political and civil unrest, the international community launched various initiatives including the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa (UNADAF), to address the problems faced by the countries in the region. At the same time, more and more African countries came to adopt Structural Adjustment Programmes supported by the Bretton Woods Institutions, encompassing rapid and extensive liberalization, deregulation and privatisation of economic activity in search for a solution to economic stagnation and decline. However, while structural adjustments Programmes have been applied more intensely and frequently in Africa than in any other developing region, barely any African country has exited from such Programmes with success, establishing conditions for rapid, sustained economic growth. This is true not only for countries, which are said to have slipped in the implementation of stabilization and adjustment Programmes (the so-called non-adjusters or bad-adjusters), but also most of the core- and good-adjusters such as Ghana who backed out of the programme in 1999.

In West Africa, the external trade to regional GDP growth has not been very encouraging in the last few years. Trade balance has been dwindling since 1996 (see figure below), mainly due to the preponderance of commodity exports whose prices are unpredictable. The problem is the result of very high variations in external trade earnings by the countries in West Africa.

Graph 1: Trade balance (% of GDP) in West Africa (1990-1999)



Source: ECOWAS 2000b.

In WA, the share of gross domestic investment in GDP growth has risen over the past three years, from 17.9 percent in 1997 to 20.6 percent in 1998, and 21 percent in 1999. A close look at the structure of investment reveals the preponderance of private investments and stagnation in public investments (ECOWAS 2000a, 15). However, the share in the GDP has been diminishing since 1990, from 16.1 percent in 1990 to 14.7 percent in 1998 and 15 percent in 1999 bring about a financing gap of 5.9 percent in 1998 and 6 percent in 1999.

(b) Capital versus labor intensity

Another structural bottleneck of ECOWAS economies is their reliance more on capital rather than labor-intensive techniques of production - a situation many critics attribute to the nature of the import-substitution-industrialization (ISI) strategy embarked upon after independence for most of these countries. Donges and Heimenz (1991, 217) point out that import-substitution policies tend to favor: (i) production of relatively capital-intensive products, as typically the industrial structure gets diversified in the vertical direction; (ii) the

application of capital-intensive technologies - because of relatively low barriers to imports of capital goods; and (iii) an inefficient use of capital - owing to the lack of competition in domestic markets. All this happens at the expense of labor-intensity, of which ECOWAS has a relatively large endowment. The failure of the Economic and Social Commissions of ECOWAS to address these variables in terms of the implementation of the freedom of movement of people and goods within the sub-region is what keeps the integration at the snail pace towards regional development (ECOWAS 2000a, 199).

IV. Other Non-SAP impediments

In addition to the structural rigidities discussed above, other non-SAP factors have contributed to non-achievement of integration objectives and ideals. Among these are the following: dependence on the developed West, proliferation of regional groupings, politics, parochialism, a huge external debt burden, transport problems, lack of information, Africa's economic crisis, bribery and corruption, war, drought and disease, dis-equalizing effects of integration, as well as deleterious world economic conditions. We look at each of these next.

(a) Excessive dependency of ECOWAS states on the developed West

As a result partly of the congenital rigidities discussed earlier, it is no secret that many African nations, and precisely West Africa generally, still depend on the West for imports of raw material-supplies and manufactured products, even in cases where products of comparable quality may be available in member states. The policy to harmonise economic policies within ECOWAS is so far behind because the convergence systems within UEMOA and the rest of ECOWAS do not re-coincide. Some indicators common to the two systems are classified differently and are therefore not always accorded the same degree of importance (ECOWAS 2000b, 45). Besides, the target dates for convergence are different: 2002 for

UEMOA, and 2003 for ECOWAS. The convergence criteria below speak for themselves. High dependence on imported raw materials from the West makes ECOWAS economies particularly vulnerable to foreign exchange availability, which in Africa is typically in short supply. Secondly, inter-sectoral and intra-sectoral linkages are bound to be weak because firms buy their requirements from outside ECOWAS rather than from within.

In addition, the internal environment of West Africa is characterised by the acute divergence in macro-economic performance indicators. Despite rising oil prices which boosted Nigeria's export earnings considerably at the end of 1999 and in 2000, WA continues to suffer from deteriorating terms of trade caused by falling export prices and the effects of the currency devaluation by some of the rival countries in Asia and East Africa on the commodity export market (ECOWAS 2000b, 189).

(b) *Proliferation of regional groupings*

The West African sub-region is plagued by the existence of several regional bodies. It seems every organization or body in anglophone West Africa, has its Francophone counterpart and vice versa. A few examples will illustrate this point. In the health sector, the Francophone *Organisation de coordination et de Cooperation pour le lutte contre les Grandes Endemies* (OCCGE), has the Anglophone West African Health Community (WAHC) as its counterpart. There are two organizations managing the river basins of the Senegal and Gambia rivers. The Mano River Union (MRU) is still in existence. However, the most polarizing of the sub-regional organization or associations is the recent formed UEMOA.

Table 4: Membership of Regional integration arrangements in West Africa

ECOWAS-1975	CEAO-1973*	MRU-1973	UEMOA-1994
Benin	Benin	Guinea	Benin
Burkina Faso	Burkina Faso	Liberia	Burkina Faso
Cape Verde	Côte d'Ivoire	Sierra Leone	Côte d'Ivoire
Côte d'Ivoire	Mali		Guinea Bissau
Gambia	Mauritania		Mali
Ghana	Niger		Niger
Guinea	Senegal		Senegal
Guinea-Bissau			Togo
Liberia			
Mali			
Niger			
Nigeria			
Senegal			
Sierra Leone			
Togo			

Note: Mauritania left ECOWAS in December 1999.

Source: ECOWAS 2000b.

The UEMOA is a regional governmental organization consisting of the Francophone West Africa states: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Niter, Senegal, and Togo. Created in 1994 from the *Union Montaire Ouest Africain* (UMOA), and the *Communaute Economique des Etats de l'Afrique de l'Ouest* (CEAO), unites the countries of the CFA Franc monetary zone. Its constitutional treaty of 1994 emphasises the principle of subsidiarity, establishes a supranational commission modeled on that of the European Union and outlines five major objectives: (a) encourage competition in an open and competitive market within a reasoned juridical environment. (b) achieve convergence between policy and macro-economic policy indicators. (c) Create a common market (d) coordinate sectoral policies and (e) align budgetary policies. All members of UEMOA share the same currency, CFA franc, which is guaranteed by the French franc at a fixed rate of exchange, and administered by *Banque Centrale des Etats de l'Afrique de l'Quest* (BCEAO).

Plans are afoot to prohibit the introduction of new protectionist barriers between states forming UEMOA. Just like ECOWAS, UEMOA pledges to support regional investment in industry, agriculture, transport, communications, and energy infrastructure. In principle, this is a policy implication of duplication of efforts and a prime intention of the francophone to balkanise the integration of ECOWAS. Instead of a policy by the UEMOA to strengthen the integration of ECOWAS, the UEMOA has actually fractionalised the integration and threatens ECOWAS' integration.

(c) Liberalisation Policies within ECOWAS

Under the Trade Liberalisation Scheme (TLS), 31 December 1999 signaled an end to tariff barriers within an ECOWAS free trade zone. The next phase thereafter is the establishment of an ECOWAS common external tariff (CET) within a period of two years. However, the Trade Liberalisation Scheme is not yet operational (ECOWAS 2000c, 64). In this state of affairs, the main weaknesses of ECOWAS is due mainly to the fact that some member states have failed to print the harmonised documents and have not yet removed tariff barriers. Other contributory factors are the high cost of compensation, the fact that the ECOWAS TLS and the UEMOA scheme co-exist, and the absence of measures to enlighten economic operators about the ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme.

Distortions are present in the areas that influence the levels of protection within member states such as taxation, exchange rates, subsidies and prices. In addition, the domestic policies of member states in the areas of capital articulation and manpower investment to aid integration of the sub-region, contradicts the harmonization and fiscal policies of ECOWAS. The sub-region until now lacks economic convergence and a fruitful surveillance mechanism for macro-economic policies; the implications are the failure of member states to streamline national economic policies and incorporate them into the

structural adjustment policies that were being implemented within the sub-region (ECOWAS 2000b, 66), hence the lack of various convergence criteria listed below.

Table 5: ECOWAS' performance under the convergence criteria: (31st December 1999).

	CRITERIA	COUNTRIES SATISFYING THE CRITERIA
I) PRIMARY CONVERGENCE CRITERIA		
1	Budget deficit/GDP (hors dons - base engagements) $\leq 4\%$	Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Senegal, (4 countries)
2	Central bank borrowing by government $\leq 10\%$ of tax revenue of previous years	Benin, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Senegal (7 countries)
3	Inflation $\leq 5\%$	Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Togo, (10 countries)
4	External reserves (within the month of importation) ≥ 6 months	Benin, Gambia, Burkina Faso, Nigeria (4 countries)
II) SECONDARY CONVERGENCE CRITERIA		
1	Arrears = 0	N.A.
2	Tax revenue/GDP $\geq 20\%$	Cape Verde, Gambia, Nigeria (3 countries)
3	Wage bill ratio/Tax revenue $\leq 35\%$	Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal (11 countries)
4	Public investments financed by domestic resources/Tax revenue $\geq 20\%$	Burkina Faso, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Senegal, (5 countries)
5	Real exchange rate stability	None

N.A. : not available

Source : ECOWAS Secretariat

V. Political Implications

(a) Political obstacles to integration

A sustained political and ideological will to succeed on the part of individual member governments is critical to the success of any regional economic grouping. This is an argument that McCoy (1993, 88) articulates with regard to the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). As with CARICOM, ECOWAS lacks a viable and stable commitment by member country governments, a complaint echoed by many of those interviewed by the author in December 1997 at the Secretariat in Lagos before the move to Abuja. Several different political ideological perspectives also exist, especially with regard to the francophone countries, not to mention the lusophone ones. As McCoy (1993) correctly argues, "ideological pluralism" has a fragmentary influence on such groupings as ECOWAS because different governments have different conceptions as to how the goals of ECOWAS are to be fulfilled.

The linguistic gulf between anglophone and francophone in the sub-region is one of the major impediments of integration in West Africa. The linguistic barrier undermines the earlier fears that the inability of the sub-region to attain set objectives is the continuous "pulling and hauling" by the francophone countries with support from France. This is implicit in what Allison and Morton (1972) describe as an organisation's behaviour within the processes of foreign policy, the group's decision-making and implementation. The opting out of the francophone countries and forming their own form of integration (the UEMOA), ostensibly supported by France, implies that the francophone countries are running as a parallel unit and muddies the waters in the sub-region. The francophone countries in policy may have divided their loyalties and their allegiance to the aims and aspiration of the ECOWAS Treaties that they signed.

The other political implication for the West African sub-region ECOWAS is political turmoil. Both Mali and Burkina Faso have experienced political unrest and the worst ravages of war have occurred in Liberia and Sierra Leone. The country of Cote d'Ivoire recently

came out of its first and worst political turmoil since the country attained her independence in the 1960. The ethnic undertones of the political crisis in Cote d'Ivoire is still simmering even though the supporters of Allassane Quattara are yet to be appeased by the dis-enfranchisement or decitizenisation of their leader, Quattara (*AfricaNews* 2001). In Guinea, there is a ranging sporadic guerrilla incursion from the border with the support of the president of Liberia, Charles Taylor. Guinea-Bissau, is yet to recover from the challenge posed by the former chief of the armed forces, General Asunmane Mane (Aning 1997, 12).

These are civil wars that are compounded by praetorianism in the sub-region and the unwillingness of the military to submit to civil authority. The catalogue of political turmoil undermines every effort at enhancing the integration process for several reasons. First, the seven years of the civil war in Liberia held inter-regional interaction at bay, and as a result implicated the social, economic and political development of the entire sub-region. Secondly, nations constituting ECOWAS were compelled to channel resources that could have been utilized for development in the individual countries to support the operations of ECOMOG in Liberia and later in Sierra Leone.

(b) Inadequate Political Commitment

This is one of the most serious constraints to integration within ECOWAS. Post-independence regional cooperation movements such as ECOWAS have their roots in political interest, rather than economic rationale. Measures agreed in regional forums are rarely incorporated in national policies and plans. The implementation of policies and plans at the country level is therefore not carried out forcefully. The failure of implementation is clearly seen with a number of regional protocols that are not ratified for years by several member states due to fear of the short-term political and economic problems, a shortage of resources, inadequate expertise, or lack of interest. A Successful integration scheme like the EU is

founded on the understanding of supra-nationality where the Commission independent of the Member States' domestic timetables undertakes the harmonization and co-ordination of programs.

Another impediment (which translates into the lack of political commitment), is the failure of member states to pay their dues and contributions to the Executive Secretariat. Outstanding loan repayments to the ECOWAS Fund can be broken down as follows: Guinea Bissau, US\$1.6 million; Liberia US\$2.3 million; Niger US\$1.116 million and Nigeria, US\$436, 235. The Executive Secretariat budget is the worst that member states pay attention to. For instance, only five member states, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Mali and Nigeria, are up to date on the payments of their contributions to ECOWAS. Total arrears outstanding to these countries amount to about US\$38.4 million; and the list for other capital projects goes on and on.

From the above record of payments, one can conclude that the political commitment to sustain integration is being undermined by the very Authority (the AHSG) that promulgates ECOWAS policies and expects them to be ratified and implemented. In view of these shortcomings, Colebatch (1998), avers that the demands of the struggle for advantage - "politics" might be at odds with the pursuit of a desired goal - "policy." In a nutshell, putting off payment of dues and contributions to the Executive Secretariat or the ECOWAS Fund might be "good politics but bad policy." But while we can distinguish between the connotations attached to "policy" and "politics, it is difficult to find out why the Heads of State and Governments' fail to pay their contributions and dues to ECOWAS.

(c) The Lack of Common Will

In any cooperative arrangement, participating countries and their leaders must subscribe to the notion that individual interests at times have to be sacrificed for the good of the larger group. In terms of neo-functionalism, the sacrifice is the response to forces whereby all decision-making is delegated to a central Authority for the good of the entire Community. The clear vision of supranationality in terms of intergovernmentalism (IG), or interdependence are reinforced by regional institutions and the acceptance by leaders that strengthening regional authorities does not weaken, but rather strengthens their common goal of regional economic integration. These are the most important and critical challenges for any regional integration seeking to reach a development milestone. The notion here is fundamental to rethinking the cooperation frameworks in particular, and the attempt to integrate states in West Africa. This is important in terms of the intellectually reinvigoration, the rationalization, and the redirection needed to strengthen the institutional, legal, regulatory, and enforcement mechanisms of the integration. In the absence of a clear definition of supra-nationality, all decisions in the intergovernmental machinery are taken on the basis of unanimity. This situation prevails within ECOWAS at the present time, which invariably leads to delays and the scaling down of policy content and result in controversy and confusion for member states. As a necessary step, ECOWAS failed to build in such critical mechanisms in the original Treaty, as well as the Revised Treaty. For example, supra-nationality should have been built into the protocols to ensure decision-making by less than unanimity and, the enforcement of mechanisms that places integration first by the countries. The failure to do so may have culminated in the progress of the integration remaining painfully slow and in the record failures within the institutional structures of ECOWAS.

VI. Social Implications

(a) Underdevelopment of human capabilities

The high population growth rate (2.7%), combined with the low rates of economic growth (2.5%), as at 1999 within West Africa is a major impediment to integration. The high rate brought the population of the West African sub-region from 40 million inhabitants in 1930 to 85 million in 1960, and stands today at 210 million (ECOWAS 2000a, 17-22). Yet as Stewart (1996, 426) points out, people have been relatively neglected, badly educated and in poor health, with their capacities frequently under-used. The consequence is low labor productivity and lack of competitiveness, despite very low wages. It is easy to flame controversy in a thesis like this, but few people would argue that part of the reason for Africa's poor educational record originates in its colonial history, which left the continent with a markedly worse educational structure than any other region in the world. For example, Stewart (1996, 426) points out that Africa's primary school enrollment ratio in 1965 was less than half that of East Asia and Latin America and only two-thirds that of South Asia, while secondary educational enrollment rates were less than a quarter of those elsewhere. Twenty years later, in 1986, the gap between Africa and the rest of the developing world was still as large as before. The West African enrolment rate for primary school education has remained at about 70%, while the figure for secondary school enrolment is only 30% (ECOWAS 2000a, 56).

Besides, the sub-region has a demographic growth rate, which doubles the population every 25 to 30 years. This kind of population increase is shocking, a shock that is all the more violent because it is accompanied by the deterioration in the region's economic conditions, at a time when the needs of the population are immense. With this premise, the sub-region will have a population of not less than 430 million inhabitants by 2020; increasing by tenfold in less than one hundred years. The above indicators are issues that should have guided the policy of the Social and Policy Councils of ECOWAS in recommending effective programmes to address the above problems. The development of the sub-region's human

capacity, or the improvement of the various facets of social development, is the reserve of ECOWAS but conditioned on the nature and the prevalence of supranationality based on functionalism within the West African enterprise.

(b) *Parochialism*

Problems in ECOWAS stem from failure, on the part of member-state governments, to internalize regional agreements in their national administrations and development plans (Nomvete 1984, 51). In many of the member states, cooperation does not go far beyond the signing of treaties and protocols. Moreover, some governments do not send to meetings those officials who have the appropriate expertise on the issues to be discussed. For example, Bax Nomvete, first Secretary-General of the PTA (COMESA), maintains that it is not unusual for an official who is a general economist or an administrator to be designated to attend all co-operation meetings, irrespective of whether the topics to be discussed are technical matters, are just policy issues, or are administrative instruments. This is true of ECOWAS meetings of Council of Ministers (COM). The result, of course, is that appropriate substantive ministries, whose officials or experts do not attend such meetings, are generally unaware that collective decisions are being taken on topics in their fields of competence. Hence no action is taken to implement the decisions or to set aside funds for the implementation of programs adopted.

(c) *The Lack of the Private Sector and Civil Society*

Regional integration issues and programs are often discussed without the active participation of the constituencies most affected, the private sector, and civil society. In particular, the expansion of markets, along with its challenges and opportunities for cross-border initiatives in both formal and informal trade are the cardinal goals of ECOWAS' harmonization goals. Similarly, the possibility of labour movements across national borders

is something labour unions should assist to shape within the West African sub-region. The policy on the free movement of labour, for example, is not a policy that can be determined by the highest authority of the ECOWAS. Neither is it in the domain of the Authority of Heads of States and Governments (AHSG) or the Council of Ministers (COM) to pronounce policies without technical advice from experts. As Colebatch (1998) alludes, expertise is the basis of participation by the private sectors within the countries to disseminate the programs that are formulated by the integration process to civil society. The growth of regional associations of business, professional, and NGOs and networks facilitates border and more informed participation by private sector and civil society interest in the integration debate. In the policies predominating within the framework of the sub-region's regional integration, ECOWAS and national governments lack that connection and relationship, as well the support of the private sector and civil society.

(d) Transport problems

The transport infrastructure for intra-ECOWAS trade (including roads, rail systems, air and some shipping) is not only inadequate, but in many cases non-existent. According to the 2000 report of ECOWAS, the Executive Secretariat of ECOWAS commissioned a study to assess the impact of the Brown Card Scheme, which has been in operation since 1983. The attempt to implement the "Brown Card" was undertaken by a local consultant, in September of 2000, but indications are that there are delays in designating national guarantors, and the lack of awareness on the part of economic operators as well as the law enforcement agents of the process. The business plan to finalise the liberalization of air traffic rights within West Africa is impeded by the differing air navigation system and a meeting of Directors of Civil Aviation in Banjul, in September 2000, to look into ways of introducing the new CNS/ATM air navigation system at the regional level is still in distress (ECOWAS 2000a, 66).

Individual railway systems are not fully compatible, especially in terms of intermodal transfer of goods. In some cases parts of the network (especially in war-torn states such as Sierra Leone, Liberia Guinea) need urgent rehabilitation and upgrading. Interviews by the author held with the ECOWAS Secretariat in Lagos in 1998 revealed that ECOWAS has completed about 87% of the trans-Saharan highway. The results are impressive in terms of road transportation, in that out of the 4,460km, about 3,894km has been completed (ECOWAS 2000a, 66). But a lot still remain, especially the road connecting Accra through Aflao to Lome, Togo, which at the present time is still untouched

(e) Lack of information

The absence of a meaningful dialogue continues to hinder the development of intra-ECOWAS trade according to the Executive Secretary's 2000 report to the summit of the Authority of ECOWAS. Most West African nations are traditionally linked to former colonizing nations and, as a consequence, there is an acute lack of awareness of what other West African countries can offer to substitute for the products currently being sourced from the developed countries. It is common knowledge that trade, for instance, within West Africa flows in a parallel manner. The lack of information is also a direct result of inadequate economic infrastructure in ECOWAS, especially in telecommunications and transportation facilities, directly hindering interaction among the West African countries. Yet as Brahmabhatt and Dadush (1996) argue, high-quality communications are essential for countries that aim to participate in global production structures (some established by multinational corporations); to respond promptly to rapidly changing market conditions; or to participate in new export markets for long-distance services such as data processing, software programming, and customer support.

Another important issue is the Travel Document form measuring 15 x 9 cm, which comprises several leaflets. It is to be used by ECOWAS nationals only in exceptional cases. As a rule, ECOWAS nationals traveling with national passports or an individual with the ECOWAS travel certificate may have these documents stamped without filling out any forms. But no member state has yet introduced these forms to date. As a result, ECOWAS nationals holding perfectly valid documents continue to fill out immigration and emigration forms. This policy leads to enormous waste of time at borders because member states are unaware that the form exists, despite the fact that the forms are everywhere in the sub-region. The ease of communication is paramount in terms of espousing the aims and objectives in a more traditional manner to the community populace. A community population, which is ignorant of the potentials in member states, cannot be easily oriented and mobilized towards economic, political, social and cultural integration. The lack of knowledge of the existence of the ECOWAS Travel Document is a clear example. Increased awareness and greater frequency of person-to-person and group contacts have to be facilitated. The media, through greater coverage of events and wider news distribution in the sub-region, can provide the mediated exposure for the citizens of the Community.

(f) War damage, Disease and Drought

We would be remiss, in a study discussing ECOWAS integration, not to make reference to the disastrous and the effects of war, drought, and disease on national and regional economies of West Africa. ECOWAS has the most distressing list of nations (of any African regional grouping) that have effectively ceased to function as modern nation states. For instance, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Niger, Guinea and a lesser extent, Nigeria face enormous and expensive reconstruction problems from years of civil wars and economic retardation that have left them desperately short of skills and infrastructure that will take a generation to rehabilitate. Likewise there is a massive backlog of unfulfilled social development projects,

particularly in Nigeria and Ghana due to the military takeovers, not to mention the rest of ECOWAS member states. Most of these countries in turn rely on agro-based industries for a huge slice of their domestic sales. In the Niger Republic the 1992 drought precipitated a 39.3 percent drop in agricultural output, which forms the economic export base of the countries total earnings (The Daily Zambian 1993, 6). Given that most of West Africa's population depends on agriculture for their livelihood, as well as for exports, it is not difficult to see how drought affects their standard of living and the lack of contributions civil society can make to the functioning of the private sector in support of the integration process.

Another area that impacts policy in terms of its implementation is disease - from malnutrition to HIV/AIDS. The health of a nation's population cannot be ignored because the citizens who are affected by these calamities are the sub-region's assets; and in terms of manpower, to propel the wings of integration. Many analysts, among them Holman (1993) point out that HIV/AIDS is already taking a heavy toll on Africa generally. More than half of the world's more than 15 million sufferers of HIV/AIDS are in Africa, many from the skilled urban class on whose shoulders the arduous task of rejuvenating African economies through structural reforms, regional integration, and other means solely rest. At the micro-level (national), in various ministries, companies and industries, HIV/AIDS-related problems come in the form of falling effectiveness, productivity and efficiency due to disability, rising sick leaves and time taken off by employees to care for relatives, and the eventual reduction in the population through death.

(g) Bribery and Corruption

A final impediment to integration here is the issue of bribery and corruption in Africa generally, and in West Africa in particular. As in many other developing regions, corruption is prevalent at many levels and in different forms, including government (and government

ministries) in the awarding and execution of contracts, and at customs check points in many parts of ECOWAS. A related, and serious, impediment germane to foreign direct investment (FDI) into Africa generally deals with what Grant (1992, 27) calls "press images of corruption in Africa." The most important conclusion drawn from Grant's assertions is that the images are presented at conferences of donor agencies that are Africa's allies in development. Africa, he says, receives terrible press in the United States, not only the corporate, but also governments and individuals who are sometimes forced out of office due to corruption charged. The image is also one of corrupt governments which, when taken together, very much discourages potential investors.

(h) Economic misery

The Human Development Index report combines life expectancy, literacy, and distribution of income or basic purchasing power as generally linked with a nation's overall economic prosperity. In short, the "statistics reflect people's well-being and the opportunities that they actually enjoy" (Human Development Report 1997, 142-47). But miserably, the Human Development Index (HDI) of 1997 indicates that ECOWAS is not reassuring against the backdrop of the index. Sierra Leone ranks (175), Niger (173), Burkina Faso (172), Mali (171), Guinea (167), Gambia (165), Guinea Bissau (163), Senegal (160), Mauritania (1500, Togo (147), Benin (146), Cote d'Ivoire (145), Nigeria (141), Ghana (132), and Cape Verde (123); Liberia was omitted in the survey because of the civil war in that country at the time of the report. The Human Development Report is a classification of a total of 175 nations measured for this report. As the Corporation for Enterprise Development (AEDC 1998, 12-15) has argued, economic development in Africa and for matter, West Africa is possible only if (i) development can enrich the material, the social well being that can be measured in the flow of money and goods over time. Such measurement will result in a jurisdiction's quality

and quantity of public goods (such as clean air and water, freedom from crime, better schools, etc.), and access to good jobs for example, with wages and benefits sufficient for supporting a family and opportunities for advancement; (ii) shared growth is present to enable a broad distribution of opportunities for meaningful participation in the economy and enjoyment of the benefits of an increased standard of living. Similarly, Sustained growth implies that the above goals are achieved in a manner that does not detract from, but rather enhances, each country's ability to achieve the same goals within ECOWAS.

The basic point underpinning all these considerations is that institution building has eluded ECOWAS, at both the sub-regional and the national levels. The history of building institutions in West Africa has been disappointing. In designing ECOWAS and building the necessary institutions, it is necessary to review the record of building and sustaining the required governance capacities. The weakness of institutions has been a major impediment to the private sector and to democratic transformation of the organisation. In short, a general West African standard for institution building has been lacking. As a result of the above, it appears the economic misery suffered by the poor in these states is so poignant that a majority of the citizens may have been forced to develop antagonistic attitudes toward the state. Indeed, they may have in their vexation toward the state, "deligitimised" it, which can then impact on participation by civil society in the process of integration in member countries. In summary, the West African sub-region has not gone far enough in terms of regional integration because the above factors have not resulted in the enrichment of the various sectors, which serve as the driving engines of growth and development in the sub-region.

Chapter VI

An Analysis of ECOWAS in Regional Development

I. Conceptualising Regional Economic Integration

The problems of regional economic integration (RI) in developing countries are obvious in that the aims and objectives of regional organizations relate to the struggle of these countries against underdevelopment and dependence upon the developed countries. Samir Amin has observed that the problems associated with RI have been compounded by the tendency of regional organisations to reinforce the dominant features of the neo-colonial relations that exist between them and their metropolitan countries (Samir et al. 1987, 16-23).

There are many studies that have sought to address the problem of regional integration in Africa. All of them point out that ECOWAS, COMESA, SADCC or others in sub-Saharan Africa were born against the background of much optimism with the OAU's Lagos Plan of Action of 1980 which called for the creation of an African Common Market by the year 2000 (Demeke 1991, 16), and the eventual liberation of South Africa. There was also the hope that these organizations would have learnt for the better from their predecessors in similar attempts at regional economic integration, particularly the defunct East African Community (EAC) (Amin et al. 1987, 45; Anyang' Nyong'o 1990, 67).

As is implicit in the objectives of all such organizations, the argument for integration is based mainly on the hope that enormous economies of scale can be attained through cooperation and coordination at the regional level, and the belief that regional integration, by removing the mono-cultural nature of individual members, will increasingly reduce the risk of export diversification. Thus, regional cooperation would gradually unite the continent that had been hitherto "balkanised." It will also increase Africa's bargaining power vis-à-vis foreigners who have, for centuries, controlled and used its immense material and human resources, and thus enhance Africa's political and economic independence. In short, the

conclusions from several areas of academic research still point to the fact that regional economic integration in Africa (and Third World countries generally) is impossible in the era of post imperialism and current international finance capital.

However, the problems which lie at the core of ECOWAS cohesiveness are no more those of imperialism nor those of neo-colonialism, but largely due to the failure of key policy implications, which have stifled the promotion of policies and faulted the methods (*procedures*) and strategies (*planning*) needed for increasing regional and sub-regional cooperation through implementation of sectoral integration. The failures are in particular the development of trade and movement of information and persons and for the utilisation of minerals and other natural resources in West Africa as a basis for the sub-region's integration. In short, the treaties setting up the various mechanisms under which ECOWAS are scheduled to operate is being hampered by the failure to achieve the promotion of cooperation and integration in the short term, the inability of the institutions with ECOWAS to facilitate policy decisions and dissemination results of experiences, and the inability to build critical capacities to support the integration process at national, sub-regional, and regional levels. Conclusions can therefore be drawn from this study that the dismal performance of ECOWAS in regional development can be grouped under seven major themes: (i) the treaties of ECOWAS are not "home-grown" concepts (ii) the Abuja Treaties were a falsification of "pan-Africanism" (iii) the birth of ECOWAS lacked iterative planning process (iv) ECOWAS failed to incorporate crucial political differences (v) there was failure to marry economic propositions with political realities (vi) the lack of mobility in the factors of production and finally, (vii) the nature of African Bureaucratic process was ignored from the start.

II. ECOWAS conception was not a “Home-Grown” Concept

One of the precipitating goals at the signing of the Treaty establishing ECOWAS boldly acknowledged that the member countries were willingly coming together in view of the relentless onslaught of globalization (ECOWAS 1975, 14). Countries in West Africa and at the receiving end of the entrenched system wanted to pool their resources in order to benefit from economies of scale and to speed up development and to reduce external dependence.

Long before Western African integration arrangements were formalized in 1975, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) had begun to see the need for such a marginalisation without integration. As in all ECA-sponsored integration initiatives, it prioritized the need for individual countries to adopt import-substitution industrialization (ISI) strategy before formally entering into integration arrangements. The strategy attempted to insulate countries from external influences which were believed to be holding back the development process, and which were assumed to be much more severe than internal constraints. ISI was regarded by governments to be important for creating in the population a feeling, of self-sufficiency while gaining the respect of the community of nations. In many countries, import-substitution was undertaken with state ownership, except in cases where this was not feasible (OECD 2001, 34).

In Ghana in particular, the state nationalized all major foreign production and distribution enterprises and set up new ones. Even in countries that supported private capital, such as Nigeria and Cote d’Ivoire, the state’s participation in production was not marginal. In many instances the state became a partner of the foreign companies that previously owned the enterprises, as did the Nigerian government with banks. The irony of ISI was, of course, that many state-owned firms were highly dependent on imported fixed and variable inputs

(Aryeetey 1998, 13). As a result the import bill did not shrink, often leading to major balance of payments problems. In the end, the ability of nations to diversify production was compromised.

The conception of ECOWAS was intended to be a multi-step process eventually leading to a customs union and then a common market and integrating states in the West African sub-region politically and culturally. Both the original Treaty and the subsequently revised version of 1992 (complemented by more than 30 protocols and supplementary protocols) include initiatives to promote co-operation and development in many areas of endeavour (ECOWAS 2000d). But the process was ill conceived with regard to the embedded problems in the sub-region. The belief was that a functionalist or gradualist thesis from the European Model, which was adopted, will provide a basis of the integration and was hurriedly imposed by the Head of States and Governments. The functionalist thesis argues that integration is best achieved through a gradual and incremental progression, which gains a momentum of its own as the interests of member states converge and as they become more and more interdependent. In other words, the signatories to the integration expected a co-operation by stealth; a case of one thing leading inexorably to another. The EU model over the years has transformed co-operation initiative in Coal and Steel by the BENELUX countries into the European Community and later to the European Union. But the establishment of ECOWAS was not planned bearing in mind the nature of their individual struggling economies. The Treaties did not as well, conceptualise the various factors that could work in favour or against any attempt to jumpstart *integration* rather than begin *co-operation* arrangements. We will return to the idea of integration and co-operation later.

The irony about the misconception of the European integration is that the over thirty or so protocols that were signed or amended due to the failure of member countries to meet set time-tables were done at various intervals by “substitutes” of the Heads of States of the

member countries. By all account, the “substitutes,” at the time of amending the original Treaty of Lagos (in 1991/92), were confronted with different issues such as quantitative restrictions, impediments to factors flows (with the exception of the monetary unions, barriers to entry, and other administrative and legal obstacles.

Related to these problems is that the Eminent Persons were assigned the task of drafting the Revised Treaty in 1991/92. The corrections or additions that they had to make to the original Treaty of Lagos included a different set of problems that were confronting ECOWAS. The Eminent Persons’ Report failed to re-emphasise the importance of identifying African problems, in terms of the lack of progress in the signing of protocols to implement many of the policies that had been proposed. There were also problems stemming from the distribution of benefits, especially when the benefits have been perceived to accrue more rapidly to richer member countries like Ghana and Nigeria (ECOWAS 2000a, 56).

ECOWAS, on paper resembles the EU, but it is rather politically more sympathetic to the ASEAN model. It is based on governments whose immediate priority is to preserve their national sovereignty, not to pool it. However, lacking the strong state structures, a strong common security interest, and dynamic economies of Southeast Asia, we have to ask whether the ASEAN model is also easily transferable. In short, lessons can be drawn from the lack of “home-grown” ideas meant to transform decisions into action rather than words. First, the European experience shows that national-level arrangements such as inter-ministerial co-ordination committees or consultation mechanisms with chambers of commerce, trade unions, and pressure groups are essential for effective participation in regional initiatives.

But the lack of ideas and the parallel imitation by the Treaties were without any procedures to follow by the countries. This is so because in devising sets of policies such as those to liberalise trade, commit the countries to the movement of people, goods or increase trade etc, requires the *how*, that is, the procedures required. To achieve a cohesive regional

integration of countries, there are no simple recipes or models. Success or failure hinges on the specific context and environment in which the co-operation is to operate. But the models, in terms of the institutions, mechanisms and formulae during the operational phase of ECOWAS were all *transplants* or *copy models* from the European integration scheme. The models adopted by ECOWAS failed to adapt to local needs and realities (West Africa is not Europe). The African needs were mostly the lack of larger markets, intra-trade amongst them, and the production of capital goods unlike the EU, which had all these factors prior to beginning the integration attempt.

There may be some approaches and mechanisms from Europe that could be useful in Africa, and for that matter, West Africa, such as the principle of subsidiary; targeted policies to reduce welfare disparities between regions; the role of small countries; and the gradual implementation of integration at different speeds (variable geometry). But the treaty setting up ECOWAS, as well as the challenge arising from the Abuja Treaty, has failed because the ideas were not embedded in local (African context) ideas to move the policies from talk to actions.

(a) Limits of the Revised Treaty after 1992

The above shifts in paradigms of the birth of ECOWAS came in 1983, when leaders had to accept that the multiplicity of agencies under the three major organizations was not only unnecessary but also costly. A joint ECA-ECOWAS study on rationalization was undertaken in 1987 and its proposals for institutional reform made public in 1991 (ECOWAS 1999b, 17-19). An expectation of the reforms was that the various smaller groupings within the sub-region would be consolidated into a single body, turning ECOWAS into the single regional economic community with responsibility for the integration agenda. In the 1992 revision of the ECOWAS Treaty, the intention was to take into account economic and political developments in the region and in the outside world. This motivated, for example, a shift to

the development of a “people-centred organisation,” as opposed to the overly bureaucratic inter-government agency of the past.

With the immense policy implications retarding the cohesiveness of ECOWAS, what are the parameters to assure internal peace as well as cross-border stability and security in West Africa? The reorganization stemming from the Revised Treaty planned to improve its decision-making processes and procedures in order to make decision binding and automatically enforceable.³⁷ The set objectives were to be achieved by streamlining the institutional and operational framework, as well as the delivery capacity, of the Secretariat. In line with the above objective, a number of existing IGOs were made specialized institutions of ECOWAS, managing activities such as monetary integration, the mobilisation of development finance, environmental protection (drought and desertification control), regional food security (cereal production, livestock development and pest control), development of river basins, human health and human resource development (ECOWAS 1999b, 17). But the Treaty was still lacking in the *prescriptions* of how Europeans are marching forward under their *own different contexts and circumstances* to that of ECOWAS, and failed to provide the operational guidance on how the declarations of intent can be implemented, and what is required to make them effective. The crucial failures were also the inability of the Revised Treaty to rationalized the specialized institutions or close them down to show its supranationality.

III. The Falsification of the Abuja Treaty

After independence in the early 1960s, two schools of thought dominated the debate on African integration. The first advocated that instant unity in African countries would cede sovereignty to central authority acting within a federalist framework. The main proponent of

³⁷ See ECOWAS 1993.

this view was Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, Africa's foremost pan Africanist, who warned that: "So long as we remain disunited, so long as we remain balkanized, regionally or territorially, we shall be at the mercy of colonialism and imperialism (Nkrumah 1970, 1). The second school of thought, favoured by most African leaders adopted the gradualist approach for a number of reasons because they were nowhere prepared to surrender sovereignty to a supranational organisation after independence.

Notwithstanding the divergence in ideologies and the aspirations of these pan Africanists, the Founding Fathers of ECOWAS failed to take cognizance of the different ideologies prevailing on the continent because most of those present during the crafting of the Treaty establishing ECOWAS were mostly military men: President Yakubu Gowon of Nigeria, President Eyadema of Togo, former President Kutu Acheampong of Ghana and others), and failed to plan the process in states like functionalism postulates. Paradoxically, barely two years after a Revised ECOWAS treaty was adopted, the CEAO transformed itself into UEMOA. The action taken by the Francophone to initiate this measure was actually what prompted the revision in the original treaty of ECOWAS to eradicate the multiplicity of agencies within the sub-region.

In short, the inconsistency in approaches, such as those initiated to rationalize the agencies, to facilitate trade liberalization, to ease the movement of people amount to a betrayal of the Abuja Treaties because they were taken without regard to laid down procedures based on the EU system of integration that they had imposed on the sub-region. Besides, Africans have always, since independence, had this idea of unity, of pan-Africanism. As rightly put by Amoako (2001), the Executive Secretary of ECA, "those are political ambitions and aspects of regional integration." However, the original Treaty of ECOWAS and subsequently, the Abuja Treaty of 1991, failed to realize that the economic aspects are

also very important, given the small size of West African economies.

Regardless of the interest expressed in functional co-operation as a strategic twin towards the pursuit of a goal of African integration, the fact is that for most African governments such co-operation can only be based on the conventional state system. However, this is the very state system that functional co-operation theory seeks to overcome in terms of the transfer of “sovereign rights” from the state to functional organizations like ECOWAS. Because the countries may not be willing yet to relinquish these “sovereign rights” and transfer of authority to ECOWAS institutions, the attempt to employ mechanisms of the EU on ECOWAS amounted to a falsification of the functional or the neo-functional model of regional integration.

IV. The Lack of an Iterative Planning Process (IPP)

Given the large diversity in planning systems and approaches, an important characteristic of the development process for complex systems such as an integration attempt, is the iterative nature of the activities (Whitney 1990, 16). Iterative planning process is primarily the result of complex, often times, and cyclical relationships of elements. In these circumstances, sometimes there remains significant uncertainty even after the early system design phase. Just like the formation of any integration of countries, the process is complex and requires planning at many stages of the process. Interim validation and verification are necessary to test the assumptions of the integration (system) as it is being built, and hence the iterative nature of the development process. ECOWAS in designing the integration attempt in West Africa failed to partition the planning and decision-making, potentially relevant to the sustainable development of the sub-region into iterations.

Regional integration describes the growth of societal integration within a region and to the often, undirected processes of social and economic interaction. Early writers on regionalism describe such a process as informal integration and what some contemporary

analysts refer to as 'soft regionalism.'³⁸ The term lays emphasis on autonomous economic processes which further lead to higher levels of economic interdependence within a given geographical area than between that area and the rest of the world. Such a geographical area is rarely affected by state policies, and the most important driving forces for economic regionalisation comes from the markets, from the private trade and investment flows, and from the policies and decisions of companies. This kind of regionalisation forms strategic alliances between firms and create inexorable momentum towards the further integration of economies within and across such regions (Hormats 1994, 98). Regionalisation can also involve increasing flows of people; the development of multiple channels and complex social networks by which ideas, political attitudes, and ways of thinking spreads from one area to the other and results in the creation of a transnational regional civil society. Regionalisation is therefore commonly conceptualised in terms of 'complexes,' 'flows', 'networks', or 'mosaics.' It is often referred to as undermining the monolithic character of the state, leading to the creation of cross-governmental alliance, multi-level and multi-player games and to the emergence of new forms of identity both above and below existing territorially defined states (Wallace 1990).

But the planning of ECOWAS was rather a political process rather than iterative planning to induce the flows, networks or complexes that strives a regional integration process. Because in the basic principles of iterative planning such as intergovernmental co-ordination, distinct intra-nation planning processes relating to infrastructure development and services, whether delivered by government, the private, or by NGOs, should be co-ordinated to make mutually reinforcing contributions to national, regional and local goals of development. Internationally, or in terms of interdependence, states sharing rules or origin, joint custom policies and other relevant issues, need to formulate strategies and policies that at a minimum

³⁸ See especially Russett 1967, 3.

are co-ordinated, and preferably that aim to increase the mutually beneficial use of shared resources.

Relevant to the need for iterative process of planning is that the current African integration arrangements can be categorised into two broad areas: those that fit into the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA), from which ECOWAS was born and those that either were in existence or came about outside the LPA. The LPA was launched as a special initiative of the Heads of States and Governments of the Organisation of Africa Unity and actively promoted by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). The LPA created a unifying framework for the creation, as asserted by Omotunde (1991), 'regional unions as a centre-piece in the grand strategy for Africa in the pursuit of development' (Olaniyan 1985, 76). In contradiction to these initiatives, however, the ECA sponsored three regional arrangements aimed at the creation of separate but convergent and over-arching integration arrangement in three sub-Saharan sub-regions: West Africa, Central Africa and Southern Africa. But the over-arching integration arrangements failed to be iterative in the sense that capacity-building: skills of policymakers, professional, civil society and community participants were not sufficient to support their roles in carrying out the policy-making data, development, analysis, and implementation activities necessary for sustainable development.

V. The Failure to incorporate Crucial Political differences

While the Functionalists thesis lays much emphasis on an apolitical approach to integration, it has not been the case in the West African experience. Claude Ake puts it succinctly in his article on "How politics under-develops Africa" that there has been too much politics and too little development in African due to the highly charged political atmosphere in intra and inter state relations which has led to violent conflicts in some cases, and detrimental to co-operation (Ake 1989, 15).

(a) Ideological differences within the sub-region

The case most pertinent and which could have provided guidance in the crafting of ECOWAS is the demise of the East African Community (EAC) composed of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania in the late 1970s. The Community started gracefully with movements in various strategic sectors of the economy. This in terms of the EU is referred to as the “spill-over effect” of integration by the neo-functionalists. Such a supranational integration covering all sectors of the economy would enable the community to establish their political ties at a supranational level instead of a national one. It has always been advocated by neo-functionalists that a successfully progressing economic integration would bring along its own political integration. Hence, they have suggested that starting with economic integration to achieve the political one is a found method and highly recommended.

But the EAC’s collapse was largely due to political and ideological differences between the member states – such differences have fundamentally been ignored in the planning process of ECOWAS Heads of State and Government. How the East Africa Community is highly exemplary and far-reaching in this direction epitomizes the disappointment with ECOWAS integration process. The reasons for the failure of the EAC and attributed to such political and ideological differences were among others (i) inadequate mechanisms for dealing with the unequal effects of the common market (intra-regional trade balance largely tilted in favour of Kenya), and this was perceived as unfair by the other countries; (ii) there was a perception of discrimination in the operations of state trading corporations; (iii) there were constraints of political nature including political divergence among the three countries (i.e. capitalist ideology in Kenya, socialism in Tanzania and a military dictatorship in Uganda); (iv) a break-down in transportation services as Tanzania imposed restrictions on trucks carrying Kenyan goods to Zambia and (v) the Railways Corporation discontinued

passenger service between Kenya and Uganda because of disputes over the transfer of revenues among the countries (ECA 2001). But in the belief by ECOWAS members in the virtue and importance of economic co-operation and integration, notwithstanding the failures of the past, they did not plan bearing in mind these political realities, which may impede the transformation of ECOWAS. As one can observe, the neo-functionalist integration approach has been justified to a large extent by the European integration example. Nevertheless, integration efforts between the above EAC communities could not be justified by neo-functionalist assumptions. Within ECOWAS the situation and factors impeding integration are not different; they are based on ideological differences of the three dominant colonial languages predominating in the sub-region.

The establishing Treaties of ECOWAS should have undertaken the integration of countries by iterations through a plan that may have overcome the inadequacies and experiences of the EAC. The creation of ECOWAS should have considered the formation of an anglophone regional co-operation to be later merged to its francophone counterpart. In their current form there is a wide array of disparities between the ECOWAS and the other small integration schemes operating alongside it. Moreover, the integrations schemes are at different stages in terms of their policy options, individual project alternatives and projected plans for development. The purpose is not so much to exhaustively characterize all feasible options – the planning process does have to be manageable, as well as accessible to stakeholders – but to consider a sufficient number of diverse types of options (as in the cases of SADC, ASEAN etc.), to ensure that every conceivable type of option is analysed through the planning process. In the case of West Africa, the diversity among options (the “home-grown” content) should have reflected significant variations in the size of countries, technology, location, and financial risk, the basic approach for each country, as well as intended beneficiaries and losers and to make provisions.

(b) *The “French factor”*

Nor has imperialism done with Africa yet. In West Africa, the “French presence” continues to loom large in relations between them and Anglophone states on one-hand and Francophone states on the other. Nigeria, in particular, has had to contend with French and Francophone suspicions of its dominant role in the sub-region. Although it has recently become fashionable to talk about the world as a global village, African villagers are still very much at the mercy of American and European Heads who dictate the international economic tune. Given the colonial inheritance, most of African, in particular, West African states (particularly, the Francophone states), are still too tied to the apron string of their former colonial power, a factor that continues to militate against the integration of the countries in the sub-region.

Some authors have compared the traditional African Policy of France in Francophone West Africa as the equivalent to the American Monroe Doctrine (Schroeder 1999, 1). However, relatively different in their purposes, the two doctrines can indeed be compared in many aspects inasmuch as they both justify, mainly through historical and geographical arguments, the exclusive control of two countries, France and the United States. What they take as their private backyard is reflected in a lot of French expressions used to describe Francophone African countries, such as *arrière-cour*, *domaine réservé*, *chasse-gardée* (exclusive hunting ground) or *pré-carré* (natural preserve). In both cases, the private backyard is considered as being off limits to other great powers.

France encouraged the implementation of a West African economic and monetary union (*Union économique et monétaire ouest-africaine*, UEMOA) and another Central African economic and monetary union (*Communauté Economique et Monétaire de l'Afrique Centrale*, CEMAC). Doing so, France tries to promote the creation of a unified market as well as the convergence of regional economic policies, just like in the European Union within the

Francophone members of ECOWAS. The West African zone is the most advanced: it has been able to intervene politically to try to solve political and military crisis in Sierra-Leone, Liberia and Guinea-Bissau, and it is already a free-trade zone of 60 million consumers.³⁹ This support of regionalization processes conforms to the interests of France, French companies being the first to benefit from such free-trade zones, because of their major share in the region's economy, and their good knowledge of it. With this strategy, the Founding Fathers of ECOWAS, failed to anticipate this and initiate policies to insulate their integration attempt from being impacted by the above forces.

(c) Flawed Procedure and Contested Deployment of ECOMOG

As demonstrated by the ideological differences above, the following is how procedures needed to form ECOMOG were almost defeated by irregularities for lack of institutional control by ECOWAS over the intervention process and malpractices on some of ECOMOG's contingents. From legal and institutional point of view the procedures followed in deciding on ECOMOG's deployment in Liberia were irregular. Firstly, the institutions that were supposed to handle the Community's decision-making on military issues had never been put in place, a fact that, as alluded to by Abass Bundu, pointed to a lack of consensus about the desirability of multilateral institutions with a mandate and capability to intervene militarily in inter-and intra-state conflicts (ECOWAS 1989, 14-23). Secondly, the organ in which the decision to establish ECOMOG was taken by the Standing Mediation Committee (SMC), acted *ultra vires* since (i) its official mandate involved mediation inter-state conflicts only (ii) any military action had to take place in the context of the above-mentioned, absent, institutions; and (iii) the decision could have been taken by the chairman only in his capacity as president of the Authority, rather than of the SMC

³⁹ The UEMOA includes Benin, Mali, Burkina-Faso, Ivory Coast, Guinea-Bissau, Niger, Senegal, and Togo. There are great discrepancies between them; for instance, the GDP per inhabitant in Ivory Coast was 782 dollars in 1998, and three times less for Burkina-Faso the same year.

These irregularities were evidence that something was wrong with the collective consensus that was supposed to underline the decision to send troops to Liberia.⁴⁰ Here, various member states had expressed serious reservations about, or outright opposition to, the intention of some countries to intervene in the conflict. In view of this opposition the protagonists of intervention could never have come to their decisions, had they followed proper procedures and attempted to have it approved by the competent Community organ, the plenary Authority. The dimensions in the conflict begun when in October 1990, Cote d'Ivoire, which was opposed to intervention, vainly called for an extraordinary session of the Authority in an attempt to discuss the matter.⁴¹

To further demonstrate how flawed procedures may have dwarfed the intervention in Liberia, Burkina Faso criticised the SMC's actions; and its president, Blaise Compaore, expressed 'total disagreement' with the intervention, which according to him, could lead to regionalisation of, what he claimed to be, an internal conflict (*West Africa* 1997, 1045). He argued, quite correctly, that the Committee did not have the competence to intervene in such an intra-state war, but could only intervene in conflicts between member states. The belief was that ECOWAS should, therefore, not intervene without the consent of all parties to the conflict (Aning 1994, 153n; Aning 1997, 11). On a milder note Senegal expressed reservations about not having been consulted over ECOMOG's mandate and Togo criticised the self-willed actions of the Committee. Mali, too, was concerned that the SMC had violated its mandate. While Togo and Mali had nevertheless promised to send troops, at the eleventh hour they backed away from doing so, because of Ivorian pressure and, in the Malian case, fears of antagonising the Libyan leader Qaddafi (Mortimer 1994). The intermediary

⁴⁰ See ECOWAS 1997.

position which these two countries took enabled them later on to act as brokers between the (predominately Anglophone) protagonists of interventions and those (mainly Francophone) states that opposed it.⁴²

The reality behind the different arguments on ECOMOG's legality is that in combination with Nigeria's dominance of the intervention force ECOMOG and its constitutive procedures were not sufficiently embedded in structures guaranteeing the proper institutionalised control. Here again, the absence of iterative planning on the composition of the force and other logistics was critical. On the contrary, it rested to a considerable extent on conjectural circumstances, in which calculation of self-interest or other motives not stipulated in ECOMOG's official rationale played a role, side by side with the formal motivations for intervention described in the previous sections. These factors, in turn, have similarly affected the pattern and course of other initiatives within ECOWAS. Similarly, the second half of the 1990s has witnessed new contributions made to highlight the existence and the importance of "non-traditional" gains from RI (see Fernandez and Portes 1997; Schiff and Winters 1997). These include among others, enhancing security, maximising bargaining power in trade negotiations, locking in reform, and making institutions more credible. This kind of policy is more important in view of the sub-region's high propensity to political and military conflicts, as well as their tendency to overturn policies.

VI. Lack of Mobility in the Factors of Production

(a) Flawed Liberalisation Mechanisms

Until recently, the history of regional integration among developing countries has been dominated almost consistently by a great gap between the rhetoric of expressed intentions and the hard facts of the unwillingness or inability to carry out these intentions.

⁴¹ See Weller, M. 1990, a BBC Monitoring Report on peacekeeping about the Liberian crisis.

⁴² See interview of Dr. Amos Sawyer 1997 on October 16 then President of Liberia's former Interim Government of National Unity from 1990 to 1994, Saly, Senegal.

The strength of current efforts and a number of their features seem to suggest that, at some promising instances, the past difficulties are being overcome; in contrast, other attempts remain half-hearted. Successful regionalism owes much to the context of regional liberalization of trade and multi-lateralisation of concessions. Some liberalization initiatives have been unilateral, even if undertaken on the advice (and even pressure or conditionality) of the Bretton Woods institutions.

In West Africa there was an agreement for the liberalization of trade in unprocessed goods and traditional handicraft products. The products were to circulate freely and exempt from duties, but there is a long list of qualifications attached, which makes the implementation of such a measure hard to achieve. According to the ECOWAS 2000a, the trade liberation scheme is not yet operational. The reasons were given that only Benin has implemented the TLS and submitted an application for compensation. Other factors, the report says, is the high cost of compensation, the fact that the ECOWAS TLS and the UEMOA scheme coexist, and the absence of measures to enlighten economic operators about the ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme. With all these difficulties, one may argue that the functionalism or the neo-functionalism that ECOWAS paralleled is not working within the West African context.

The experience of regional integration agreements has also shown that where the member countries have very dissimilar underlying economic and political strategies, there is much smaller likelihood of successful integration. Integration between a state-centred economy and a more market-oriented economy can be problematic, as is the case of Benin, Togo, Mali, Ghana, Nigeria and most others who can easily be compared in terms of their different forms of governments within the Community. Similarly, countries with a history of political support, cooperation, and mutual global interests make better candidates for regional integration, whereas countries with antagonistic histories find it more difficult to negotiate

and compromise. It is difficult to generalize about these issues within the context of ECOWAS, as each pair of countries has a unique historical relationship. But given the history of regional and domestic conflicts, and the difference in and uncertainty about basic economic strategies, negotiations on a multilateral trade agreement may have added to the slow pace of integration in West Africa.

Here, the ECOWAS integration process is not a case justifying the hypothesis of the neo-functional integration theory. The neo-functional theory claims, a scientific hypothesis, that economic integration is an obligatory base of a political supranational integration and that the realisation of economic integration within a supranational organisational framework would lead almost automatically to a supranational political integration. But the dynamics with ECOWAS and that of the EU where this framework works have completely different relationship between them.

(b) Limits placed on harmonisation

The problem is compounded by the unwillingness of member countries to subordinate their liberalisation effort to regional objective. For instance, UDEAC operates under the *Taxe Unique* as their national objective of import-substitution, under which products from the region should be subject to the same tax rate irrespective of their source. Because of this variance in the national trade policies, the harmonisation provisions within UDEAC and other minor integration schemes in the sub-region are at odds with the requirements of ECOWAS harmonisation policies, rendering the non-implementation of most tariff codes. Other Constraints placing limits on harmonization is that there are problems with intra-regional trade. The constraints include the inconvertibility of member currencies and difficulties in establishing letters of credit, inefficient and costly transport and communications links, differences in national product or service regulations and standards and the lack of information about the existence of potential buyers and sellers in partner countries. Within

West Africa, there are also constraints in terms of language differences, the harassment of traders at the borders and too many road-blocks tend to discourage many entrepreneurs and for this reason retards intra-trade between and amongst the member countries of ECOWAS.

(c) Compensation factors

The compensation mechanisms are very rigid, and it is not clear how the expected revenues are to be calculated by member countries. According to most analysts, the method currently in use assumes that the structure of revenues cannot be changed. The realisation is that a distortion will occur in the exporting countries if domestic taxes must be raised in order to finance these payments (McCarthy 1996). Besides, the ECOWAS mechanism in effect transfers the financial burden of compensation to the exporting countries, which are not always willing to bear such a burden. More so, compensation is in effect disguised by the subsidizing enterprises, and continues to hinder competition. There are also consequences from the above due to the prevalence of ten (10) different currencies in use, of which most are not accepted in international trade. The problem is further compounded because the West African Clearing House is unable to prevent serious delays in settling payments between some member states (ECOWAS 2006b, 716).

(d) Lack of enforcement

There is also the strong absence of supra-national institutions within ECOWAS. The ECOWAS Secretariat has little authority to force governments to implement trade liberalisation and other integration measures. First is the problem with finances, where most of the countries, have accumulated huge arrears in the non-payment of dues to the Secretariat. The Secretariat cannot enforce rules and regulations or discourage member countries from taking certain measures that it deems detrimental to the survival of the integration process.

(e) Limited resource base

Results have hardly been any better in the areas of infrastructure and natural resources

development, which seems to have the characteristic of a "win-win" undertaking within the community. According to Robson (1996), a clear example from ECOWAS is that co-operation in energy supply, even though relatively little, there is a possibility of connecting national networks at reasonable cost. But the present time, the most successful initiative so far is the agreement between Ghana, Togo, Benin and Cote d'Ivoire which allows Ghana to sell hydro-electric power to the other parties when their supply falls below a stated threshold level (ECOWAS 2000a, 34). Ghana can also import from Cote d'Ivoire in times of need. While the potential for mutually beneficial co-operation in the areas of water and transport is generally acknowledged, there have been little efforts due to policy inconsistencies to tap this potential. Here, one may again argue that the integration in West Africa may have been better if the countries had started co-operative arrangements in this manner, rather than trying to immediately integrate their countries based on the functionalist thesis.

(f) The lack of forecasting

The poor functioning of the system of preferences and the inherent loss of revenue to several members have led to difficult fiscal situations in those states. By 1991, arrears to the secretariat and to the compensation fund amounted to 45.5 Billion CFA francs, which was four times as much as the combined budgets of the institutions (Badiane 1993, 56). Within the Francophone countries, the continuing fiscal problems of member states and the growing pressure they were coming under from international financial institutions to carry out macroeconomic reforms led to their decision in 1991 to meet in Ouagadougou. The meeting was to forge a programme of activities to address the economic crises without necessarily having to devalue the CFA franc. The resulting programmes they envisaged was to allow for budgetary and fiscal policy harmonization which will lead to the institution of several arrangements for regional banking commissions, the harmonization of legislative and regulatory frameworks to govern economic and social activities, including social insurance

and business law, etc. The plan was to go further and to develop a single financial market, a regional stock exchange and a free trade zone.

But the lack of policy coordination here is that the preparatory work for launching UEMOA took place between 1991 and 1994. But by 1994, when a number of the institutional agreements in Ouagadougou had been established and had become functional, the idea of avoiding devaluation had to be abandoned in view of continuing economic crisis and increasing pressure from multilateral development agencies. Thus, on the eve of the member states' meeting in Dakar in January 1994 to formalize the institutional development that had taken place over the three-year period into a treaty, the 50 per cent devaluation announcement was made by France hence, the lack of adequate forecasting is evident.

The adoption in 1987, of the ECOWAS monetary co-operation programme was intended to achieve, in the medium-long term, the convertibility of West African currencies and the creation of a single currency by the year 2000. What has been achieved so far is much more modest hence the lack of foresight due to the inadequacy of research capacity within ECOWAS. The lack of forecasting has also complicated the limits or the problems that member states are being confronted with and to collaborate these under an umbrella of a supranational organisation, hence the lack of a more appropriate method with a view to realizing the desired supranational political integration. Different and separate trade liberalization schemes and implementation schedules are evident in the ECOWAS (ECOWAS 1998b and 1999b, 67; 2000a, 89). ECOWAS and UEMOA coexist with different schemes in spite of their common membership (all members of UEMOA are members of ECOWAS).

In form, this situation is similar to what some experts have described as "the variable geometry" concept (Tinbergen 1995, 15). In the Latin American Integration Agreements

(LATA), it is a deliberate policy to encourage member states to move towards the establishment of the free trade zone at faster, but distinct speeds because of the different levels of development of the member states, and with LATA's overall objective. The situation is different in an ECOWAS context where smaller groups exist side-by-side with ECOWAS and operate as completely independent and autonomous bodies and virtually as if the larger bloc (ECOWAS) did not exist, and vice versa.

In summation here the reality is that at the inception of ECOWAS, it was hailed as being an attempt to bring together anglophone, lusophone and francophone states, but it has not lived up to expectation in that endeavour. For instance, like most African regional organizations, ECOWAS has placed too much emphasis on trade liberalization where there is little to gain from lowering trade barriers between countries that have little to sell to each other.

In a similar vein, overly restrictive rule of origin especially in terms of limiting preferential treatment to products by companies predominantly owned by nationals have been counter-productive to the liberalization process because they rule out a significant gamut of goods traded within the sub-region (Wangwe 1990, 2). By so doing, the liberalization scheme is rendered pointless. According to the ECOWAS 2000a, the restrictions seem at variance with the growing trend towards domestic policies that promote increased foreign investments to support national development efforts. In addition, existing compensation mechanisms face funding problems in the absence of sustainable self-financing mechanisms for ECOWAS.

(g) Informal cross-border trade

The definitions of informal cross-border trade vary across literature. There are other terms in use or similar phenomena such as "parallel", "black", "fragmented" and "segmented." One wonders if all these terms are synonymous and can be differentiate among market structures, particularly in the African context. With regard to the definitions of parallel markets,

Lindauer and Roemer (1989), assert that parallel market is a structure generated in response to government interventions which create a situation of excess supply or demand in a particular product or factor market (Lindauer and Roemer 1989, 76). The classic example is a control that attempts to limit the extent of a price increase when there is a shortage of supply (Lindauer and Roemer 1989, 76). The market does not clear at the control price, and both producers and consumers seek illegal channels of trade that eliminate excess demand at higher prices. Lindauer also emphasizes that over-valued exchange rates create parallel, usually called "black," markets for foreign currency; quantity restrictions on imports induce smuggling; and minimum wages generate excess supplies of labour that are absorbed in a parallel (or "informal") labour market. "Black market" is probably the most frequently used term for the phenomenon we have defined as a parallel market. But "black" is not merely a synonym for "parallel." As Lindauer and Roemer (1989) pointed out, "black" also covers markets for prohibited goods such as narcotics for which no legal market exists, so the illegal parallel is not parallel.

For the purpose of this study, informal cross-border trade within ECOWAS is the parallel market where both licensed and unlicensed traders carry out their transactions. These transactions do not conform to official trading regulations or respect the official price structure as they trade across the border. Indeed, this informal trade co-exists with legal or formal trade. In ECOWAS, informal cross-border trade is commonly associated with private sector activity and is not always readily apparent because the same traders associated with the informal cross-border trade may also be active in formal cross-border trade. Both formal and informal cross-border trades rely largely on private sector participation. However, the essential difference is not whether trading is performed by public or private sector participation but whether or not public and private trading is carried out in compliance with the rules of (origin) the game established by the Abuja Treaties. It is a two-way activity;

export goods are taken out while consumer goods are brought in. Under this definition activities of informal cross-border trade are basically the following:

- Bringing goods through illegal checkpoints or entry points likely associated with boats or canoes at night and through unknown paths, hence definite real costs incurred in undertaking it;
- Bringing goods through legal checkpoints or entry points but passing customs control by simply bribing the customs officer or concealing the importation or exportation in one form or another. The assumption here is that a tariff creates an economic incentive to under-invoice so as to avoid the full tariff.

ECOWAS, in its 2000a report, has address several important tasks in its efforts to promote co-operation and development in all fields of economic activity, especially in the area of trade with the aim of raising the standard of living of its people (ECOWAS 2000a, 67). To achieve this, its fundamental goal is the reduction and eventual elimination of tariff and non-tariff barriers on goods and services traded between member countries. Other approaches to easing trade within the grouping include the establishment of a Clearing House to settle transfer of national currencies, developing rules to define national origin of commodities and simplifying trading documents and procedures just to mention a few. Since ECOWAS inception in 1975, gradual trade liberalization, in terms of trade continues to face a lot of resistance from some member countries (ECOWAS 2000a, 12).

Besides, the common ECOWAS external tariff has still not seen the light of day and the economic and financial policies have not been harmonized although a framework has been established for this. Like many of the regional integrations in sub-Sahara Africa, the postponement of deadlines for implementing various trade liberalization schemes by ECOWAS does not only continue to threaten the achievement of significant integration but also, among other things, triggers these forms of informal cross-border trade in the sub-region. The maintenance of the protectionist tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade may lead to

a lower output of the importable than under free trade; the result may also cause price distortions and loss of government revenue through informal cross-border trade (tariff evasion). Usually, informal cross-border trade occurs where there are trade barriers (Altschiller 1988, 14). According to Lindauer and Roemer (1989), informal cross-border trade can compromise the policy prescriptions that are part of most reform packages and can lead to different interpretation of the benefits of reforms.

Throughout the borders of West Africa, between members of ECOWAS, despite stringent restrictive trade regulations there is a large magnitude of informal cross-border trade taking place. Even where you have large lakes or dams, such routes are used for informal cross-border trade. ECOWAS experience in informal cross-border trade emerged out of a colonial legacy that accepted a pre-eminent role for the State as a protector. Until recently, many member States of ECOWAS attempt to control balance of payments by imposing exchange controls and quantitative restrictions upon imports fail to materialise. Such policies are being justified either by concerns with the balance of payment and mounting foreign indebtedness or by the choice of an inward-looking development strategy (or both).

The practice to participate in informal cross-border trades is often fuelled additionally by the fact that the producer prices of cash crops are kept below the world price. Today, this problem of price differential still exists and partially caused by inappropriate government marketing policies in most West African countries, particularly Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire in Cocoa producer and consumer prices (Africa Research Bulletin 1987, 13606). According to Morris and Newman (1989), in their study on cereals market in Northern Senegal, informal cross-border trade serves as the main marketing channels for locally produced rice in that member country of ECOWAS. Rice producers in the Senegal River valley who sell to illegal, itinerant traders find a reliable and accessible outlet for their produce at higher prices than official prices, which have eventually encouraged increased rice production. It is also argued

that the inadequate market information and inappropriate macro-economic policies in ECOWAS sub-region have also encouraged informal cross-border trade. These policies have neither recognized the importance of using the "right" exchange rate nor helped much in removal of heavy domestic market protection (El-Agraa and Jones 1981, 16).

Institutional inadequacies have also tended to encourage informal trade in the sub-region. Although ECOWAS countries have made progress in building national, sub-regional and regional institutions for promoting and monitoring their economic development, most border areas are without institutions such as banks from where people along border areas can easily get foreign exchange for their trade. Customs control posts also tend to be not well equipped for proper monitoring of informal trade. The bureaucracy employed at the checkpoints can make a traveller from one country to the other frustrating. Such vital institutions should be well developed in order to assist in the facilitation of formal border trade along the border areas of the sub-region and within it.

In addition to institutional inadequacies, at most of the border areas of ECOWAS, member countries are in many cases inhabited by people of the same or close ethnic group. Additionally, most borders have no physical barriers, and this all-together makes it difficult to monitor informal cross border trade in West Africa. These structural characteristics demonstrate how the Founding Fathers were so careless in their vision to allow ECOWAS to suffer in terms of the limited sectoral coverage of their industries, which has not allowed member countries to exploit their comparative advantage in other sectors, especially in agriculture. For example, Barry (1994) and Salinger and Stryker (1993), among others, found that removing the barriers to trade in cereals, non-cereals, and livestock could increase intra-regional trade in these products in the West African integration. Moreover, policy instruments in most West African integration have been limited to tariff reductions (Langhammer 1992, 416; ECOWAS 1998a and 1999b, 78; ECOWAS 2000b, 208). Progress on removing other barriers, such as quantitative restrictions,

impediments to factor flows (particularly with regard to intra-trade), barriers to entry, and other administrative and legal obstacles, has been limited. These impediments have reduced the scope for trade expansion, even in cases where tariffs have been reduced.

Implementation of policies in West African integration is as a result a problem, and has been particularly slow where tariff reductions have been negotiated product-by-product rather than across-the-board (ECOWAS 1998a and 1999a). Similarly, less progress has been made when countries have to negotiate or have relied on positive lists of sectors to be included, rather than negative lists of sectors to be excluded. Case-by-case negotiations and positive lists give members considerably more latitude to exclude sensitive products from liberalization, limiting the scope for gains from integration (de la Torre and Kelly 1992, 34).

Another important aspect of the limits in the policies pertains to the distribution of benefits, especially when the benefits have been perceived to accrue more rapidly to richer member countries like Nigeria and Ghana. In principle, the richer country could compensate the poorer countries (like Benin, Togo, Guinea-Bissau etc) through explicit financial transfers, differing schedules for tariff reductions, changes in the allocation of industrial location, or location of infrastructure to support the agreement (e.g., regional development bank, organizational secretariat). But in practice, the calculation of the appropriate size and distribution of the compensation payments has proven to be difficult, and has been the source of friction between member countries. The problems can be grouped as follows: First, members tend to rely on simple, seemingly transparent measures of economic gains and losses (such as lost tariff revenues), but often the indicators are very misleading measures of true economic gains and losses. The problem is compounded for lack of adequate statistics to base such measure on. Yet still, most have no funds to set aside to pay such compensation because most are currently in arrears in dues and payment to the Community Fund. Second, members fail to follow through with agreed compensation payments. Third, even where

cross-border compensation takes place, it generally is not distributed to the individuals and firms that lose from integration; more often it accrues to the government budget for more general distribution.

In the countries so affected, government bureaucracies make such payments impossible or the lack of payment to the firm or enterprise so affected. The perceived imbalance in economic gains was the major reason for the demise of the East African Community (EAC) in 1977 (McCarthy 1996, 55; Foroutan 1993, 231; Ravenhill 1990, 89; Robson 1987, 324; Hazelwood 1967, 45). The only example of successful compensation arrangements in SSA is SACU, where member countries have agreed to a split of tariff revenues collected by the South African Customs Administration. But even here the administration of the split is challenged regularly (Bhagwati and Krueger 1985, 216).

VII. The Failure to marry Economic Propositions with Political realities

The signatories to ECOWAS also failed to distinguish between the requirements of regional integration from co-operation arrangements. The two vary in their structure, objectives, sector coverage, and membership. Regional integration agreements generally are aimed at removing discrimination between foreign and domestic services, and factors of production (Balassa 1976). There are four classic types of arrangements:

- Free (or preferential) trade areas, in which member countries reduce or eliminate trade barriers between each other, while maintaining trade for non-members countries
- Custom unions, in which member countries reduce or eliminate barriers to trade between each other and adopt a common external tariff towards non-member countries.
- Common Markets, in which members expand the basic customs union by reducing the barriers to the movement of factors of production (labour and capital).
- Economic unions, in which members aim to more fully harmonise national economic policies, including exchange rate policy and monetary policies (e.g., a monetary union).

By definition, regional integration provides preferential treatments for members and entails discrimination against non-members. Bhagwati and Krueger (1995), among others, have emphasized this point with respect to free trade areas, and have argued that they can be called preferential trade areas. In their attempt to transplant the EU (European Union) models on to the West African scene, ECOWAS failed to distinguish regional integration agreements on one hand from co-operation agreements, which are aimed less directly at trade and factors of production, and instead commit members to work together towards a common end or purpose. Perhaps ECOWAS would have been better off with a co-operative type arrangement than the urge to integrate. Co-operative initiatives tend to be more selective in their coverage and generally require less long-term commitment than integration, which could have worked better within West Africa.

If one is to go by the definition of Bhagwati and Krueger (1995), then what ECOWAS seems to be pursuing are selected policy harmonisation and joint production of public goods such as railroads, bridges, communications systems or institutions (e.g., education, research). These areas of endeavour are not in themselves a move toward integration but may be termed *co-operative* initiatives by ECOWAS. The basic conclusion is that at this time there is little reason to expect significant gains from formal regional integration agreements in West Africa. Such formal agreements, in and of themselves, are unlikely to yield appreciable benefits unless they are preceded by decisions within the member countries (particularly Nigeria and Ghana) to follow a strategy of opening their economies to competition in global markets. This is not to say that there is no potential for further economic integration and deeper intra-regional trade in West Africa (indeed, there *is* significant potential); rather that formal regional trade agreements are not the most appropriate mechanism to achieve these goals. There appears to be much greater potential for gains from individual country efforts to pursue a more outward-oriented trade strategy, especially if these actions are complimented

by efforts towards regional *cooperation*, including the joint construction of transportation and communication infrastructure and other public goods (such as education and research facilities).

As rightly placed by Langhammer and Hiemenz (1990), the experience of one type of grouping, in this case that of the EU's grouping and its transformation over years may not necessarily be relevant to others such as ECOWAS. Langhammer and Hiemenz (1990) have warned the tendency of governments from developing countries to assume that the experience of industrialized country regional integration agreements can easily be replicated in developing countries as "the fallacy of transposition." They argue that "many initial conditions conducive to integration in Europe have been overlooked by governments of developing countries: e.g., a high level of intra-regional trade before integration was started; similarities in income and industrialization levels allowing for intra-industry specialization; political congeniality in foreign affairs; and capability and willingness to provide compensation payments. This study argues along these lines and strongly believes ECOWAS has a long way to go before it realizes gains from integration. It cannot from this study be regarded, on the basis of the various policy implications, be considered a regional integration.

(a) Instability

The history of countries in West African of both macroeconomic and political instability suggests that they would be relatively poor candidates for membership in regional integration they anticipated. In the uncertain political climate of coup d'états and military takeovers, leaders failed to demonstrate the vision expected of them in terms of iterative planning and long-term objectives. Besides the lack of intra-trade in the sub-region is compounded by weak infrastructural linkages (Stern and Gugerty 1996, 56) the economic realities in the sub-region is further complicated by poor port facilities, weak communications links, and underdeveloped road networks, which all limit the potential for expanding regional

trade. ECOWAS leaders, at the signing of the Treaty establishing it failed to realise that rail, road and port facilities were designed to strengthen trade ties with the former colonial power, not for trade with neighbouring countries. The policies put in place at the time to facilitate trade liberalization failed also to realise that many of the strongest commercial ties are between domestic firms and those in former colonial countries, especially where African firms have preferential access.

In the uncertain political and economic environment that continues to prevail throughout much of the continent, it is highly unlikely that many of the theoretical dynamic gains from regional integration (e.g., increased investment, product and process innovation) can be achieved. These concerns suggest that taking preliminary steps towards export diversification and achieving and maintaining macroeconomic stability would be prerequisites to successful trade integration in the region. Similarly, where regional integration agreements (and member governments) have lacked credibility, investment has not occurred. Investors have stayed away from projects that have relied on the regional market and the existence of the integration agreement (ECOWAS 2000b, 389).

VIII. The nature of African Bureaucratic process

(a) Constraints of a Cultural Commonality

Cultural commonality is a requirement for any group that aims at achieving cohesiveness in whatever they undertake. This is because differences among peoples in West Africa are not only real; they are basic. West Africans are differentiated from each other by history, language, culture, and tradition and most importantly, religion. Their views and relations amongst them of God and man, their respective countries and the differing view of the relative importance of rights and responsibilities, liberty and authority, equality and hierarchy are mixed. These differences are not only the product of centuries, but came about through colonisation and the partition of Africa to colonialism in 1885/86.

Regional integration in West Africa, to be successful, requires cultural commonality of the people. In the words of Huntington, "the former Soviet Union as communists can become democrats, the rich can become poor and the poor rich, but Russians cannot become Estonians and Azeris cannot become Armenians overnight" (1992, 27). Because economic regionalism is increasing on the African continent, and particularly in West African, a key to the reinforcement of civilization-consciousness is to work for a common identity in the sub-region. Hence, the constraint to regional integration may be rooted in the lack of a common civilization and the likeness reflected of such peoples.

In terms of what Huntington (1992, 33) argues, and which succinctly gives credence to the plight of ECOWAS is that the European Union, formed in 1958 even though was necessary to preserve peace between Germany and France and to foster lasting peace after world war II, constituted a common culture based on a Western value-system and Christianity. Common culture asserts Huntington (1992) is clearly facilitating the rapid expansion of the economic relations between the People's Republic of China and Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore and the overseas Chinese communities in other Asian Countries. If cultural commonality is to serve as a prerequisite for such meaningful integration in West Africa, then ECOWAS policies in the sub-region should ensure that culture be made part and parcel of the core issues that must be addressed in the light of all their ongoing attempts at bringing countries in the sub-region together. As people define their identity in ethnic and religious terms, they are likely to see themselves as a whole seeking to achieve self-reliance and to transform their countries along the lines set in the Treaty of Lagos of 1980. Because differences in culture and religion create differences in policy issues, ranging from human rights to immigration to trade and commerce and even to matters of the environment.

(b) Bureaucratic Constraints

ECOWAS is operated through a conference of Head of State, a Council of Ministers,

an executive Secretariat, a development and co-operation fund, and five specialized commissions. In addition, the individual countries remain the ultimate decision-makers of ECOWAS, through what has been described as "intergovernmentalism" (Ntumba 1997, 17). By this, the Authority of Heads of State and Government (hereafter the Authority) sits at the top of the hierarchy of governing bodies and dominates the bureaucratic system. All the power to direct ECOWAS comes from the Authority, which meets annually. It is responsible for governing the community, and for determining policy directions. It also constitutes the court of last appeal, even though it has now been agreed to formally set up an ECOWAS Supreme Court (ECOWAS 2000b, 498). Indeed, the Authority is the body that will determine the composition, powers, statutes and all other aspects of the regional tribunal. The Authority is responsible for appointments to the most senior posts, including that of Executive Secretary of ECOWAS and Accounts Commissioner of ECOWAS. Indeed, as Ntumba (1997) has observed, "nothing is done without the Authority's explicit approval."

The Executive Secretary and other Secretariat officials do the running of the day-to-day affair of ECOWAS. Until the 1992 reforms, the secretariat of ECOWAS has been described as weak (Adedciji 1970, 2; Ntumba 1997, 18). It lacked any decision-making power and could only implement the decisions of the inter-governmental bodies. The lack of decision-making authority is invoked to explain the usually long reaction time between events and Community responses (Ntumba 1997, 20). More to the point is that the time lines set for the summits of the Authority runs counter to the elements required for planning in iterations. Besides, the lack of enforcements by the Secretariat of Community protocols and also their implementation results from the Bureaucratic ineptitude and constraints prevalent in the relationship between the Authority, the Secretariat and the Council of Ministers.

(c) Intra-Political Outcomes

The Bureaucratic Politics paradigm is that the decisions and actions of governments

are essentially intra-national political outcomes. The decisions are outcomes in the sense that what happens is not simply solution to problems, but are rather results from compromises, coalitions, competition and confusion among government officials who see different facets of an issue. In the EU such outcomes are derived through a simple majority and procedures are then set for the implementation of the said policy. But in Africa, there are two ways of examining this phenomenon. One is functional based on an analysis of component units such as socialization or association, communication, and the formulation and execution of policy. The other is the institutional process, depicting the role of the actors and influences in the decision-making and execution process as a whole.

What demonstrate intra-national political outcomes within ECOWAS, in terms of the institutional process implies the "institutional charisma" of African political leaders (Zartman 1966, 23). Institutionalised charisma implies the political leadership exhibited by the Authority of Heads of State and Government in decision-making during their summits. The importance of charisma as a vehicle for political institutional transfer has frequently been noted since the beginning of postcolonial political development of institutionalising the position of charismatic leadership. After independence the progression in the unit of legitimacy from party-to-government and from state-to-nation held the leaders of most countries in Africa as dominant heads of such units. The leaders became the "original ancestors" of the new nations, and as political rather than genealogical concept illustrates; they at the same time personalise, politicise and popularise themselves. Because of these outcomes, intra-African politics is focused on the president and the presidency only. The declarations of the president become the national ideology and consecrated into *-isms* for the leader's name – as in Nkrumahism, Borguhism, Mobutuism and Ben Bellaism.⁴³ In this role, the presidents believe they have "special competence" in intra-African relations and can make

⁴³ See Article 8 of the Charter of Addis Ababa, and Article 8 of the Abuja Treaty

specific and even last minute important and technical decisions without regard to laid down protocols of functionalism/neo-functionalism theoretical models. It will not be surprising then to say that the non-implementation of policies within ECOWAS may be attributed to the nature of intra-African way of “doing business,” which is bureaucratic in nature and lacks the tools needed to fix the implementation problem.

(d) The primacy of Inter-governmentalism

National governments within West Africa are actors in terms of decision-making within the institutions of ECOWAS. They are neither a unitary, nor a conglomerate or organizations but made up of individual players acting on behalf of their countries. They therefore retain direct role in decision-making through inter-governmentalism, which results from the position they occupy at the apex of the bodies within ECOWAS. The Technical and Specialised Commissions are discernible in these respects; they are central to the day-to-day decision-making that will eventually transform the integration process. But most of the time those representatives sent to these Technical and Specialised Commissions are limited in the overall directions and navigation of the integration process and cannot effectively provide the synergy needed. Even if they are the right ones to provide the synergy, they are limited in the scope because of the natural propensity to avoid new or daring initiatives because of the fear and risk of their decisions or initiatives being overturned by the Authority or the Council of Ministers. Herein lies the dominant role of the Authority and the Council of Ministers where the existence of two plenary deliberating bodies makes the structure of ECOWAS “top-heavy” and hard to manage. The drawback of the process here is that the Authority and the Council normally meets only once a year and contradicts that of the European Council which meets three times a year and the Council of Ministers of the EU, about fifty to sixty sessions within a year.

(e) The Writ of ECOWAS Decisions

ECOWAS decision-making mechanism is that actions are the outcome of bargaining among individuals and groups within the governments in West Africa. Delegates from countries, as individuals with different motives, contribute to initiate policies. The policy formulation stage comprises an outcome distinct from what any one country would have chosen. The Bureaucratic Politics model III explains such a process as the "pulling and hauling" of various players with different perceptions and priorities but focusing on a particular outcome of a policy. But ECOWAS sub-regional decision-making retains little currency when applied to the interstate approach of regional integration in the EU or the ASEAN. This is in contrast with the European Council and Commission mandates, whose remarkable and wide range of legal instruments calls upon them to pursue their missions within a range of options, which can be adapted to different needs and circumstances. According to Article 189 of the Treaty of Rome, the *options* consist of regulations, directives, decisions, and recommendations. Within the EU, *directives* are binding on member states only regarding their results, and they do not impose any obligation as to the means used to attain those results. EU member states can freely choose the legal instruments best suited to give effect to any directive: a law, a decree, an order, an edict, a regulation etc. They enjoy full discretion in the choice of domestic institutional arrangements for applying such directives. In such a situation a directive is not directly applicable to all members; it is a representation of a preferred means for co-ordinating and harmonizing member state's economic policies and national legislation. Also, EU decisions are mandatory in all respects and targeted at a specific group. This instrument is, however, different from a regulation in that it does not have a general legal effect and concerns only those to whom it is directed. In contrast to a directive, a decision is binding with respect to its results and the means employed to achieve such a result. As an intermediate measure, it has a wide range of application within the EU. *Opinions* and *recommendations* are non-binding because they

have no constraining force and do not, *stricto sensus*, impose any legal obligation on the countries. According to Isaac, they are nonetheless useful in providing administrative and legislative guidance to the EU Treaty.⁴⁴

According to Article 189 of the Rome Treaty, quasi-legislative acts, are equivalent to domestic laws within the EU. A regulation is general and impersonally applicable, and it represents the key instrument for the implementation of common policies. As the Treaty describes a regulation within the EU, it is *mandatory* in all respects and directly applicable in any member state." Put differently, "it has legal effect, on its own and automatically, without any intervention on the part of national authorities in the internal affairs of member states must be implemented within their territories." But ECOWAS establishing Treaty and the Revised Treaty of 1992 (and ratified in 1993), is contrary to all these theses provisions. ECOWAS operates through *decisions* and *directives*, but without any clear distinction between which *regulations*, *decisions* or *directives* apply *specifically* and which applies *generally*, as well as the specifics regarding their force and consent.⁴⁵ According Article 6 of the Establishing Treaty, the Authority and the Council of Ministers apply proclamations for the implementation and the determination of *decisions* and *directives* generally. However, Article 7 of the establishing Treaty states that, whereas decisions are equally applicable to member states and community institutions, *directives* are the concern of only the Community's own institutions, and not the Tribunal. *Recommendations* with ECOWAS may be addressed to the Authority by the Council of ministers. The *recommendations* may include what the Technical and Specialized Commissions and the committees may make to the Council of Minister, but those recommendations do not really count, as they are only proposals submitted to the Authority for approval.

⁴⁴ See Isaac 1989, in which he elaborates on the compliance mechanism within the EU.

⁴⁵ ECOWAS Article 5, section 3. This assertion is applicable to the authority of heads of state and government and the Council of Ministers. There are no such provisions for the Technical and the Specialized Commissions.

Generally speaking then, directives of the Council of Ministers are subordinate to those of the Authority and affect only the Community institutions within the Council's competence, which is the Secretariat, the Technical and Specialized Committees of ECOWAS.⁴⁶ In this case neither the Authority nor the Council has the power to impose legal obligations on member countries under the ECOWAS Treaty. To put it another way, the Authority and the Council's decisions have a direct binding effect only within the institutional structure of the Community but not in the national territory of the member states.⁴⁷ Because of these attributes, the legal jurisdiction of these communities is quite weak and dependent upon the good will of member states to make them effective. Because the Revised Treaty failed to capture this fundamental inadequacy in the Treaty provisions, there will still exist the lack of implementation of community policies and directives.

(f) To Co operate or to Integrate?

One may argue that most developing countries aimed at cooperation have fared much better than those aimed at integration. Co-operation agreements can focus on any of a wide variety of issues, including infrastructure construction, research and development, environmental initiatives, food security, energy management, improved flows of information, and mutual defense and security. The strong consensus in the literature is that the countries of SSA would be far more likely to gain by enhancing regional coordination in these areas than by formal trade integration (Mytelka 1994, 56; McCarthy 1996, 78; Foroutan 1993, 99; de Melo and Pangariya 1993, 67; Ravenhill 1990, 28; Mulaisho 1990, 89; Langhammer and Hiemenz 1990, 467; Robson 1987, 645).

An example from outside the WA sub-region is the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which was not primarily aimed at trade integration. Rather, the main objective was to defuse conflict among member states and to forge a common voice on

⁴⁶ ECOWAS Treaty Article 5, section.3.

international matters of mutual concern. Trade integration took a back seat, both because some members (especially Indonesia and Thailand) initially had high tariffs, and because member states initially mistrusted each other's intentions. As both these factors changed over time, the early emphasis on dialogue and on cooperation eventually evolved into more substantive discussions on trade. As a result of this flexibility, cooperation initiatives are less threatening to the ruling elite than formal trade agreements in terms of encroaching on national sovereignty (Ravenhill 1990, 29). They also tend to be lower profile, and thus less risky for policymakers. Co-operation initiatives also usually have smaller secretariats and bureaucratic hierarchies, and therefore are less demanding on scarce administrative and financial resources than more formal trade agreements. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, cooperation can help pave the way for increased trade within the region (and beyond) by improving communication and transportation links and by establishing dialogue between member countries, both of which are prerequisites for successful integration.

⁴⁷ ECOWAS Treaty Article 6, section 23, and Article 7

Chapter VII

Summary and Conclusion

I. Summary

This thesis has been an attempt to look at the policy challenges facing Africa's second largest regional economic groupings, the attempt for a common market for West Africa (ECOWAS). Specifically, we have discussed some of the factors that to date have made it difficult for ECOWAS to achieve its integration aims and ideals. The empirical work involved the estimation of a number of policy variables and growth equation to regional economic integration. The economic variables indicated impediments that have negatively impacted the countries, and reflect the influence of economic policy changes as well as other explanatory factors. The causes of economic underperformance of ECOWAS are many and varied. The levels of investments have been low and declining. Efficiency of capital, as measured by incremental capital output ratios, (ICORS) has been low. Poor infrastructure, inappropriate policies, weak institutions and poor governance within ECOWAS in turn have caused the low-efficiency rates of capital.

On the basis of the study and a review of the evidence of economic integration from 1975 to 2000, we were able to determine which policies appear to have been the least effective in terms of increasing economic growth. The main implications in the policies meant to give effect to the integration process include static economic performance indicators, the lack of trade creation within the sub-region, as well as dynamic effects like the failure to implement the policies on the free flow of the factors of production, the liberalization of trade among the countries, and the nature of West African bureaucratic system. African economies in general

(and those in West Africa particularly), suffer from too much structural rigidity to allow for free and fair regional markets and smooth integration.

In addition, the impediments to integration have a lot to do with the structural adjustment programs (SAPs) dictated by the World Bank and IMF and pursued by states in the region. Among the major non-SAP impediments to ECOWAS integration are structural rigidities (such as dependence on a few primary exports and underdevelopment of human capabilities); parochialism; dependence on the developed West; proliferation of regional groupings; politics; a huge external debt burden; transport problems; lack of information; Africa's economic crisis; dis-equalizing effects of integration; deleterious world economic conditions; as well as war, drought and disease. The major SAP-induced impediments seem to originate from the imports side: where all countries are encouraged to export (under the World Bank's outward orientation), but at the same time the demand-management approach of the IMF calls for cut-backs in imports. This is an obvious contradiction given that ECOWAS countries pursue simultaneous and identical adjustment programs.

Economic integration is a complex process. Africa, unfortunately, has yet to succeed in having a regional grouping that has all three fundamental conditions necessary for the success of economic integration: sustained political commitment, regular growth of national economies, and no major economic sub-regional disparity. As Traore (1993) correctly points out, in the economic sphere, most of the countries have in fact stagnated or lost ground over the past decade and were forced into applying the painful solution of structural adjustment, the latter bringing its own impediments to integration. As indicated in chapter V, the SAPs did not work and have been abandoned by most countries in the sub-region. ECOWAS, therefore, is far from living up to its advance billing as a saviour of economies in West Africa through Structural Adjustment Programs.

Among many other important reasons, a truly regional and hemispheric-wide cooperative arrangement has many benefits for the improvement of life for its citizenry. But for the member states to effectively promote development amongst them; they must have legitimacy; that is to say, they must be democratic. In the context of the current development paradigm, markets, as an institution and institutions meant to transform the integration process are important. Although member states must play an important role in promoting the economic integration through provision of policy environment, services, and in some cases through direct promotion of productive activities, intra-state trade, and the promotion of large markets must play a central role in consolidating the integration process. This, however, should be guided by the political will to support the integration process by allowing institutional policies to be made and implemented at the supranational level.

The urgency surrounding regional integration largely stems from the above and the fear of further marginalisation in a world that is increasingly globalising and yet doing so around regional blocs. Notwithstanding the dilemma surrounding ECOWAS's development into a regional integration, considerable scepticism still remains about the success of regionalism in the sub-region (Jebuni 1998, 42; Lyakurwa et al. 1997, 67). In view of this, one may ask: has ECOWAS confused regional *integration* with that of a regional *co-operation*? For in the pursuit of a regional development within the West African sub-region, the cardinal pronouncement here is that integration becomes a process and not an event.

II. Conclusion of the Study

Regionalism is not a new undertaking in Africa. Indeed, the world's oldest custom union exists in South Africa and a list of both past and present multilateral economic agreements is probably longer than that of other continents.⁴⁸ However, while some

⁴⁸ The Southern African custom union, the (Rand) common monetary area, and the CFA zone are examples in this regard. It is interesting to note that there were successful links with partners in the Southern African custom

successful examples of RI do exist, Africa's record of creating a sustaining regional framework is generally not encouraging. Nevertheless, there has been resurgence of interest in RI for both within Africa and on the part of external agents interested in Africa's development. The motivations of these agents however differ.⁴⁵ RI is frequently seen as an alternative to unilateral trade liberalization.

Despite the concern by international donors of the lack of progress in both economic development and priority in Africa, they are rather optimistic that RI will aid poor countries or complement their efforts at participating in the liberalization of global trade. Whatever the ultimate goal of a regional arrangement, increased intra-regional trade should rank high among priorities. It is also the yardstick to measure the depth, the scope and the width of the integration process.

In the West African case, the existing institutional framework for co-operation and integration in the sub-region is weak. The general view of both research and policy review alike is that results on trade liberalisation and economic integration have so far been disappointing. Consensual decision-making arrangements, overlapping and often conflicting integration scheme memberships, lack of regional-level monitoring of the implementation of decisions, unwillingness of governments to cede authority to regional bodies, and subsequent lack of power by the regional Secretariats to take initiatives have significantly reduced the effectiveness of the regional integration scheme. The absence of effective compensation arrangements in ECOWAS has further hindered implementation of certain trade liberalisation measures. This is because the Community issues are entrusted only to intergovernmental mechanisms, such as government committees of civil servants, Council of Ministers (COMs),

union and the Common Market for Africa.

⁴⁵ There are currently contending views about the NEPAD document, which some say is only favourable to the West because it resembles other forms of partnership that are "non-African." Of relevance here is the Berg

and summits of Heads of State and Government. The participation of civil society is minimal if non-existing in the economic integration process. The non-implementation of policies, the non-ratification of protocols are problems closely related to the inability of the Council of Ministers to solve Community problems at its level, but systematically referring technical issues to the Heads of State and Government.

Whatever the underlying argument for integration, a necessary condition for the realisation of the theoretical gains from integration is whether the partners are similar (i.e., each have something to gain from integration), or that an efficient and equitable compensation mechanism from winners to losers can be formulated. This assumption is precisely the condition that is hardly satisfied among any of the existing ECOWAS member states, in this case, stating the case and the problems that have been examined.

Reforms within the ECOWAS Treaty following the proposals put forward by the Committee of Eminent Persons for the Review of the ECOWAS Treaty in June 1992, promised to put new life into the integration of states in West Africa. Despite the recommendations of the Committee, a lot is still desired in terms of the institutional mechanisms and organisation of the integration process. Not much has been incorporated into the revised ECOWAS Treaty for the strengthening of ECOWAS.⁵⁰ For the greatest promise of ECOWAS integration efforts, the guiding words toward regional development are the willingness for co-operation, an attitude enabling co-ordination, and the necessity of harmonisation of the policies and institutions set up to address all the dynamics of the integration process.

As far as the process of the *de facto* regional economic integration by ECOWAS is

Report, which was to guide African integration schemes but which has been criticised by various writers because it is devoid of the prevailing circumstances under which African nations operate.

⁵⁰ The aims and objectives were provided in Article 2 (1) of the Revised Treaty: ECOWAS "shall ultimately be the sole economic community in the region for the purpose of economic integration and the realisation of the objectives of the African Economic Community." But there is still a duplication of efforts in terms of harmonisation of markets, money, and the "Brown Card." ECOWAS Executive Secretariat - Abuja, Nigeria.

concerned, there are two types of challenges that should be distinguished: one is strategic and the other is economic. A united West Africa will be in a strategically superior position to negotiate with the existing or the emerging future economic blocs than could any one-member country doing it alone. The second challenge is that trade amongst West African is imperative if ECOWAS wants to achieve a common market.

In summation, the priority role of ECOWAS Secretariat, within the framework of the ECOWAS Treaty, is to take the mantle of leadership of its member states, through promotion of regional integration to make the adjustments necessary for them to become part of the global economy. Needless to say, it is the current institutional approach to regional integration, which has proved to be ineffective and is condemned to remain so until decision-making mechanism of a supranational nature are agreed upon and adhered to. The voluntarism enshrined in the Abuja, ECOWAS, and the UEMOA treaties have failed to compensate for the absence of this fundamental pre-requisite.

As Wilmot rightly remarks (1993, 25), the difference between the provisions of the old and the new ECOWAS Treaties on the one hand, and those of the African Economic Community (AEC) versus the European Union (EU) Treaties on the other hand, in relation to the binding force of decisions, 'is one of substance, touching on the fundamental issue of supranationality'.

As already discussed in the study, supranationality refers to a situation "where an international institution is endowed with powers to take decisions binding on sovereign states either generally or in specific areas of the state's activity" (Wilmot 1993, 26). Thus, whereas it is clear that the provisions of the AEC and EU Treaties envisaged the establishment of supranational institutions to oversee their integration process, the 1975 ECOWAS Treaty and that of the Revised one of 1992/3, did not contemplate any such institutions in the framing

stages of the ECOWAS. It is reassuring, however, to note that the three related key dimensions involved in the integration of the African economies are now clearly espoused and given the necessary emphasis both in the treaties and priorities of the major post-1990 African economic communities.

But the lack of policy implementation towards the regional integration effort is taking place in a context that characterises inconsistencies. In many parts of the continent, the post-colonial state's tenuous claims to legitimacy and the threat of increasing market segmentation call for a comprehensive reappraisal of the linkages between structural adjustment policies, the social regulatory functions of the state, and the creation of regional economies.

In rethinking ECOWAS' approach to integration, the cost of non-integration has become a secondary issue compared with the threat of disintegration through formal means or the corrosive impact of Trans-state networks. An institutional reform within ECOWAS is no panacea or substitute for the lack of political will or deficiencies in policies and programmes for regional co-operation, especially in the economic sector. However, it must be noted that institutional deficiencies have hampered co-operation and created shortcomings within ECOWAS, and needs to be rectified.

The summation from this study is that countries involved in ECOWAS regional integration have not fared any better in terms of the neo-functionalist model they claim to have been operating under. Neither have the integration process occurred in a "systematic and pragmatic manner" as envisaged in most the ECOWAS Protocols. More so, in spite of the fact that the functionalist gradualist approach has been the guiding theoretical framework for regional integration in West African it has not been a successful model. Consequently a bolder approach is needed.

Effective regional integration is generally recognised as a component of a strategy to improve economic growth. The inter-regional co-operation initiative addresses some of the

weaknesses of regional initiative by emphasising outward orientation, national and regional policy complementarity, and the direct involvement of private sector. Given the precarious environment facing ECOWAS members, particularly under the World Trade Organisation (WTO) agreements and the trends of globalisation, ECOWAS cannot afford to lag behind in these developments.

The governments of the sub-region must demonstrate both the political will and the willingness to implement ratified protocols, treaties and programmes. They must take necessary remedial steps towards fiscal restraint, currency flexibility and the introduction or supervisory mechanisms to keep pace with financial liberalisation. What needs to be realised and learnt as a lesson from Southeast Asia, though, is that ASEAN states exhibit a lot of complementarity even in a sector (for example, agriculture) that is perceived to be common (thus competitive) among members. Thus, a clear understanding of where comparative advantage lie in each West African country appears to be the first hurdle that member countries must pass before a common agricultural policy can be implemented. These challenges mean three things for ECOWAS. First, is the acceptance of new objectives and new principles to achieve those new objectives. The most important new objective is ECOWAS's greater integration in the future. It has to develop beyond state-to-state relations. In practice, integration has been going on for some time and some integration has already happened as shown by the Liberian crisis and its immediate contagion among ECOWAS members. How much integration is to be achieved in ECOWAS in this respect depend on the development of ingenious strategies and an ability to implement them. Astute economic diplomacy will have to be displayed in the premises that will bring ECOWAS to the level of development achieved in ASEAN.

Second, is the institutional response to drive the regional integration. ECOWAS has been proud to be able to do things without having strong institutions. That may be valid for

the first twenty-seven years when state-to-state relations alone sufficed. But if regional integration is an important development objective for ECOWAS, which it should be if ECOWAS wants to maintain its relevance in the future, then greater institutionalisation is a must. This means resources (human and financial) should be given to ECOWAS. ECOWAS may still avert becoming a Brussels-type of bureaucracy, but there is a long way to go from transforming the ECOWAS Secretariat as it is now into a Brussels-type one in future. Something in between these two types is advisable.

Finally, is the need for the NGOs to participate more fully in ECOWAS's activities and to create a nexus between governments and NGOs through the idea of an annual ECOWAS Congress in which both sides can explain their ideas and programmes and can explore ways to promote co-operation. Also, the challenge of integration should be left to bureaucrats rather than to the usual Heads of State and Governments. Translated into the ECOWAS framework, this suggests the need for more regular meetings and at more levels. This is not only true of the meetings of the ECOWAS Heads of Government and the Foreign Ministers, but also of those in other functional areas who have not, to date, been involved in the process of co-operation and integration.

III. Post Analysis

What model of development should West Africa adopt to catch up with the rest of the world? In the last 40 or so years after colonialism, the question central to every discussion on the development of Africa is on how to move from the signing of protocols to implementation. Many attempts have been made in the past at articulating a purposeful paradigm for the continent, but not much as been achieved.

The current slow pace of ECOWAS integration follows the culmination of various factors or inadequacies. What implications can be drawn from the attempt to fulfil the requirements of a full-fledged regional integration in West Africa? First, the co-ordination

mechanisms envisaged in the treaties have failed to achieve an orderly and equitable distribution of the fruits of industrial policy. These fruits also proved very meagre or non-existing, as the industrial development plan, based on import/substitution could not produce them even after several SAPs policies.

Second, political differences have widened since the conflicts in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau and others when the inconsistencies in the 1978 protocol on intervention had to be adopted unilaterally or sort of imposed by Nigeria and to an extent, Ghana. The political will to discuss crucial matters at summits are impeded by the absence of some Heads of State for unexplainable reasons. On policy makers' agendas, short-term survival clearly overshadows any long-term economic issues, especially those related to the implementation agenda. A compatible system of domestic policies and economic management is critical for convergence in key prices – such as goods prices, asset prices (interest rates), and the exchange rate – to occur at low levels.

Third, and related to the above, differing political orientations all too clearly is causing the divergence in economic management. There is the lack of compatibility of the currencies in the sub-region. There are two different currency unions in the sub-region at present both working against each other and competing for recognition.

Finally, the provision of common services may be important not only for increasing intra-regional trade, but also when such services require huge investment and/or are needed by countries with special geographic characteristics, such as land lockness by some member countries. Given the inability of such land-locked countries (such as Mali, Burkina Faso), to move goods from the coastal areas, road transportation is imperative if these countries are to fully participate in trade within the sub-region.

Foroutan (1993), Langhammer and Hiemenz (1990), and Ravenhill (1990) have all proposed that the trade integration approach, being the only approach that ECOWAS has been

pursuing should be avoided. Trade and factor integration they say are not considered feasible because of the dissimilarity of African, or for that matter West African of the economies and the difficulties of putting in place an effective compensation mechanism (Foroutan 1993, 56). The claim is that "co-operation, co-ordination and harmonisation hold greater promise for African countries rather than an attempt towards regional integration (Foroutan 1992, 265).

We agree that ECOWAS may have solidified gains from integration if it were pursued first on the basis of regional co-operation for infrastructure development and/or what is described as thematic co-operation. That is an agreement on cross-border investment, say, between Nigeria and Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana, Nigeria and Cote d'Ivoire etc, preceding trade co-operation. Individual co-operative attempts in sectoral projects turn to avoid the problems of distribution of gains and loss of sovereignty that has been crucial to the integration process within ECOWAS and retarded its dynamic transformation. Also, co-operative endeavours empower countries and give them confidence. The power also results in confidence between the countries incrementally over time. An example was the co-operation in iron and steel between the BENELUX countries that preceded the European Economic Community. A co-operative endeavour allows the countries enough time to consolidate gains and to be prepared to facilitate future market policies towards regional integration, like the transformation of the EEC into the EU.

While this study acknowledges the proposals by Foroutan (1992), Langhammer and Hiemenze (1991), and Ravenhill (1990), we believe that ECOWAS' problems have more to do with the way things *are done* rather than the way things *ought to be*. After all, every economy whether small (as in Botswana in Southern Africa) and others in the export of primary commodities or without any natural resources (as in Japan), may succeed if set objectives in short-term and long-term planning are met in iterations. Their plans would also work if they involve civil society, craft their policies in the context of that country and fulfil

the economic and fiscal policies that they have set themselves to implement.

We believe ECOWAS' lack of progress from this study is not that of trade integration but that the establishing Treaty and that of the Revised Treaty were not planned using the iterative method of planning, in which the Founding Fathers defined the transformation of ECOWAS into a system of multiple time-scope – a cyclic and rolling way of planning into short, medium and long term processes. Much as the trade integration approach is often invoked to be the problem for countries within Africa and particularly, ECOWAS, the crafting of policies to transform ECOWAS should have taken into consideration prevailing conditions on the continent of Africa and the circumstances under which such policies are required. The policies must also state under which procedures, and with full cognisance of the sub-region's limitations, that those plans are to be implemented.

Instead, ECOWAS' integration was rational only to the extent to which the Authority of Heads of State and Government (AHSOG) could arrive at hastily decision based mostly on "military-type" solutions to precise and limited questions. Second, the study found out that the planning of ECOWAS was not "home-grown", in that the decisions or protocols establishing the integration process were never embedded in West African realities such as the limits in the sub-region of trade, the production of only primary goods, the differences in language, culture, values because of colonialism and other factors, etc. Third, the planning of ECOWAS falsified the ideologies of the Founding Fathers about the meaning of seeking the "total liberation of the African continent" from colonialism and imperialism. Even though most Founding Fathers instituted drastic economic policies immediately after independence to usher economic development, their visions were betrayed and short-lived by military coup d'états, threats of overthrow, assassinations, and dictatorship, thereby defeating the tenets of pan-Africanism.

The study also argues that ECOWAS Founding Fathers, in the pursuit of the objectives, did not do a good job on the modalities of what functionalism/neo-functionalism entails. The protocols that were all proposed and ratified were mostly limited in scope with regard to time, themes, stakeholders, etc, rather than interconnections between them like the neo-functionalist would claim. In short, the planning, vision, decisions, transformation of the integration process of ECOWAS was lacking a step-by-step process that is inherent in policy implementation or areas and sectors characterised by relatively simple conditions (not necessarily as having few influential factors), but what factors exist that are relatively well known and which demand proper actions "(power to act, toolbox, etc) to fix the car."

The analysis of the dynamics determining ECOWAS integration has been displayed in detail. One can draw general conclusions that ECOWAS relations have been determined and shaped, in the first phase, by political dynamics. During this period, it has been observed that economic integration was at a very weak and insufficient level. In contrast, the EU has shown strong and determined political will to maintain its integration model. The determination of the European Community to create integration explained only the existence of political reasons of the Cold War years.

The European Community's determination to assign a time frame for the consolidation of its integration process is based essentially on neo-functionalism economic integration model. In other words, it was also the political dynamics, which assured the creation and development of this relationship in the first phase. However, in ECOWAS' situation, such political dynamics have been marred by dislocation in the intent of the principles of functionalism and neo-functionalism. ECOWAS' integration process has been complicated by conflicts, with their attendant problems of massive human displacement and destruction of human lives and property. Issues of identity, governance, resource allocation, State sovereignty and power struggle, sometimes coupled with the personality question, have

all conspired, not only to cause staggering lack of implementation of dynamic policies of economic development, but also to make the sub-region unsuitable for regional integration.

To achieve a true regional economic integration ECOWAS must be receptive to strengthening and expanding existing bilateral cooperative arrangements. All participating countries must bring political will derived from regional leaders' enlightened national interest, as well as popular support, and with intellectuals playing a catalytic role. Also required are long vision, a regional concept of development, effective individual and institutional administrative capabilities and political skills, frank acknowledgment and discussion of the fact that as different states and areas have different interests, the process of creating a web of regional cooperation means members will have to make tradeoffs, with cooperation's overall benefits worth the compromises.

IV. The Way Forward

There are major issues yet to be addressed within ECOWAS, and the following suggestions are offered as a way forward. First, integration can confer substantial institutional benefits, but only if real authority is delegated to central institutions. The ECOWAS Secretariat and the Commission must be given the supranational autonomy it deserves to implement protocols and drive the engine of the integration.

Second, Nigeria has undoubtedly been in the forefront of major activities in the Community. For example, it has contributed regularly towards effective functioning and maintenance of the ECOWAS Secretariat and including the maintenance of peace and stability through contributions towards the upkeep of ECOMOG forces. It has also supported the ECOWAS Fund, as well as the established relevant regional financial institutions, which are basic to meaningful economic integration. Nigeria and Cote d'Ivoire must assume full leadership roles within the Community and to steer the affairs of the integration like France and Germany within the EU. Lastly, but not least, the leadership of Africa must provide the

vision and direction needed for the regional integration schemes that were established out of the African Economic Community Treaty, and charged with the achievement of a Common Market by the year 2025. In the absence of such a shift in policy, ECOWAS would be unlikely to move member countries towards greater integration within the sub-region. Instead, the integration could actually be detrimental to the member countries involved resulting in the social unrest and the instability that continuously revisits the sub-region.

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Annex: 1

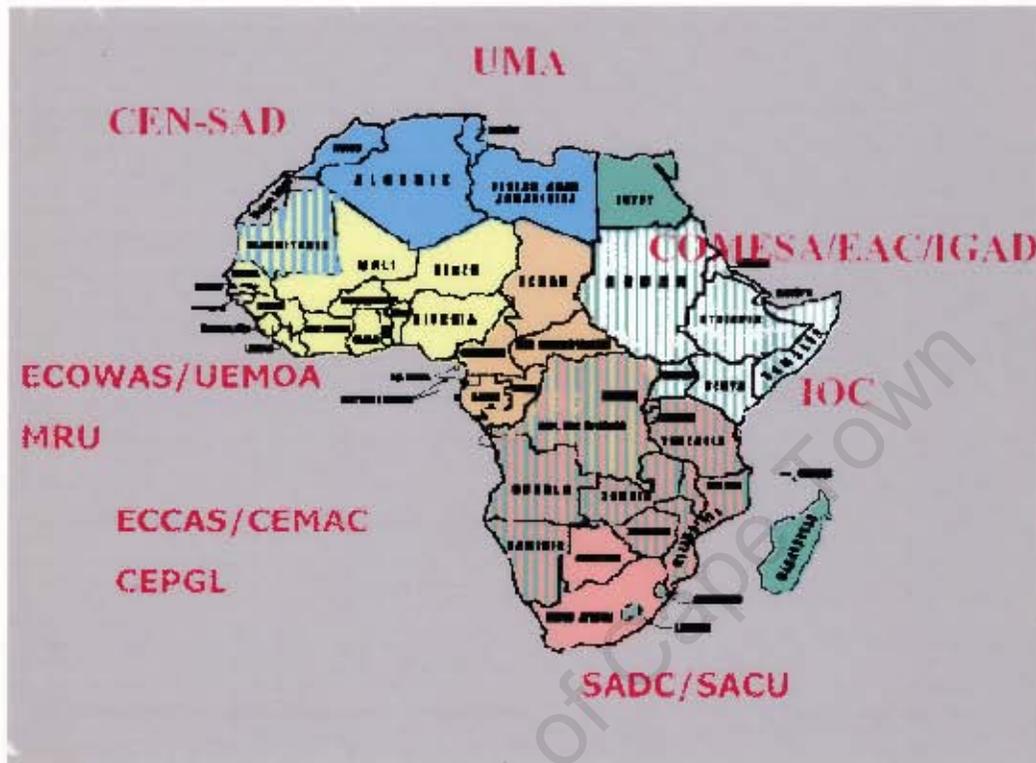
Map of West African sub-region showing ECOWAS



SOURCE: ECOWAS Yearbook, 2000b.

Annex: 2:Map:

Regional Integration Schemes in Africa



Source: Annual Report on Integration in Africa (ARIA) (2000b)

Annex 3:

The Structure of Community Trade

TABLE 4 - STRUCTURE OF COMMUNITY TRADE

YEARS	IMPORTS			EXPORTS **			TOTAL TRADE		
	GT	IT	%	GT	IT	%	GT	IT	%
1985	15,344	984	6.4	18,310	1060	5.6	34,154	2044	6.0
1986	10,451	1,172	11.2	11,999	945	7.9	22,450	2,117	9.4
1987	11,383	1,078	9.5	14,591	1,580	10.8	25,974	2,658	10.2
1988	11,388	1,120	9.8	13,873	1,490	10.7	25,261	2,610	10.3
1989	11,181	1,092	9.8	15,186	1,473	9.7	26,367	2,557	9.7
1990	13,320	1,454	10.9	20,736	2,113	10.2	34,056	3,567	10.5
1991	14,073	1,334	9.5	19,384	1,661	8.6	33,457	2,843	8.5
1992	18,501	1,808	9.9	19,188	2,180	11.4	37,689	3,988	10.7
1993	17,428	1,572	9.0	15,249	1,600	10.5	32,676	3,172	9.7
1994	13,518	1,301	9.6	12,036	1,424	11.8	25,554	2,725	10.7
1995	13,838	1,552	11.2	16,121	1,715	10.6	29,959	3,267	10.9
1996	15,631	1,882	12.0	20,345	2,316	11.4	35,976	4,198	11.7
1997	16,430	1,813	11.0	20,100	2,539	12.6	36,530	4,352	11.9

Source: ECOWAS Handbook of International Trade, 1998.

Key:

G. T. - total trade in millions \$

I. T. - intra-trade in millions \$

** Over 80 per cent of exports consisted of agricultural and mineral products.