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Theoretical Reflections on the Influence of Sovereignty and Hegemonic Self-interest on Regional Economic Integration in Africa: A Comparative Study of the Achievements and Challenges of EAC and ECOWAS: A Comparative Study of the Achievements and Challenges of EAC and ECOWAS/CEDEAO: Communauté Economique des Etats de L'Afrique L'Ouest



INTRODUCTION...



Economic Integration involves agreements between countries that usually include the elimination of trade barriers, aligning monetary and fiscal policies in order to eventually achieve a more inter-connected global economy (Balassa, 1961). It is different from economic re-integration which is a philosophical and historical inquiry of how integration has served or has not served us well.

- Despite the spirited efforts by the informal traders to interact and promote trade in East and West Africa, custom officials and bureaucratic government officers deliberately create non-tariff barriers to frustrate mobility across the borders of Nigeria and Benin and Togo.
- Traders in African borders are victims of custom officials who use variety of measures to slow movement of people, labour, goods and services. To make matters worse, French structural and monetary colonial legacies in west Africa is a big drawback to having a single monetary union and currency.



Recent contagion of military adventurism in power in former French colonies has exacerbated rather than ameliorated trade, acting as an anathema to full integration of ECOWAS partner states.

- Integration is both a process and a state of affairs. It involves diplomacy and political good will, which the leaders in both the EAC and ECOWAS have not offered. Instead of having integration, which involves abolition of all forms of discrimination, we have co-operation which merely lessens or decreases discrimination (Balassa, 1961)

WHY ECONOMIC INTEGRATION?

- ✓ Nnandi Madiche (2002) writing on ECOWAS has submitted that economic integration is only beneficial when it leads to three things;
- ✓ Firstly when it improves welfare of the citizens in the region,
- ✓ Secondly if can protect the infant industries and
- ✓ Thirdly the possibility that it promotes growth by expanding the volume of investible funds through private or public savings.
- ✓ 4th If it Allows people, goods, vehicles, traders to move freely across borders unhindered
- ✓ To what extent, for instance, has integration through RECs improved welfare of the ordinary citizens of East and West Africa?

METHODOLOGY....

- 🗣️ The research objectives necessitate the application of mixed method: Interviews with Officials virtually, FGD, Unstructured Interviews with colleagues at UniLag, Face to face Interview with ECOWAS officials. On-line data mining was conducted.
- ✍️ Physical Visit to Nairobi Ugandan Ambassador, PS Trade and EAC, Ministry of Trade Rwanda [MINEFETT], Political Commissioner for EAC, Mr Onen Samwel and his team, KRA offices in Nairobi and Ministry of trade and EAC, Arusha HQT, and Ministry of Trade Dar es Salaam and a Fellowship at the prestigious University of Lagos where we have been holding discussions with academic fellows and lecturers in during my 90 day research.
- 📄 Oral interviews across the borders of Isebania, Busia and Malaba OSBP. This permitted the researchers to better understand the regulatory frameworks, legal policies, treaties and agreements as well as documents from the member states while analyzing the processes of how such documents are agreed upon.
- 📄 The study also examined member country legislations, statutes, reports frameworks, records and other documents as well as treaties, protocols, regulations, policies and other documents issued by Secretariats of the EAC.
- 🕒 ECOWAS Team: Oral interview Mr Francis Chucks, Youth Affairs, Kola Sofala-



Visit to EAC Headquarters at Arusha Tanzania, 2021

ORIGINS OF EAC.....

One thing that the EAC has is a rich history of the process towards economic integration. The British colonial government created a **Customs Union** in 1918 between Kenya and Uganda. Tanzania joined in 1923 then known as Tanganyika. Between 1920 and 1965 the three countries had a common currency known as the EA Shillings. Kiswahili was a common unifying factor for the region.

Then in 1948 there was established the **EA High Commission**, that was followed by the EA Common Services Commission in 1961 and finally **the EAC was Established in 1967 unfortunately, it collapsed after ten years in 1977.** This rich history should have been used by the three founding members [Obote, Nyerere, and Kenyatta] to move towards a full blown federation, but that did not happen leading to new efforts towards re-integration from 2000.

- The EAC population is 300 million, but plus DRC it is 490 Million, EAC GDP is USD 920 Billion with Kenya being the largest economic hegemon with 270 B, Tanzania at 170 B, Uganda at 97.9 B [almost size of Lagos], larger than ECOWAS.

- Rasul Ahmed (2010), comparing the hegemonic role of Kenya in EAC, has expressed doubts whether Kenya plays this same role. While examining why the EAC has not fully integrated into a political federation, Ahmed points to Tanzania as the reluctant party to integration because of ideological differences. His view is that the EAC, unlike ECOWAS lacks a regional kingpin to act as a true regional hegemon.



HISTORY OF ECOWAS AND NIGERIAN HEGEMONY.....



The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was actually established on May 28th 1975 via the Treaty of Lagos. ECOWAS is a 15-member regional group with a mandate of promoting economic integration in all fields of activity of the constituting countries in West Africa.

- **Objectives:** increase trade, industrial development, better allocation of resources, factor mobility and establish a customs union, infrastructural development, remove all forms of tariffs, harmonise bargaining power through CET.



The partner states making up ECOWAS are Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote d' Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Senegal and Togo [Mauritania?].

- Out of all these members, Nigeria controls almost 62.7 percent of the regional trade. With a GDP 477 USD out of USD 760 for ecowas. Crude petroleum gives her USD 42 B and also exports refined petroleum to India, Spain,



USA, France and China; she has 258 universities; categorized as private [148], federal [50] and state [60] universities

- She has a Strong and growing financial sector and petroleum export as well as an enterprising population and a huge IT hub. But she has a protectionist trade policy with high peaks, non-tariff barriers and import bans; its currency Naira, is non convertible and chronically volatile of late (IMF, 2017).

- Yet Nigeria plays a pivotal role in Wet Africa, not just demographically, economically and security-wise, she can easily be considered the regional hegemon or the strongest state in ECOWAS. Nigeria is considered hegemonic in the ECOWAS, a dominance that rests on her economic, huge financial sector and military power base supported by the West. (Altheide, 1984).



EAC [JUMUIYA] ACHIEVEMENTS & PROBLEMS.....

EAC Achievements, namely use of single passport, common parliament based in Arusha known as East African Legislative assembly [EALA], EA Court of Justice and very soon EA Monetary Union Bank to be located at Mbagathi in Nairobi, one currency called the Shilling, possibility of having one language called Kiswahili, established the Common External Tariffs (CET) against all foreign goods entering the region, which means that there are certain imported goods like Sugar upon which tariffs are agreeable between member states but countries still hold on what they special list of sensitive goods which countries do not want to move freely though Tanzania still blocks certain goods from Kenya or Uganda, while Kenya too blocks maize sales from Tanzania yet maize is the main food between the two nations.

- Main problem is lack of political will for full federation due to ideological and business ethical differences between Kenya and Tanzania, while Uganda and Rwanda are ready for a federation.
- The differences between Rwanda and Uganda, the dominance of Kenya, Colonial legacies in signing trade treaties with individual partner states and Stereotypes about each other, individualistic and competing policies on industrialization eg. Buy Kenya Build Kenya, Buy Uganda-Build Uganda, Dominance of Cartels controlling strategic trade in Sugar and other commodities, Threat of Al-Shabaab insurgency.


MORGENTHAU THEORY AND STATE INTERESTS...

- Hans Morgenthau (1948) had long established that nation-states have their interests to pursue just like individual humans. Accordingly, the place of sovereignty is one of the major theories dealing with in promoting or hindering economic integration.
- Nugent (2003) felt that sovereignty is the main concept in inter-state systems whereby it entails three aspects, namely the right to legal existence and legitimate being, to be located within a defined territorial space and the government as the ultimate power in decision making.
- But...even if states have a right to exist, they must also work and associate with other states and which entails 'loss or giving up of sovereignty' to the bigger group of nations for the sake of integration. Are African presidents ready to donate sovereignty for the bigger benefit of Integration?

RELEVANCE OF THEORIES...

- One of the most relevant theories remains the Neo-functionalism, which according to Onditi, encourages plurality of actors including powerful institution pillars (Onditi, 2020, 79). Proponents of the theory include Ernst Haas, Joseph Nye and Joseph Keohane, the latter two also being Neo-liberal/interdependence theory scholars, among others.
 - It is a theory of regional integration that places major emphasis on the role of non-state actors – especially, the “secretariat” of the regional organization involved and those interest associations and social movements that form at the level of the region – in providing the dynamic for further integration. Member states remain important actors in the process. They set the terms of the initial agreement, but they do not exclusively determine the direction and extent of subsequent change.
 - Rather, regional bureaucrats in league with a shifting set of self-organized interests and passions seek to exploit the inevitable “spill-overs” and “unintended consequences” that occur when states agree to assign some degree of supra-national responsibility for accomplishing a limited task and then discover that satisfying that function has external effects upon other of their interdependent activities.

HEGEMONIC STABILITY THEORY....

-  Robert Keohane, the political scientist who coined the term HST in 1980, explains that to achieve the status of hegemon, a state must “have control over raw material, control over sources of capital, control over markets and competitive advantages in the production of highly valued goods” (Keohane 1984, 34)
- Hegemonic stability theory suggests that the presence of a dominant state like Nigeria or South Africa, can create a sense of predictability and stability in the international system, as other states can rely on the dominant state to provide leadership and to address global challenges.
- However, Keohane also disputes the hegemonic stability theory also acknowledging that the dominance of a single state can be controversial and can lead to resentment and resistance from other states, e.g. Ghana vs. Nigeria. Or Kenya vs. Tanzania.
- The hegemon may use its dominant power to exploit other states and further its own interests, rather than acting in the best interests of the international community.

RELEVANT NEW THEORIES....

- But...Francis Onditi (2020) has proposed a new theory to explain economic integration.
 - The dominatarianism theory proposes to examine integration using a social force known as personness and role of the personalities.
 - For him “the process of regional integration should therefore be a combination of people, institutions and geo-economy, as follows: Person + Economy + Institutions + Politics = An Integrated Regional Society” (Onditi, 2020: 85).

INTER-GOVERNMENTALISM THEORY

- Stanley Hoffman identifies the fear of integration by members due to strains in the process causing “spill-back” or throw back., and that may create integration stagnation where countries are not moving or making moves. For the solution, he has divided the issues into 2:

High politics

[Defence, Security, Foreign policy and Taxation] which members are **reluctant and unwilling** to surrender due to fear of losing sovereignty to the supranational authority;

Low politics

[appointments, new offices, bureaucracy and delegation of tasks] which members **can easily agree on.**

- However all we need at ECOWAS are a common foreign policy, promote good governance and democratic project, need to decolonize the French neo-colonialism, and create a Monetary Union.
- To do there must be political will from leaders, include civil societies and accept the spirit of competition and collaboration in EAC and ECOWAS.

EXPECTED GAINS...

- Haas argued that the decision to proceed with integration or oppose it depended on the expected gains or losses as perceived by the major groups within the units of integration (in the case of Europe this would lead to transformation of ECSC to EEC through the Rome Treaty, 1957; and eventually to EU under the Maastricht Treaty of 1993. In EAC the same could explain the revival of the regional body in 2002, after 25 years of the collapse of the first one, as well as its expansion from 3-member to 7-member body with potential of further expansion).

CHALLENGES TO INTEGRATION IN ECOWAS...

- TOYIN FALOLA “PREMIUM TIMES” Newspaper, 2nd September 2023
- He asserts that Since 2020, there have been eight military coups in Africa, with two occurring this year alone. Unfortunately, these military interventions that are overturning “democratically” elected governments are not an unusual development on the continent.
- He submits that between 1950 and 1991, Africa recorded 84 successful coups spread across 45 countries. And even after 1991, coups remained a celebrated august visitor, dotting the African political landscape every now and again. With recent developments, we are compelled to ask ourselves, “Has Africa really made tangible political gains since independence?”
- Alexis Akwagyiram (2023) writing for *Semafor Africa*, an on-line news blog on 16th August 2023 submitted that the diplomatic deadlock in the wake of the coup in Niger and Gabon remains the most watched story on the continent.
- There were brief breakthroughs sandwiched between the military junta rebuffing officials from both West Africa’s regional bloc (ECOWAS), the USA and French efforts to restore the deposed president Mohammed Bazoum.
- Nigeria responded to coup by putting up sanctions and cutting electricity contrary to 1960 treaty between the 2 nations on the reciprocal use of R Niger waters by both Niger and Nigeria, who appeared to be fighting proxy war for France and the USA

COUPS IN ECOWAS REGION



GAINS AND ACHIEVEMENTS.....

- Considerable efforts have now been made in harmonizing macroeconomic policies and private sector promotion towards achieving economic integration e.g. having a common ID and passport to facilitate movement of traders
- ECOMOG...Ecowas Monitoring Group-the Military Wing that protects democracy
- These initiatives include implementation of the roadmap for the ECOWAS single currency [EKO currency] programme, monitoring and evaluation of performance and macroeconomic convergence, management of the ECOWAS Macroeconomic Database & Multilateral Surveillance System (ECOMAC) as well as co-operation with other regional and international institutions.
- There was a lot of expectation of achieving complete economic integration by 2020: moving from an ECOWAS of states to an ECOWAS of people, a possible confederation or federation, but this was not achieved.

CHALLENGES TO INTEGRATION...

- **Single Currency**, Francis Chuks, the ECOWAS Youth Director argued that a Single currency needs convergence criteria on economic issues such as controlling the rate of inflation. They need to harmonise commonality on lending rates, interest rates by central banks. Despite that and in the spirit of trade, individual national currencies are Accepted across borders. Currencies are used across the borders without any hindrance.
- **ECOWAS ID Card** is yet another contentious issue. There are intentions to introduce a biometric ID card for ECOWAS zone. Already Ghana had done but Nigeria is yet to. Incidentally the French speaking countries have been travelling without passport (Francis Chucks)

ECOWAS BARRIERS [UNILAG GROUP DISCUSSION 9TH /8/23]...

Internal problems	Negative Ethnicity, religious feuds, discrimination against other ethnic groups, lack of crisis mgt track record
External forces	The French, American, Russian, Portuguese and British economic interests, call for holistic political leadership, solidarity and cohesion are the core to crisis response in the Sahel and francophone zone
Lacks of consciousness	Lack of civic education, ethnic loyalty and identity
French neo-colonialism	CFA franc French Africa colonial created 1945 General de Gaulle 65% of incomes to Paris, inconvertible problem in ecowas
Nigerian Hegemony	Fear of Nigeria's cultural economic and political dominance, boisterous and domineering
Resurgence of Military coups d'état in ECOWAS Region	Reactionary take overs in Chad [, Mali [May 2021], Guinea [Sept. 2021], Burkina Faso [Jan 2022], Niger [July 2023], need for collective action and systematic preparation, lack of strong institutions and Gabon...

CONCLUSION.....

- Need to include African philosophy of Utu, Ubuntu and Ujamaa in our theoretical analysis to reconfigure African studies; use African languages Yoruba, Xhosa, Hausa and Kiswahili to promote regional integration.
- **Bright prospects** for Africa Continental Free Trade Area of 55 states, with 1.3 billion people. The EAC and ECOWAS should lead the rest of Africa to full economic and political Federation.
- Recommendation: Let's have open and practical discussions on how African Union [AU] can improve on our democratic governance to avoid frequent military adventurism, reduce frequent coups d'état and foreign interference in the Sahel and West Africa. The French should change their attitude and neo-colonial policies and engage us as equal partners with new and equitable monetary paradigm for Francophone Africa.
- The borders should not only be decolonized, but also de-militarised. We should have one ID card [passport] across the countries of West and East Africa. For instance in Burkina Faso, Nigerians are easily integrated and facilitated, but that is not the case in Ghana where there is latent fear of Nigerian hegemony and the fear of Nigerian trade dominance. On the other hand Togolese form the highest number of informal traders in both Lagos and Cotonou in Benin. Yet the government bureaucrats continue to frustrate cross-border migrations (FGD, NIIA, 17/08/2023).

ECOWAS MAP...



ECOWAS

	Mali		Niger
	Senegal		Burkina Faso
	Cape Verde		Benin
	Gambia		Nigeria
	Guinea-Bissau		Togo
	Guinea		Ghana
	Sierra Leone		Cote d'Ivoire
	Liberia		

Economic Community of West African States

THE EAC MEMBERS WITHOUT DRC



La BIDC, au cœur du développement, transformant des
Régénération de la Banque d'Investissement de Développement

BOIC TMB

occidental
BIDC

EAC - the heart of development, changing lives in East Africa
Actual
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JKIA AIRPORT ON RESEARCH IN NAIROBI



La BIDC, au cœur du développement, transformant des
Régionalisation de la Banque d'Investissement de Développement

BOIC TMB

ando vidas na África ocidental
volvimento do IDAO (BIDC)

EBIDC - the heart of development, changing lives in West Africa
Regionalization of the IDAO (BIDC)

ECLIP JENIP TMB

VISIT TO EAC HEADQUARTERS AT ARUSHA TANZANIA, 2021



EAC HEADQUARTERS WITH LEGAL AND HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSIONER, 2021



BORDER POINT UGANDA/KENYA ONE STOP BORDER POINT



La BIDC, au cœur du développ
Réhabilitation de la Banque d'

BOIC TMB

ESDC the heart of development, changing lives in East Africa
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TMB

SEME-KRAKE BORDER COTONOU BENIN



La BIDC, au cœur du développement
Réhabilitation de la Banque
BIDC TMB

Building Trust in West Africa
Trust and Development

END..

**THANK YOU
ASANTE SANA
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