

## **ECOWAS AND DIALECTICS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND COLLECTIVE SECURITY IN WEST AFRICA: AN ANALYSIS IN NEO-FUNCTIONAL THEORY**

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### **Abstract**

*The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is easily the flagship of regional economic cooperation in Africa. Over the years however, ECOWAS has through the exigency of ECOMOG also assumed the status of a defense and security instrument. This paper interrogates the dialectics of this metamorphosis or transformation. Anchored in the framework of neo-functional theory of integration, the paper relies on documentary sources as well as analytical inductive / grounded theory technique in the generation and analysis of relevant data respectively. Our findings show that besides the ambitious objectives which the founding fathers gave the regional project at take-off, that the Freetown Protocol (1981), the economic crisis that afflicted many African states in the 1980 and up to 2000 and widespread security challenges thereof were the major factors that gave rise to the emergence and burgeoning of ECOMOG. The implication of this is that the transformation of ECOWAS into a major defense and security arrangement, though not envisaged in the initial agenda of the organization, was not altogether a strange development. Against the backdrop of these economic and social developments; this paper recommends increased capacity for ECOWAS for the maintenance of collective security system in West Africa.*

### **Keywords**

Collective security, Economic crisis, ECOMOG, Freetown protocol, Insecurity, Mutual assistance and Regional economic cooperation.

### **Introduction**

As the name of the organization clearly suggests, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was from the on-set in 1975 conceived as a regional organization with purely economic development focus. The primacy of ECOWAS' 'economic development focus' is underlined by a main objective of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) treaty which provides for a programme of liberalization of trade and realization of customs union within the community over a period of 15 years (Olaniyan, 1986; Ladan, 2015) There is thus no doubt that ECOWAS was abinitio designed to leverage economic and technical cooperation among the sixteen countries of West Africa. As it turned out, by early 1990s, some founding fathers in ECOWAS were already decrying the deviation of the regional organization from the original focus into a defence and security instrument by way of its military

organ, the ECOWAS Monitoring Group, ECOMOG for short (Adisa, 1992). A decade later, Harsch (2003) also had cause to note that Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has transformed from a regional organization with a purely economic development focus to that of regional security, defense and peace-keeping outfit.

This paper takes a closer look at this transformation. In specific terms, the paper interrogates the political, economic and security environments of this transformation vis-à-vis ECOWAS' original mandate. What is the specific security architecture and the emergent pattern or factors of this transformation? Specifically, why did the ECOMOG grow from a small military force dispatched to monitor the proper observance of a truce between rival rebel factions and the government of Samuel Doe blossom into a military force composed of several thousand men operating simultaneously in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Guinea Bissau? Many years after, and with the current insecurity profile arising largely from the activities of Boko Haram and the likes in many member states of ECOWAS, what are the implications and relevant policy options?

Given the issues and questions raised above, this paper is divided into five interrelated parts. Following this introductory brief, is the review of relevant literature in part two. The third part provides insight into the theoretical framework and methodological issues on the subject-matter. The fourth part explores three factors that characterize the transformation of ECOWAS from a regional economic organization with purely economic development focus to that of a security and peace keeping inclined organization. Part five is the concluding analysis

### **Review of Relevant Literature**

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has become one of the models of regional economic cooperation on the African continent, with its progress being cited as an example that needs to be followed by the other sub-regional organizations in Africa, if the objectives of continental economic integration are to be achieved. As a matter of fact, the socio-economic diversity, historical evolution and the challenges of under-development combined to make regional integration an imperative necessity for the sixteen countries of the West African sub-region (Odock, 2004).

This transformation of ECOWAS from a regional integration scheme geared mainly towards promoting economic cooperation into a near ideal or perfect regional defense and security arrangement in Africa, is worthy of study from the practical point of view of showing how this transformation was accomplished as well as demonstrating its inherent cause. The transformation of ECOWAS into a major defense and security arrangement though not explicit in the initial agenda of the organization was not altogether a strange development given the ambitious political, economic and strategic objectives, which the founding fathers of ECOWAS gave their regional project. Article 1 of the ECOWAS Treaty, for example, listed the following far reaching objectives of the organization:

It shall be the aim of the Community to promote cooperation and development in all fields of economic activity particularly in the fields of industry, transport, telecommunications, energy, agricultural natural resources, commerce, monetary and financial questions and in social and cultural matters for the purpose of raising the standard of living of its peoples, of increasing and maintaining economic stability, of fostering closer relations among its members and of

contributing to the progress and development of the African continent (See Treaty of the ECOWAS in Akinyemi et al. 1984, pp. 664 -766).

Any careful reader will readily come to the conclusion that these objectives were more political than economic; requiring the political commitment of the member states at the highest political level for their attainment. Furthermore, it can be argued that the security and defense dimensions which deal directly with peace-keeping efforts in the sub-region were not lost sight of, prior to and soon after the signature of the Lagos Treaty establishing the Economic Community of West African States in May, 1975. For purpose of recall, it could be noted that concern for national security and problems of interference across national frontiers had been salient to the states of West Africa soon after independence in 1960: for example the assassination of President Olympio of Togo in 1963, the Nigeria-Biafra War between 1967 and 1970 and eventually, the military coup d'état that plagued many countries of the sub-region between 1963 and 1980s all point to the need for security cooperation in the sub-region. As shall be seen the signing of the 1981 Protocol on Mutual Assistance in Freetown, Sierra Leone was a logical response to the perceived and felt threats to national security that existed throughout the sub-region at the time.

Since May, 1999, most decisive steps towards West African regional integration have been accomplished. Very outstanding are the construction of a Gas Pipeline from Nigeria to Benin, Togo and Ghana; the establishment of an ECOWAS Parliament in Abuja; the creation of an ECOWAS Supreme Court; as well as the establishment of an ECOWAS Common Currency to run parallel with the Franc zone (Odock, 2004). While these developments in the economic and technical sectors of ECOWAS were taking place, there was also a continuing evolution of the West African regional organization towards assuming an active role in the settlement, resolution and management of regional conflicts as can be seen in the long list of West African countries where the military wing of ECOWAS, "ECOMOG" has had to serve or intervene in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Guinea Bissau and Cote d'Ivoire (Harsch, 2003: 16)

No doubt some West African States contested the initial decision that led to the establishment of ECOWAS Monitoring Group and its deployment in Liberia. As Adisa (1992) points out, this was definitely due not to the absence of a legal framework for the intervention as it was the continuous unfolding of the competitive regionalism of the Francophone and Anglophone countries of the sub-region (Adisa, 1992:212-221). It also bothered on the admixture of national and individual political preferences (Adisa, 1992). For all practical purposes, it is important to note that the broad objectives assigned to the ECOWAS in the Constitutive treaty as well as the series of Protocols that had been signed by all the parties provided a sufficient legal foundation for the extension of regional cooperation from the economic to the security domain.

There have been many studies of Nigeria's military intervention in Liberia and Sierra Leone, which have focused on various aspects of the ECOMOG operations. While a military strategist has highlighted the opportunities that were lost in the ECOMOG operation in Sierra Leone, another writer has contrasted the peculiarities of regional and global peace-keeping (Adesina, 2000). What needs to be pointed out is the fact that the peculiarities of the ECOMOG operations in Liberia and Sierra Leone had much to do both with the mandate of the forces as contained in the Freetown Protocol of 1981 as well as the contradictions of West African regional cooperation located specifically in the reality that some members of the regional cooperation arrangement maintain very close security cooperation and defense arrangements with their former colonial power - France - and the parallel existence of two or more

regional integration schemes in West Africa the Communate Economique de I' Afrique de I' Quest (CEAO), which is restricted in membership to Francophone West African States and the all embracing Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), as well as the three nation integration scheme linking Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone in the Manu River Union (MRU). This situation of competitive integration within the sub-region promoted a foreign observer to raise the problem of compatibility among these organizations (Burgi, 1983).

While Adedeji (1991: 392) highlighted the origins of the African crises and the role of the wrongheaded policies of the IMF in aggravating the cause, other African scholars wrote about Africa in terms of uncertainty and hope. While it is possible to agree with Eliagwu (1998:31) for instance, that “there is a problem in identifying causes of problems”, his emphasis on the technological backwardness of Africa vis- a-vis the developed world as one of the root causes of Africa’s economic and political crisis is a good starting point in explaining the continent’s predicament. The strong dose of authoritarianism and official ineptitude on the part of the continent’s political leadership have combined in different ways to produce many of the political and economic disasters that the continent registered in the last three decades or so.

If we focus our attention for the moment on the political crisis in West Africa in the period covered by this study, one can isolate the following types of conflict on the sub-region ‘Boundary conflicts, conflict of governance, conflict of economic development, conflict resulting from foreign intervention, conflicts arising from the militarization of the society’ (Akiba, 1998:72). While it is possible to reclassify these conflicts into purely economic and political categories or in any other combinations, their prevalence on a large or small scale especially in West Africa increased pressures for security defense and peace cooperation, irrespective of the sources of such conflicts; whether they were elite conflicts arising from contests for power, factional conflicts, communal and mass conflicts, revolutionary conflicts and the outcome of foreign intervention.

Africa’s major headache, Ihonbvere (2002) posits, stems from the fact that the continent’s economic crises were accompanied with numerous negative consequences: severe declines in the quantity and quality of major export crops, a steep fall in the world market prices for most agricultural commodities and raw materials; a consequent major short-fall in export earnings for most African countries; huge and unprecedented budget deficits, and the rapid expansion of external debts for most countries. Others include the inevitable incapacity of many African States to meet their basic minimum obligations in terms of payment of salaries and wages to their employees, the incapacity to maintain public infrastructures such as roads, utilities, electricity, water supply and health services. The uniform recourse of the African States to IMF and World Bank prescribed Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) rather than ameliorate the situation, significantly worsened the condition of the social sector across the continent.

In specific terms, Ukeje (2003) provides some indications as to how the West African Economic Community became transformed into a regional peace-keeping organization: “Virtually left in the lurch by the United States and major European countries, and for a long time by the United Nations, the burdensome responsibility of external intervention to manage attendant humanitarian emergencies fell on the weak shoulders of a few member states of ECOWAS - notably Ghana, Guinea, Sierra Leone, the Gambia and Nigeria - who pioneered what has become a unique and unparalleled sub-regional peace-keeping and peace-enforcement initiative under the aegis of ECOMOG, the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (Ukeje, 2003:97).

## **Theoretical and Methodological Issues**

This work is anchored in the neo-functional theory of integration. Posited and given comprehensive formulation by David Mitrany and Ernest Haas, functionalism was first used as an approach in social analysis by anthropologists particularly Radcliffe-Brown and Bronislaw Malinowski and sociologists such as Max Weber and Talcott Parson. It was subsequently adopted by many political scientists notably Gabriel Almond, James Coleman etc. Functionalism or functional orientation of represents

a view of political phenomenon and an alternative to traditional mode of analysis. Within the context of inherent interrelationship and laws revealed by structures, functional orientation encourages and advocates the examination of the purpose which given objects serve. It hinges on the logic or the fact that functions arise or exist essentially because of the demands made of the system” (Biereenu-Nnabugwu, 2008:132)

As explained by Plano et al (1973) functionalists aim at developing integrated theory that can be used to explain the overall operations of a political system through its dependence on certain functions. In specific terms, for Mitrany (in Plano et al, 1973: 58) “the road to world peace lay through international institutions acting piece meal to deal with specific recognized needs for economic and social cooperation”. Often considered the most influential theory of regional integration, neo-functionalism recognizes that “regional integration in an area generates pressures for further integration in the form of ‘spillover’” (Heywood, 2007:152). Largely because it is almost impossible for any scholar to predict exactly how the processes involved in the integration process evolve over time, Haa’s (1976) argues that the theory of integration is a turbulent field. Interesting this argument or position remains largely relevant today.

What these theoretical observations imply with respect to the subject of our paper is that it might be near impossible or very difficult to describe in a precise manner, the line of evolution of regional integration projects anywhere in the world including West Africa. It is perhaps already obvious that our central hypothesis in this paper is given the tendency towards a continuous increase in independent variables in integration theory, it might be probable for independent variables used in the explanation of regional integration not only to grow over time but it could also be expected that these variables might also undergo continuous transformation and mutation over time. If this logic is accepted then, we might expect that the progress of regional integration schemes could then be conceived as a continuous chain reaction in which initial economic, technical and social objectives will give rise to an initial impetus for integration, which in itself will provoke other effects such as the need for mutual defense, security and peace-keeping, etc. An attempt to engage in large scale security cooperation, peacekeeping and mutual defense will then reveal the necessity for a strong economic foundation in order to fulfill such ambitious regional projects, and thus the need for regional economic cooperation.

This paper relies largely on documentary sources including conference papers, multilateral materials, books and journals for the generation of relevant data. The generated data were analysed by examining the critical issues that have come to assume prominence in the interface between economic development and collective security in West Africa. Grounded theory technique enabled us to analyze gathered data closely alongside analytic inductive technique.

## **ECOWAS and the Dialectics of Critical Response Factors**

The interface between ECOWAS and neo-functional collective security were affected by a number of factors. Here we identified and investigated three. They are first, the Freetown Protocol on Mutual Assistance on Defense which was signed in 1981. The economic crises that plagued the African countries in general and those of West Africa in particular in the period 1980-2000; a period of two decades was also a factor. Thirdly, there was widespread state failure occasioned by severe political instability that ravaged the countries of West Africa from the early 1980s.

### **(a) *Freetown Protocol and the Emergence of ECOMOG***

The task here is to briefly examine the provisions of the Freetown protocol on Mutual Assistance on Defense. Doing so will provide some useful insights into the eventual growth and development of ECOMOG as an instrument of regional defense and security policy. It is pertinent to recall that the Lagos Protocol on Non-aggression of 22 April, 1978, expressed the commitment of the member states:

...in their relations with one another, to refrain from the threat or use of force or aggression or from employing any other means inconsistent with the Chapters of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity against the territorial integrity or political independence of other member states (Article I).

Such a guarantee was the minimum condition that would allow some of the small states of the region to accept any extensive cooperation with the larger ones such as Nigeria. Three Articles of this short Protocol are particularly important. First, it sought to restrain the member states from “committing, condoning or encouraging ... acts of subversion, hostility or aggression” against other states. Secondly, it enjoined them to restrain foreigners resident on their territory from committing acts of aggression, subversion or hostility against the territorial integrity and sovereignty of other member states. Finally, the same restraint was required to be undertaken by member states with respect to non-resident foreigners who might be desirous of undermining the territorial integrity and sovereignty of other member states.

However, three years later, things had evolved further in the sub-region with the coup d'état that brought Samuel Doe to power in 1980 being one of the most significant. Consequently, on the 29 May, 1981, at Freetown in Sierra Leone, the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State signed the Protocol relating to Mutual Assistance on Defence, with this central objectives: ‘Member states declare and accept that any armed threat or aggression directed against any member state shall constitute a threat or aggression against the community’.

In the classic terms of international organization theory, the Protocol on Mutual Assistance on Defence of 1981 effectively created a *collective security system* in West Africa whereby any act of aggression or threat against one member state, was to be automatically considered a threat or aggression against all. Thus, all that remained to be seen was how this collective security system would work in practice. As it turned out, the internal crisis in Liberia beginning from 1980 and balance of politico strategic forces in neighbouring Cote d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso and Guinea actually provided the opportunity par excellence, to transform this theoretical system of collective security in West Africa into a concrete project of both peace-keeping and peace enforcement in West Africa. With the ECOMOG engagement in Liberia widely accepted, even by countries that initially rejected it, the expansion of the operations into

other countries in the sub-region was only a logical development given the similarities of the situation of the countries of the sub-region as far as prolonged economic crises, political conflicts, instability as well as state failure were concerned.

**(b) *Economic Crisis and Collective Security System.***

There are obviously many ways of demonstrating the economic crises that have plagued the African countries in general and those of West Africa in particular in the period 1980-2000; a period of two decades. The African Development Report for 2001, for example, focused on the rate of growth of the GDP of African countries up to the year 2000. According to the report, “after slowing to 2.7 per cent, in 1999 real GDP growth in Africa recovered modestly to an estimated 3.2 per cent in 2000 ... Twenty countries achieved growth rates of between 3 and 5 per cent compared to fourteen in the previous year”. However, this modest growth rate has nothing to celebrate in view of the fact that population growth rate for the continent stood at 2.9 per cent. In other words, the modest rate of growth was naturally nullified by the rate of growth of population in the continent. A more relevant indicator, which emerges from the African Development Report above, is that six countries - Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Cote d’Ivoire, Guinea, Gabon, Kenya and Zimbabwe experienced recession in 2000.

What is significant about the foregoing is not that some African countries experienced a recession at the beginning of the new millennium. It is the composition of the list that is remarkable. These six countries include five namely Congo Democratic Republic (DRC), Kenya, Cote d’Ivoire, Gabon and Zimbabwe; whose economies in the 1970s and early 1980s were considered, even if superficially, to be the epitome of economic growth, prosperity, and stability in Africa. With such countries experiencing economic recession at the turn of the century, the economic fortunes of most of the countries of the sub-region could actually be said to have been in serious trouble indeed. However, since our study is concerned more specifically with the West African sub-region, the statistical Bulletin 2000 and 2001 published by the Secretariat of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in two volumes provides us with sample statistical information on the member states of the Economic Community of West African States.

Of particular interest to this study is the statistics blow, which shows that, with few exceptions, all the States of West Africa suffered a brutal decline in their GDP between 1980 and 1985. A few illustrations will drive home the point: Nigeria the largest economy in the sub-region saw her GDP fall from 56.40 billion dollars in 1980 to 28.39 billion in 1985. This represents a decline of nearly 50% of the GDP in five years. For Cote d’Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, the picture was essentially the same. Each of these five countries saw their GDP change from 12.24, 14.80, 1.86, 0.92 and 1.10 billion dollars in 1980 to 7.02, 4.49, 1.77, 0.86 and 1.20 billion dollars in 1985 respectively. There is no doubt that the rate of growth of the GDP of the countries of the sub region between the two dates is more illustrative of the economic crisis in the sub region in the period under consideration. Table 1 below shows that for Nigeria and the five states listed above the rate of growth of their GDP was the following. 15.61,-14.44,-23.08, -2.44, -4.81,-0.28. The information in table 1 can simply be summarized in a single sentence. Most of the countries of West Africa experienced negative growth between 1980 and 1985, some of these states experiencing a more than - 10% and this period can be taken as the lowest point a negative growth in the economic situation of most of the countries of West Africa and could symbolize the genesis of the political crises that engulfed the region in subsequent years.

Figure 1: GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT OF SELECT MEMBER STATES OF ECOWAS FOR 1980 AND 1985

Serial Number	Six Select Member States	GDP(1980) in billion USD	GDP(1985) in billion USD	Difference (in %)	Growth Rate
1	Cote d'Ivoire	12.24	7.02	5.22	-14.44
2	Ghana	14.80	4.49	9.90	-23.08
3	Guinea	1.86	1.77	0.09	-2.44
4	Liberia	0.92	0.86	0.06	-4.81
5	Nigeria	56.40	28.39	26.01	15.61
6	Sierra Leone	1.10	1.20	-0.10	-0.28
	<b>Total</b>	<b>87.32</b>	<b>43.73</b>	<b>43.59</b>	<b>-29.41</b>

Source: Computed by the authors with data from Africa Development Report,2001

In view of the foregoing, emphasis on some West African countries being the source of the crises that helped to transform the Economic Community of West African States from an organization oriented toward economic cooperation to a strategic - peace keeping regional organization, it is significant to note that for some of these countries: Sierra Leone and Liberia in particular, the trend of negative growth rate of GDP persisted up to 1999 and 1998 respectively. The point that needs to be made in relation to the steep decline in gross domestic product and negative growth rate of the economy is that they entrench and reinforce mass poverty, reduce the political capacity of the state to carry out its essential functions, thereby exacerbating social tensions and conflicts. This is more so that other significant economic indices such as the external public debt, the balance of payments and the total volume of exports and imports tend to flow from or are dependent on the GDP and its rate of growth. By way of illustration, the external public debt of the West African states and the percentage of export earnings devoted to debt service are quite indicative of the political difficulties observed in many West African states in the period under review. We will again focus on five countries that were instrumental to the transformation of the West African regional organization in the direction of greater military and security cooperation: Liberia; Sierra Leone, Guinea, Guinea Bissau and Nigeria. For the five states: Liberia; Sierra Leone, Guinea, Guinea Bissau and Nigeria, their public external debt calculated as a percentage of the GDP changed from 50.53% in 1980 to 84.28% in 1985 and 126.81 in 1990 for the period 1995 to 1999 the public debt profile of Liberia hovered between 1571.11% and 581.61% of GDP. Surprisingly Liberia spent a very insignificant percentage of its export earnings to service its external debt. The absence of a normal functioning central authority from 1990 up to 1997 as well as the preoccupation of factional leaders with internal security problems explains this seeming anomaly.

Sierra Leone the second beneficiary of the military intervention of the Economic Community of West African State is another example of a heavily indebted West African state. Between 1980 and 1990 the public external debt of Sierra Leone passed from 32.43% of GDP in 1980 to 103.55% in 1985 and declined to 74.56% in 1990. By 1995 however, the figure had risen to 185.14%. Between 1997 and 1999, the figures were 208.5%, and 160.2%. The debt service ratio of Sierra Leone as part of imports earnings



fell steadily from 16.40% in 1980 to 12.78% in 1985 and 6.17% in 1990. It rose to 45.44% in 1995 and 133.00% in 1997 and 1999. What these figures mean is that when Sierra Leone was deep in internal political crises, it could not honour its external obligations which explain the explosion of the figures in the late 1990s.

The balance of payments position of the states of West Africa between 1980 and 1999 could be taken as another significant indicator of the economic crises that plagued the West African sub-region in the period of our study. Beginning from 1980, most states in the sub region had already started experiencing balance of payments difficulties; which became severely aggravated in the two subsequent decades. Let us focus on Nigeria and Cote d' Ivoire which could be taken as the two largest economies of the sub region and then Guinea Bissau and Liberia the two beneficiaries of the ECOWAS intervention in West Africa for the years 1980, 1985, 1990 and 1995. Nigeria had a favourable trade balance of 7.77% in 1980 which transformed into a deficit of - 4.26% in 1985, rose again to 3.65% in 1990 but declined again to - 8.42% in 1995. For Cote d' Ivoire the corresponding figures were - 5.42% in 1980, - 2.51% in 1985 with a decline to - 21.00% in 1990. For the year 1995 the Ivorien balance of payments was - 2.34%. As for the smallest of the economies, notably Guinea Bissau and Liberia their economic situation as shown by their balance of payments for the same period is very interesting. For the four years in question, Guinea Bissau posted a negative balance of payments for a significant number of years as follows: 0.00% in 1980, 0.67% in 1985, - 12.00% in 1990 and -21.39 in 1995. As for Liberia for the two years that figures are available for the period, she posted a balance of payments of -5.08% in 1980 and - 19.38% in 1985. There is every likelihood that if figures were available for the remaining years, they would have confirmed the negative trend registered in 1980 and 1985. From the foregoing, there can be little doubt about the gravity and severity of the economic crises which the West African States under went in the period under review. From these grim statistics, it is not surprising that some African and external observers had to come up with sometimes pathetic description of the African and West African situation.

### ***(c) State Failure and the Bourgeoning of Insecurity***

Beyond the Freetown Protocol and economic crisis it is necessary to explain or interrogate state failure as a factor. We commence this by posing the question: why did ECOMOG grow from a small military force dispatched to monitor the observance of a truce between rival rebel factions and the government forces of Samuel Doe in Monrovia to blossom into a major military force composed of several thousand men operating simultaneously in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Guinea Bissau? The answer is found in the severe political instability that has ravaged the countries of West Africa since the early 1980s. The vulnerability of countries such as Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Cote d' Ivoire to internal instability might be accounted for by the absolute poverty of such countries, or their dependence on one or two export commodities, or again, the presence of an external influence such as the former colonial master, if not the result of the demise of a long standing authoritarian leader whose death, created a power vacuum that generated rivalry over succession as in Cote d' Ivoire.

In the face of the massive failure of the state to meet its political and economic obligations to its citizens, most citizens within the period not only began to question their national identity, which in Africa has been sometimes erroneously considered to be a secondary identity (Mills and Rochefort, 1991), by emphasizing their primary ethnic or other identities. It was only a logical next step that these primary

identifications began to stake a claim for political autonomy thereby subjecting the territorial integrity and sovereignty of many states to the test.

In this regard, it may be noted that Nigeria's petroleum based economy has provided the military and political ruling classes sufficient economic resources to mediate and sometimes, bribe and intimate major contenders for state power in the sub-region. Secondly, the multiplicity of primary groups in Nigeria appears to make the various groups to cancel out each other in their struggle for political power and economic resources thereby leaving the state a greater margin of manoeuvre. In the first instance, the failure of the state has been anchored on the rapid disappointment of the high expectations, which were generated in the masses of the people at independence. As has been observed "how far have the hopes and aspirations of the people who greeted that act of change of government in the midnight of September 30, 1960, with thunderous ovation been fulfilled"? (Aguda, 1985:VIII). The obvious answer is that those who witnessed the ceremonies of independence have been disappointed or out rightly frustrated. This is not only true of Nigeria, but also most other countries of West Africa, and indeed Africa.

Going hand in hand with the dashed hopes and aspirations that were associated with independence has been the complete or total breakdown of the alliances both vertical and horizontal that were forged by the nationalist movements to wrest political control from the colonialists. In this regard, the use of state power to consolidate ethnic, religious and other hegemonies since independence became very instrumental to the failure of the state across the continent. In a situation where many states became visibly identified as instruments for the promotion of the parochial and sectional interests of particular groups, patriotism and national loyalty to the nation state were rapidly replaced by religious and ethnic jingoism as documented by Egwu (2001). In a contribution on the African development crisis, Ajayi (1995:42) had pinpointed the crux of the problem of state failure. When all is said and done, the most all pervading explanation of the failure of the post-colonial state was the failure to decolonize, signified by the continuing control of the economy and the strategies of development from outside. It is true that concretely, the failure of the state manifested itself on the ground in diverse forms. As for the West African sub-region, Ukeje (2003:85-112) shows how state disintegration or failure in Liberia not only plunged the country into civil war, but also produced some of the notorious child soldiers that the continent has been doing everything to eradicate.

In all, it is possible to applaud the positive impact which ECOMOG has had on the most potent security challenges facing the countries of West Africa to date. This is because the threats that have tended to undetermined the national cohesion of these states as well as their internal socio-economic stability and progress" (Imobighe 1993:88)].

### **Discussion and Concluding Analysis**

*Discussion* As shown in the accompanying schematic sketch below; peace, security, stability and economic development and conservation are so intricately intertwined that they can never be separated one from the other. This being the case, regional integration schemes will increasingly be multifaceted rather than having a specialized focus. Thus, the current evolution of ECOWAS appears to us as a confirmation of the continuous erosion of traditional and classical distinctions between, for example, domestic and international policies, high and low policy areas, economic and social issues versus security and defense policies.

*Summary of Finding:* This paper examined the seeming anomaly whereby the Economic Community of West African States which was originally designed to leverage economic and technical cooperation amongst the sixteen countries of West Africa metamorphosed into a regional security arrangement, through the development of the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) between 1990 and 2005. The paper relied upon the neo-functionalist theory of integration that predicts the spillover of cooperation from a few technical or economic areas into other fields. Among others, the paper tried to answer the question why did the ECOMOG grow from a small military force dispatched to monitor the proper observance of a truce between rival rebel factions and the government of Samuel Doe blossom into a military force composed of several thousand men operating simultaneously in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Guinea Bissau? Based on a careful examination of relevant documentary sources, the paper was able to also show how a number of factors including the deep economic crises suffered by the member states of the Economic Community of West African States in the last two decades of the twentieth century brought with it serious political sustainability problem that made defense and security cooperation an absolute necessity.

**Figure 2: THE CONTINUOUS INTERDEPENDENCE BETWEEN REGIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND INTEGRATION AND REGIONAL ECONOMIC CRISES AND POLITICAL INSTABILITY.**



Source: Authors, 2016

Beside the ambitious objectives which the founding fathers of ECOWAS gave the regional project, this study also identified three other factors responsible for the transformation of ECOWAS from purely economic focus to a more or less security organization. The three other factors are:

- The Freetown Protocol of Mutual Assistance which was signed in 1981
- The economic crises which befell many African countries in much of 1980 to 2000.
- State failure and drift to state failure in many parts of the continent, particularly in West Africa.

*Implications of the Study:* The implications of the foregoing is that the transformation of ECOWAS into a major defense and security arrangement, though not envisaged in the initial agenda which the organisation set for itself, was not totally a strange development. This as we have posited is because the arrangement is in line with the central views canvassed by the proponents of neo-functionalist theory of integration. Besides, there is in reality dialectical relationship between economy and security.

*Recommendations:* In line with the findings and implications of the study as stated above, we recommend that alongside economic and social developments there is need for robust increased capacity for the maintenance of security and economic wellbeing of citizens in West Africa. In this way the new or contemporary phase of insecurity in the region – especially insurgency, terrorism, kidnapping, rustling, and militancy need to receive holistic treatment.

*Conclusion:* The metamorphosis into security arrangement is in line with the global perspective on regional integration which underscores the inseparability of national security, political and economic stability and the possibility of regional economic cooperation. In the final analysis the security of a nation from internal and external threats provides the foundation for political stability and economic development which in turn facilitate regional economic integration.

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