

Chapter Three

Nigeria and the Establishment of ECOWAS

3.0 Introduction

This chapter aims to analyse the processes towards the establishment of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The basic problem to be examined in this chapter deals with the role of Nigeria in establishing ECOWAS. The chapter will also examine the transitory stages of ECOWAS and its eventual transformation from a purely economic to a political and security integrative scheme. In doing so, it will be necessary to examine the struggles and contestations that occurred prior to this establishment. This chapter will be a purely historical narrative, because it captures the dynamics that contributed to ECOWAS's establishment. I will position these processes within a specific historical trajectory and development. By so doing, I will be able to position ECOWAS's transition from economic to political integration, the role of the actors (that is state actors and the executive secretariat) and the historical basis for this occurrence. It also seeks to identify the main participants in this process, by evaluating in some depth, the political controversies that engulfed the negotiation processes concerning the establishment of a security regime. Changing from economic to political and security integration eventually led to conflict and compromise among the sixteen member states of the organization.

The argument in this chapter is that to appreciate what is characterised as a new and evolving West African security regime, such analysis should be situated within the context of regional and sub-regional political dynamics before and after 1989. It is only when such analyses are situated within their historical and political perspectives that the importance of the outlines of ECOWAS's security framework can be appreciated.

The major argument in this chapter is that the transition to the establishment of ECOWAS and its subsequent transformation into a political integrative¹ scheme were historically and politically logical processes resulting from the cautious — as compared to the more radical position by Ghana — trajectory taken by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) at its inception. This prevented the OAU from establishing the mechanisms and framework necessary to tackle the security problems of the continent as will be discussed in detail in the chapter later. ECOWAS's subsequent transformation, in the thrust of the thesis occurred not only as a result of the political and military incidents on the sub-region, but also because of the role played by the experts at its secretariat and transnational actors along West Africa. In the following sub-section, the discussion traces the different processes towards an Africa-wide integration process. Such an approach is useful because

¹It is critical that I state from the onset that no supranational body came into being, in the bid to contain the challenges posed by the Liberian Conflict, as a result of the shift from economic to security concerns. This, also, applies to the later usage of integration and its derivatives, throughout this thesis. Since 'sound does not travel in a vacuum', almost all decisions whether socio-economic or security related had to have a medium of acceptance and legitimacy in the collective will of the political leadership of ECOWAS. Some examples of political decisions on integration in the sub-region that do not hint at a supranational body include the protocol on free movement of persons for up to ninety-days; introduction of the ECOWAS travellers cheque as a precursor to the ECOWAS currency; the establishment of the ECOWAS Parliament; the ECOWAS Judicial Council; and others.

it shows how the different positions taken by states and leaders first shaped perceptions to security and eventually resulted in sub-regional organizations taking an interest in security.

3.1 Discourses on the Processes Towards African Regional Integration

Applying a historical perspective implies an analysis of the discussions concerning political and economic integration in post-independence Africa. This resulted in the formation of divergent 'integration' groups cutting across different regions, and climaxing with the 1963 formation of the OAU. A brief but detailed discussion of the views presented under the auspices of the OAU concerning defence-related issues is important to demonstrate that ECOWAS's formation of a security regime is the fulfilment of long discussed political strategies in the pre-independence period.

To appreciate the historical basis of ECOWAS's intervention in Liberia and later Sierra Leone, I have chosen to extend the time limit concerning security discussions in Africa to the immediate post-independence period in the early 1960s. The rationale is to give the discussions some historical depth. Such an approach situates ECOWAS's own radical political detour from 1976 into its proper historical and political perspectives. It will also show that the inclusion of security-related protocols was not just a circumstantial appendage to the original ECOWAS Treaty. On the contrary, these additions were a

logical addendum to the original Treaty. Also, the choice for this approach will show that:

- (i) formation of ECOWAS and its subsequent problems and collective actions are embedded in the history and politics of the sub-region (in the immediate post-independence period) prior to the formation of the OAU, and subsequently after its formation; and
- (ii) development and addition of security related protocols to the original ECOWAS treaty were not, as has been argued elsewhere, an unnecessary complication.²

Rather, the analysis in this chapter will illustrate that the addition of security protocols was a realistic and logical addendum to the original ECOWAS treaty based on an intricate and complex interplay of disparate factors. The important determinants of ECOWAS transition into a political and security framework were the:

- (i) Inability of the OAU to consider and resolve defence related issues; and
- (ii) Increasingly unstable political and military situation on the West African sub-region over a period of time, especially from 1963 when *coup d'etat* became common.

²Ravenhill, J. 1985. 'The Future of EurAfrica' in T.M. Shaw and O Aluko, eds, *Africa Projected: From Recession to Renaissance by the Year 2000*. London: Macmillan.; McGowan, Pat & T. H. Johnson, 1984. 'Sixty Coups in Thirty Years – Further Evidence Regarding African Military Coups d'etat', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 24.3; Ihonvbere, J. & Turner, T. E. 1993. 'Africa in the Post Containment Era: Constraints, Pressures and Prospects for the 21st Century', *The Roundtable*, 328.

3.1.1 Historical Background³

The formation of ECOWAS should be seen as a continuation of discussions concerning post-independence African discourses on regionalism, and not least, as part of the search for an effective method of fulfilling the Pan-Africanist ideas that typified the struggle against colonialism. During the early 1960s, the major issues under discussion — collective defence and security, territoriality, sovereignty, non-interference in the internal affairs of states **S** became central themes during meetings of Pan-African movements. 1960 became the watershed year when most African countries attained their independence. Discussions concerning the need for rapid economic development centred on how best resources could be pulled together and utilised in a way that fulfilled the ideas, hopes and aspirations discussed during Pan-Africanist sessions.⁴

The discourses within the Pan-African movement in the immediate post-independence period rapidly showed the incipient divergent views on how best political integration could be carried out. Three schools of thought quickly became prominent. First, Ghana's leader, Kwame Nkrumah, wanted a form of Continental Union government, or failing to achieve that a form of political union involving all West African states. This

³I have chosen to make a historical study of ECOWAS's evolutionary process towards establishing a security framework for ECOWAS because the knowledge gained during one phase of the integration process has helped shape actor's perceptions of their choices and chances during subsequent phases, see Haas, Peter M. 1997. "Epistemic Communities and the Dynamics of International Environmental Co-operation", in Volker Rittberger, *Regime Theory and International Relations*, p.169.

⁴Wolfers, M. 1976. *Politics in the Organization of African Unity*. London: Polity Press' Legum, op cit.

represented the radical view.⁵ Member states of this group, also known as the Casablanca group, included Algeria, Egypt, Ghana, Guinea and Morocco. They canvassed for the creation of an African organization with continent-wide structures and institutions including a common market, concurrently with a common African citizenship and an African High Command (AHC).⁶

Paradoxically, Nigeria led a spirited campaign against any form of political integration. Nigeria, which stood in sharp contrast to Nkrumah's radical blueprints for quick continental or sub-regional integration presented the moderate-cum-conservative position concerning integration. This group consisted of Nigeria, Liberia, Ethiopia and seventeen other states. Of primary interest to this coalition or Monrovia group, as they became known, was their insistence on the principle of the absolute equality of states, non-interference in the internal affairs of states and the unqualified condemnation of externally supported subversive conduct in the domestic affairs of states.⁷

A third group, the Brazzaville group, was led by the late Ivorian leader, Felix Houphouet-Boigny and consisted of the former French West African states. This group sought a more gradual approach to integration with an emphasis on close relations with the

⁵Nkrumah, Kwame. 1963. *Africa Must Unite*. London: Heineman Books.

⁶Legum, C 1962. *Pan-Africanism: A Short Political Guide*. London: Macmillan, p.190; Rooney, D. 1988. *Kwame Nkrumah: The Political Kingdom in the Third Republic*. London: IB Taurus Books. p.211.

⁷. Legum, *ibid*; Thompson, Scott. 1969. *Ghana's Foreign Policy, 1957 – 1966*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, p.32. This suspicion was targeted against Nkrumah who was suspected of supporting critics of several African governments and liberation movements. Most members of this group had defense pacts with their former metropolises.

former colonial masters. The apparent divergences in the political positions of these groups eventually led to the creation of different political groupings on the continent. Although all the groupings argued for continental integration, they presented dissimilar methods for its achievement.

Diverse reasons have been presented for the hesitation of the different newly independent countries to agree on this point. Politically, the core reason was the reluctance of new states to hand over their recently won political sovereignty to a supra-national organization.⁸ While economically, there was the argument, especially from the moderate states that economic integration must precede political union and that economic integration itself must begin at the sub-regional level and proceed in stages beginning with functional cooperation and coordination and leading towards, perhaps a common market.⁹ Ojo makes an interesting but an unsubstantiated point that it was “the very possibility of Nigerian economic domination, however, (that) was one reason for Nkrumah’s insistence on immediate continental political union”.¹⁰ Substantiation for this point has been difficult to find, though there is no doubt that at independence, the economic statistics available compared Ghana favourably with Nigeria despite the latter’s greater potentials and size.

This, however, does not explain convincingly any realistic reason on Nkrumah’s

⁸Legum, op cit; Aluko, op cit.

⁹Ojo, Olatunde, B. J. ‘Nigeria and the Formation of ECOWAS’, *International Organization*, 34. 4. Autumn. 1980.

¹⁰Ojo, ibid, p.573; Welch, C 1990. ‘The Military factor in West Africa: Leadership and Regional Development’, in Julius Okolo & Stephen Wright, eds. *West African Regional Co-operation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Brown, L. M. 1989. ‘Nigeria and the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement and Residence’, *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 27.2.

part that Ghana could challenge Nigeria in the economic sphere. If anything, Nkrumah recognised Nigeria's importance and critical centrality to any serious integration scheme. To that extent, Nkrumah gave financial, military and political support to the group of radical Nigerian politicians whose political philosophy he felt concurred with his own. For any regional integration to function, and for that matter political union to occur presupposes a concept among participating states of a sense of their interdependence, "a shared conception of *how* and *why* they need one another".¹¹ This perception of interdependence among African states was vague or virtually nonexistent in the immediate post-independence period.¹² The consequence was that most states despite the rhetoric of integration still sought closer ties with their former colonial masters.

The most important institutional blocs expressing these differences in Africa were, the Brazzaville, Casablanca, and Monrovia groups. Despite the apparent differences, a group of uncommitted, neutral states initiated diplomatic efforts to find a common forum through which Pan-Africanist issues could be discussed without recourse to group polemics. Such a forum, the neutrals anticipated, could accommodate the disparate assumptions on African unity. Through the initiatives of the neutral group of states, there was a gradual but determined endeavour by African leaders to 'submerge' their ideological differences and initiate an era of formalised interdependence.

¹¹Haas, E, 1970. 'Turbulent Fields and Theory of Regional Integration', *International Organization*, 30, Spring, and 1980. 'Why Collaborate? Issue-Linkage and International Regimes', *World Politics*, 32.

¹²Baynham, Simon. 1988. *The Military and Politics in Nkrumah's Ghana*. Boulder: Westview; Nkrumah, Kwame. 1970. *Revolutionary Path*. New York: International Publishers.

These diplomatic efforts yielded results. In May 1963, leaders of independent African states met in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, preceded by a meeting of Foreign ministers. The host, Haile Selassie, argued that “the union we seek can only come gradually as day-to-day progress, which we achieve, carries us slowly but inexorably along this course”¹³ set the tone of the meeting. Under such conservative salvos, most leaders argued for a gradual step-by-step approach to continental unity. Nkrumah’s urgent pleas for a more radical charter and the establishment of an AHC¹⁴ that could hasten the efforts towards a continental political union were ridiculed. Prior to this meeting, however, Nkrumah made an eloquent presentation of the need for continental unity and an AHC in his book, *Africa Must Unite*. He subsequently mounted a vigorous African campaign to explain the principles behind his arguments. In Nkrumah’s words:

We should aim at the establishment of a united military and defence strategy. I do not see much virtue or wisdom in our separate efforts to build up or maintain vast military forces for self defence which in any case would be ineffective in any major attack upon it¹⁵.

These arguments were not accepted before, during or after the inaugural conference of independent African states that established the OAU. At the conference and in front of his peers, Nkrumah attempted to allay the fears — by offering to subject

¹³Legum, op cit; Thompson, op cit.

¹⁴The idea of an African High Command to deal with security-related issues were first voiced in 1958 under the All-African People’s Conference sponsored by Nkrumah. For a discussion of the debates concerning the AHC, and the increasingly divergent views on regional and continental issues between Nigeria and Ghana, see the seminal work on this topic by Aluko, Olajide, (1976) *Ghana and Nigeria: A Study in Inter-African Discord* (London).

¹⁵Nkrumah, 1963, op cit, p.219.

Ghana's independence and sovereignty to any supranational organization — of the assembled leaders by arguing thus:

United we must without necessarily sacrificing our sovereignties, big or small, we can here and now forge a political union based on Defence. We need a common defence system with an African High command to ensure the stability and security of Africa.¹⁶ Despite the conservative trajectory that the conference had already chosen, Haile

Selassie attempted to placate the radical group. According to him:

Steps must be taken to establish an African Defence system. Military training for the security of the continent must be taken in common within a collective framework ... Provision must be made for the extension of speedy and effective assistance when any African state is threatened with military aggression. We cannot rely solely on international morality.¹⁷

The idea that Africa should have an integrated defence system, and the lack of consensus on this had direct impact on ECOWAS's future process. It can be argued that, ECOWAS eventually filled the void that had been created by the inability of the OAU to agree on an integrated defence mechanism.

This recommendable attempt as host to bridge the schism among the divergent factions remained only at the level of rhetoric. The adopted charter was a major victory for the moderate/conservative group. For the purposes of my analysis, two decisions agreed at the summit are particularly relevant. These were the establishments of (a) a Commission

¹⁶ibid.

¹⁷p.219.

of Mediation, Arbitration and Conciliation, and as a conciliatory gesture to Nkrumah, the setting up of (b) a Defence commission. The core Charter provision on conflict is Article 111, which will be consistently used by the OAU, and similarly employed by observers to criticize ECOWAS action in Liberia. The Charter states, among other things “non-interference in the internal affairs of States; respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each State and for its peaceful settlement of disputes by negotiation, mediation, conciliation or arbitration, unreserved condemnation, in all its forms of political assassination as well as subversive activities on the part of neighbouring States or any other State”. It is in the light of the general immobilism that defined the OAU’s responses to African conflicts, at least until 1993, that ECOWAS’s efforts at initiating a security regime should be analysed.

3.1.2 African Discourses on Security and the OAU Defence Commission

Different reasons have been presented to explain why Nkrumah’s arguments for the establishment of an AHC under the auspices of the OAU were rejected. The summit that culminated in the founding of the OAU was a major victory for the majority moderate-conservative bloc. Rather than adopt a Protocol that had the potential capability of effectively tackling the continent’s rising security-related problems, the assembled African leaders instead pacified the radical bloc by agreeing to establish a Defence commission. It is the activities of this commission and its responses to independent African states worsening military and security-related crises added to regional political and military

dynamics in the West African region, that this thesis asserts to be the driving force behind the West African security regime under ECOWAS.

3.1.3 The OAU Defence Commission 1963-1982

This section seeks to analyse the activities of the OAU's Defence commission and will situate the discussion concerning ECOWAS in its political and historical context. Such an approach will enhance the understanding of ECOWAS leaders' policies not as isolated events or as the efforts by military dictators to preserve the status quo.¹⁸ As such, sub-regional developments were as a result of the logical consequences of the need to tackle increasingly pertinent security related issues in a regional context.

The headquarters of the Defence Commission was situated at Accra, Ghana. Here, Nkrumah felt that he had an advantage of influencing the officials and the workings of the secretariat from such close proximity. At the first meeting of the commission in October 1963, three memoranda were presented to the meetings by the Ghanaian delegation advocating for a Pan-African Force.¹⁹ There were two major components to these documents that were an improvement on Nkrumah's ideas since 1958, and had probably resulted from a realisation of the need for a more diplomatic and tactical approach to the

¹⁸Inegbedion, J 1992. 'The ECOWAS Intervention in Liberia: Towards Regional Conflict management in Post Cold War Africa', paper for the Academic Committee on the United Nations System (ACUNS), Newhamphire, July.

¹⁹Fasehun, O 1980. 'Nigeria and the Issue of An African High Command: Towards as Regional and/or Continental Defence System?', *Afrika Spektrum*, 80.3.

issue of collective continental security. Under the rubric of these new proposals, Ghana argued for:

- (i) the establishment of a military organization under a single military authority accountable to the Assembly of Heads of States and Government, and
- (ii) secondly, there was to be a Supreme Command headquarters responsible to the Defence commission, and composed of Ministers of Defence of OAU member-states.

Implicit in these Ghanaian proposals was the idea that African states were already in some form of military alliance with each other or had a mutual security interest²⁰. Surprising as the Ghanaian position might seem, taking into consideration the rejection of their position at Addis Ababa, it is in fact reasonable because the discussions in 1963 had strategically left undefined and vague, the aspirations and capabilities of these commissions.²¹ At the signing ceremony of the OAU Charter, Nkrumah had refused to sign the document because of what he felt to be a myopic and conservative document. He had to be gingerly persuaded to do so by the conference host, Haile Sellassie. Nkrumah's main contention with the document as it stood was the inclusion of the inviolability of the national boundaries of member states of the OAU as fixed by former colonial masters. Earlier in 1960, Ghana's Republican constitution under Article 2 provided for the eventual surrender of Ghana's sovereignty to a union of African states. The charter document, therefore, was a hindrance to his dream of a united Africa, and the ability of African states to respond to

²⁰This was not possible as a result of different military alliances with former colonial powers.

²¹Meyers, Davis B. 1975. 'An Analysis of the OAU's Effectiveness at Regional Collective Defence', in Y. el Ayouty, ed. *The OAU After 10 Years: Comparative Perspective*. New York: Praeger, p.120.

internal conflicts.

Given the pattern of rivalry that had clouded Ghana-Nigeria relations at the time, Nigeria presented yet another version to Nkrumah's proposals. These suggested the setting up of a Permanent Military secretariat at the OAU headquarters in Ethiopia.²² The first meeting of the Defence commission recommended the establishment of an insignificantly staffed permanent military headquarters within the OAU secretariat, and suggested that Africa be divided into four military zones. These proposals were far short of the original presentations by Ghana, and again showed the moderate-radical dichotomy that had plagued continental politics before the institutionalisation of the OAU.

Instances of insecurity such as the military insurgency in Tanzania in 1964 did not convince the Council of Ministers meeting in Lagos in 1964 to heed Nkrumah's call for the establishment of an AHC²³. The increasingly conservative trajectory of norms governing post-independent African attitudes towards collective security was codified under the OAU's Charter, Article 3, that took a statist line. The resultant effect was that the emerging concepts of territoriality and sovereignty of the inherited African state militated against the establishment of a central body with legally binding powers. This omission effectively relinquished the task of resolving Africa's conflicts to non-African parties because as

²²Wolfers, A. 1976. *Politics in the Organization of African Unity* London: Polity Press; Imobighe, T. 1980. 'An African High Command: The Search for a Feasible Strategy of Continental Defence', *African Affairs*, 7 9:3.

²³Op cit, Wilson's book details a step-by-step introduction to the creation of Tanzania, and the subsequent 'mutiny', and the role played by the US and British embassies in quelling the disturbances. It has a large section of primary material dealing with telex and cable messages from London and Washington to Dar-er-Salam.

individual states, African states were not capable (a) of repulsing attacks and (b) did not have the military might to do so. A classic example was demonstrated when this meeting refused to consider the need for an AHC, and instead recommended that the discussion be taken up in the larger more conservative forum of Heads of States and Government meeting in Cairo in July 1964.

Nigeria's opposition to Ghana at Cairo, Egypt, during the 1964 OAU meeting gained the support of Tanzania's Julius Nyerere. This in reality sounded the definite death knell for Ghana's radical plans for an AHC.²⁴ The formal meeting of the Commission in 1965, in Sierra Leone, saw the presentation of an idea for the institution of a so-called African Peace Force. This was summarily rejected by Nigeria as a clever manoeuvre to slip in the concept of an "(African) High Command ... by the back door".²⁵ What came out of this meeting was an agreement by individual member states to put at the disposal of the OAU their armed forces to deter external attack. No concrete machinery was set up to deal with the practicalities that followed from such a decision.

A six-year lull in the activities of the Defence commission occurred between 1965-1971. During this period, several political and military incidents occurred in many African countries that on the surface seemed to bridge the schism among the divergent groups.²⁶

²⁴Opoku, Agyeman, 'The Osagyefo, the Mwalimu and Pan-Africanism: A Study in the Growth of a Dynamic Concept', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 13.4.

²⁵Aluko,, op cit.

²⁶Welch, op cit; Shaw, T & 'Sola Ojo, 1982. *Africa and the International Political System*. Washington: Polity Press.

During the 1971 meeting, the fourth by the commission, thirty participants representing the forty-one independent countries underwent a radical policy discourse alteration led by Nigeria. Here, Nigeria not only changed its stance on collective security as a whole, it now accepted the need for a formalised military structure based on the respective African regions.

Nigeria's *volte-face*, and reasons for advocating such a radical policy change, shocking on the surface, can possibly be explained in the light of events occurring within Nigeria itself and in the West African sub-region as a whole. Apart from an attempted Portuguese invasion of Guinea in 1970, the incidence of external aggression as has been argued elsewhere by certain writers' as a decisive factor for such radical Nigerian policy change should be found elsewhere.²⁷

Between 1971 and 1985, the Defence Commission which was supposed to deal with security issues never met. However, with respect to the specific ECOWAS developments, two statements by Sierra Leone and Ghana, probably based on their experiences with ECOWAS's efforts at creating a security regime are worth quoting at some length. In 1985, Sierra Leone argued for the formation of a "principal and permanent forum capable of responding with the required promptness and efficiency to crises that occur in the political and security sectors of the African continent".²⁸ Subsequently, in

²⁷Nwokedi, Emeka. 1992. *Regional Integration and Regional Security: ECOMOG, Nigeria and the Liberian Crisis*. Bordeaux: Centre d'étude d'Afrique noire; Ajibewa, A.I. 1994. *Regional Security in West Africa: A Comparative Study with special reference to the OAU Peacekeeping Force in Chad and the ECOMOG in Liberia*. Unpublished PhD thesis, Lancaster University, UK, pp.53-83.

²⁸ARB, 1985.

1986, Ghana pleaded for the establishment of “a viable system for our collective security in the event of external aggression and mounting peace-keeping expenditures in times of intra-African conflicts”²⁹. In evaluating the Defence commission and OAU security policies as a whole, Welch concluded that only “minimal progress had been made on either cooperative protection against civil strife or effective moves against apartheid”³⁰.

It is against this background of a continental organization that, despite the increasing levels of intra- and inter state conflicts, was unable to design and adopt concrete measures for dealing with its security issues. It was because of this failure that, the sub-regional organization option increasingly began to look attractive. Added to the changing regional and international political system, ECOWAS took the fundamentally significant decision to include defence related protocols to its original treaty in 1978 and 1981 that formed the basis for its intervention in Liberia and later Sierra Leone when they collapsed as functional states. The basis for these changes were the result of the increasing spate of violent *coups d’etat* and the incidences of externally funded mercenary attacks, first on Benin in 1973 and on Guinea in 1977.³¹

²⁹Ghana’s experience at least conforms to the excessive costs of individual state in response to security crises. *ARB*, 1986.

³⁰Inegbedion misapplies Welch in this context and creates the impression that Welch evaluates ECOWAS’s defence protocols as a “co-operative protection against civil strife”, based on which he concludes that “it is therefore not far-fetched to say that the Defence Protocol put at the disposal of ECOWAS leaders an instrument for defending the *status quo*” (his emphasis). Arguments will be presented to prove the erroneous nature of this assertion. Welch, op cit, p.172, Inegbedion, 1992, p.9.

³¹McGowan, Pat & Thomas H. Johnson. 1984. ‘African Military *Coups d’etat* and Underdevelopment: A quantitative Historical Analysis’, *Journal of Modern African History*, Vol. 22, No. 4.

3.2 The Politics of ECOWAS's Formation, Structure and Development

The following discussion will focus on the politics towards ECOWAS's formation, its structure and subsequent developments that transformed it into a security integrative scheme. Such a discussion is useful because it shows a logical development in West Africa, and continues the earlier discussions under the OAU, which did not resolve how the OAU's response to security issues should be dealt with.

This section begins with the political discourses that occurred in the aftermath of the Second World War, and immediate post-independence period from 1960. Discussions of the need for economic integration in Africa has been Eurocentric, with the efforts by western European countries to implement economic integration programmes being the archetype to follow. In the immediate post-independence period, several economic unions were formed which aspired to establish some form of economic co-operative schemes.³² While such efforts were usually among West African states, others cut across the regional divisions that were present.

Due to the dire economic situation in which several signatory states found themselves, the OAU Charter sought to "co-ordinate and intensify co-operation and efforts to achieve a better life for the peoples of Africa". In recognition of the need for rapid economic development, signatory Heads of State and Government created an Economic

³²Asante, S. K. B. 1985. *Political Economy of Regionalism: A Decade of the Economic Community of West African States*. New York: Praeger.

and Social Commission (ECOSOC) as one of the five specialised commissions of the OAU in 1965. A preparatory Economic committee was established to study the whole issue of “economic cooperation and development among member states”, in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). Among other things, the committee was charged with studying the “possibility of establishing a free trade area between the various African countries”.³³

Before these continentally induced measures, however, West African states had initiated various steps aimed at forming an embryonic integration scheme. These schemes were established under the rival blocs of Casablanca — radical, and Monrovia — conservative/moderate axis. Despite attempts made by these blocs, nothing concrete occurred until the formation of the OAU. Apart from the political rhetoric and inertia that characterised OAU meetings of the need for economic cooperation and growth nothing of essence occurred. The early 1970's seem to have been a watershed period in West African state's discussion of regional economic integration. Most of the moribund ideas that had so often been repeated began to have a new surge of life.

Although different West African states had taken diverse positions on issues of economic and political integration prior to the formation of the OAU, after 1963, an increasing merger of ideas on integration could be discerned. Two key reasons account for this. First, the first group of post-independence leaders had left the political scene by 1970. Second, the new crop of leaders had mainly military background and thus one could argue

³³Asante, *ibid.*

that a certain sense of military *esprit de corps* might have eased the discussions towards a closer West African integrative process. The fulfilment of the political dream of a West African customs union became a reality in 1975 as a result of active and effective Nigerian diplomacy, which had consistently worked on the outlines for such a union for more than a decade. Several reasons account for this major diplomatic success. Failure of its exertions with respect to the establishment of an African Common Market, and the efforts by the former French colonies in the region to establish an exclusively French *Communauté Economique de l'Afrique de l'Ouest* (CEAO) created a sense of unease in decision-making circles in Nigeria.

Togo and Nigeria were in the formation of an embryonic all-West African Economic Community (WAEC) in which oil and oil generated revenues were used as diplomatic tools in what became known in Nigerian diplomatic parlance as 'spray diplomacy'.³⁴ Nigeria's active role in the formation of ECOWAS stands in sharp contrast to Haas' assertion that hegemons, "confident that their size and resource base makes them relatively independent of their regional powers" take virtually no interest or only slight interest in regional integration.³⁵

Added to a favourable convergence of interests among military-civilian leaders in the region, and emerging norms and principles among what can be depicted as a West

³⁴Some of the reasons for Nigeria's strenuous efforts at establishing ECOWAS was its realisation of the failure of its African diplomatic efforts during the civil war. Both France and Côte d'Ivoire supported the Biafran cause during the civil war. The need to undermine French influence and interests similarly played a crucial role.

³⁵Haas, op cit.

African Heads of State Club (WAHC). This complex interplay of factors played a crucial role in the eventual consent of the sub-regional leaders to formalise economic cooperation by establishing ECOWAS. Of the fifteen original signatory states, eight were headed by military leaders and the remaining seven by civilians.³⁶ Not only did the convergence of military leaders create a favourable climate for cooperation, but also the very political climate in the sub-region augured for structured cooperation.

In November 1976, ECOWAS member states ratified the central protocols of the Treaty in Lome, Togo. Despite the differences that had characterised the pan-African movement in the immediate post-independence period, the new generation of ECOWAS Treaty signatory leaders and states paid homage to the more radical pan-Africanist ideas presented by Nkrumah. In the Treaty's preamble, ECOWAS states anticipated the "creation of a homogenous society, leading to the unity of the countries of West Africa".³⁷ The establishment of ECOWAS, in several aspects mirrors the aims of the Preferential Trade Area (PTA) of East Africa although, crucially, its organ's possess no supranational powers as that envisaged by Nkrumah with respect to the OAU. The central organs are the Authority of Heads of State and Government (HSG), the Council of Ministers (CM), the Executive Secretariat (ES), a Tribunal and several technical and specialised commissions. The essence of ECOWAS's economic rationales for its integrative schemes are clearly spelt out in Article 2 (1) of the Treaty. It sought to:

³⁶Agyeman-Duah & Ojo, O. 1991. 'Interstate Conflicts in West Africa: The Reference Group Theory Perspective' *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 3, October; Welch, op cit.

³⁷ECOWAS Treaty, 28 May 1975: Preamble.

promote co-operation and development in all fields... for the purpose of raising the standard of living of its peoples, and of increasing and maintaining economic stability, of fostering closer relations among its members.

The major rationale, therefore, for establishing ECOWAS gravitated more towards the anticipated accumulation of economic gains, which would improve and facilitate the economic development of the sub-region. Encompassed in this philosophy is what John Sloan has described as 'developmental regionalism'; that is, an integrative scheme that aims at speeding the development of 'both the member-states and the geographical region' as a whole.³⁸

For the purposes of the thesis, the Treaty also provided that the community should by stages ensure "such other activities calculated to further the aims of the Community as the member states may from time to time undertake in common" (Article 9 (2)). Added to this, the Authority is also empowered to establish other commissions "as it deems necessary" (Article 9 (2)). The inclusion of security related protocols were a progression from the economic rationales underpinning the economic integrative scheme. Thus, under the provisions provided by the Treaty, ECOWAS's leaders were empowered to make extensions to the original Treaty as and when the Authority saw appropriate. The implications of this addition was that it enables ECOWAS leaders to respond to situations on the sub-region that needed the expansion of the original Treaty objectives without having

³⁸1971. 'The Strategy of Developmental Regionalism: Benefits, Distribution, Obstacles and Capabilities', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 10, December.

to go through a whole re-negotiation process.

Within the first few years of its conceptualisation phase, several schemes dealing with diverse issues and topics were put in place. At its inception, three stages were designated for fulfilling the aims of ECOWAS. Stage One, lasting two years, was to be devoted to fact-finding and organization of community institutions. Stage Two lasting eight years was to result in the gradual elimination of customs duties and quantitative restrictions in accordance with a schedule to be agreed upon in a protocol. Stage Three lasting five years was a period for the abolition of existing differences in member states' external tariffs. Under Article 4 of the Treaty establishing ECOWAS, four main organs were established. The main policy-making institutions are the Authority of Heads of State and Government, the Fund, Executive Secretariat and the Council of Ministers. This meets twice a year and is composed of two ministers from each member state. Its responsibilities are to monitor the functioning of the community. Four specialised and technical commissions were initially established: (i) Trade, Customs, Immigration, Monetary and Payments Commission; (ii) Agriculture, Industry and Natural Resources Commission; (iii) Transport, Telecommunications and Energy; (iv) Social and Cultural Affairs.

With the initiation of processes towards a security regime, the Defence commission was included as one of the Technical commissions. This is important because by designating this commission as such, it could then draw-in different experts to analyse the security situation of West Africa and define response strategies. Characteristic of ECOWAS, the Defense commission was never formally established.

For the specific transformation of ECOWAS into a security mechanism, two

protocols are important and central for my later discussions. These were the 1978 Protocol on Non-Aggression³⁹ and its supplement in 1981, the Protocol on Mutual Assistance on Defence (PMAD) with their respective operative articles. By promulgating these treaties, West African states created the formal framework for dealing with their security-related problems. These marked a significant change in efforts at managing the sub-region's security predicament. What was unclear was ECOWAS's ability to manage these changes peacefully.⁴⁰

ECOWAS's economic rationalities were in obvious disregard, superficially, at least, to the political and security dilemmas of the region. The first steps towards a security discussion was started by the Senegalese leader, Sedar Senghor, who argued that "development cannot be secured in a climate of insecurity, [and] this being so, we must among ourselves, establish a genuine West African solidarity pact to guard against external aggression". His Togolese colleague, Gnassingbe Eyadema concurred, seeing a security pact as "a logical follow-up to the signing of the non-aggression treaty".

Several of the above questions impacted on the perception of West African leaders in several ways. First, this concerned the dangers of political and military instability and its impact on the attainment of economic integration and the subsequent envisaged

³⁹ECOWAS Protocol on Non-Aggression; Weber, M.1997. Hierarchy Amidst Anarchy: A Transactions Cost Approach to International Security Cooperation', *International Studies Quarterly*, vol.41, pp.321-323.

⁴⁰ Holsti, Kalevi. 1996. *The State, War and the State of War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press., pp.212-215.

development.⁴¹ The ECOWAS Treaty was in fact supplemented in 1978 by a Protocol on Non-Aggression which accepted and recognised the fact that the Community “cannot attain its objectives save in an atmosphere of peace”.⁴² Secondly, there was grudging recognition from sub-regional leaders that the causes of sub-regional instability were not, as earlier supposed, from external threats.⁴³ This realisation led to strengthening the resolve of the Authority in what Ernst Haas has succinctly characterised as “a shared conception of how and why they need one another.”⁴⁴

Despite the failure to fulfil its original goals, ECOWAS moved on to a different set of goals. However, despite the failure to improve West African economies, Michael Brown argues that ECOWAS has some further potential for development in terms of its ability to respond to its security problems. It is within this context of invisible improvements in trade that Brown sees ECOWAS’s intervention in Liberia as a significant move into the political sphere through establishing its joint peacekeeping force in Liberia since 1990.⁴⁵ In seeking to understand how this transformatory process has occurred since 1988,⁴⁶ I define

⁴¹ECOWAS Protocol on Non-Aggression, 1976, Article 2.

⁴²ECOWAS Protocol on Non-Aggression, Article 2.

⁴³McGowan & Johnson, op cit.; Welch, op cit; Weiss, T. M. & Kessler, A. M. eds., 1991. *Third World Security in the Post Cold War Era*. London: Lynne Reinner, p.13.

⁴⁴Haas, op cit., p.186.

⁴⁵Brown, Michael. 1995. *Africa’s Choices: After Thirty Years of the World Bank*. London: Penguin Books. pp.141-142.

⁴⁶Okolo, 1985, op cit, p.136ff; Archer, Clive. 1992. *International Organizations*. London: Routledge.

transformation as a process of moving from one stage of integration to the other⁴⁷. This will be in line with Lindberg and Scheingold's assertion of transformatory processes as comprising "specific and general obligations that are beyond the bounds of the original treaty commitments". Typically, it "entails a major change in the scope of the community or in its institutions that often require an entirely new constitutive bargaining process among member states entailing substantial goal redefinition among national political actors".

By transformation, I am basically referring to the dynamics of ECOWAS's transition from economic to political integration through negotiating processes, which led to the two security-related protocols and the eventual establishment of the Standing Mediation Committee — SMC — that led the intervention into Liberia. It subsequently established the peace-keeping unit, ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group, — ECOMOG. — to intervene in the Liberian conflict. It is the politics and negotiations around the decision to establish these organs, and their subsequent responses to on-going policies in Liberia and later, Sierra Leone, that constitute the core of what this thesis sees as an on-going transformational process. My analysis will also include the interrelationship between these critical institutions and the *ad hoc* institutional offshoots of the intervention, the role of epistemic communities, and the negotiation process.

Among what Hurrell sees as the four important characteristics of "new

⁴⁷I have used 'integration' here in the context of the formation of new political authority in the West African sub-region. This ties in with my earlier presentation of regimes in the sense that it comprises a complex network of transnational institutions, procedures, norms, values and processes. Through such a process, member-states and their actors are connected by their common cultural identity and this endeavour to launch and institutionalize processes for collective resolution of common dilemmas. This does not make integration synonymous with a security regime.

regionalism”, two are of particular salience to my analysis of ECOWAS’s transformation. First, is the multidimensional character of new regionalism. Here, the dichotomy between economic and political regionalism is blurred as new regionalism is spurred on both by the end of the Cold war and the decentralisation or regionalisation of security concerns. Secondly, new regionalism has a wider variation in the level of institutionalism, consciously, avoiding the institutional and bureaucratic structures of traditional international organization and the regionalist model represented by the European Union.

Several questions will inform and guide the subsequent discussion in interpreting the dynamics of the assumed transformation towards political integration and how they relate to regime formation and consolidation. Critical to my perception of ECOWAS’s transformation are the significant questions of *why* and *how* this transformation occurred? What motivations accounted for this transformation? It also attempts a logical interconnection between the rhetoric of the immediate post-independence African discussions on security and ECOWAS’s factual establishment of a structured security mechanism.

3.3 Conclusion

What this chapter has demonstrated is that the inclusion of security-related Protocols to ECOWAS original Treaty was a logical political developmental process. In this chapter, the discussion has shown that while the initial addition of security protocols were criticised, taking a historical view of the processes that went on before the

establishment of the OAU and in the post-OAU phase has demonstrated the logical processes involved in ECOWAS development. The discussion has shown that in spite of the initial differences among Africa's original post-independence leaders, the security dilemmas faced by West African states helped to bridge whatever schisms were to be found in their political thinking on close integration. Also, while the processes towards the establishment of ECOWAS, led by Nigeria, was fraught with the Anglo- and Francophone divide, the aim of a closer West Africa seem to have held sway and contributed to the eventual formation of ECOWAS as an economic integrative scheme. This notwithstanding, the political and security developments on the sub-region led to specific protocols that dealt with these issues. Finally, the analysis has argued that ECOWAS has been transformed and this transformation has imparted vitality and optimism to the organization.

Several conclusions can be drawn from the analysis above, of the negotiation process, starting from the initial presentation of the security protocol idea until the establishment of the Committee of Nine. One is that during Council negotiations, recommendations do not have a particularly bright chance of success unless at least a major actor supports it on the sub-region - Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria or Senegal. Reviewing the development of the original ECOWAS scheme and the subsequent inclusion of the security-related protocols, even when the relationships among these major actors are clearly not amiable, proposals from them or supported by any one of them had a better chance of being adopted (Interview, Tom Ikimi, Lagos, 4 July 1997). However, as has been shown, at least with the negotiations towards the formal acceptance of the ECOMOG option (both military and diplomatic), as a corollary to formal negotiations, informal bilateral

sessions among governments did take place before such sessions. The critical techniques of operation are the exploration for compromise and, in certain cases, the deferment of resolutions that may threaten deep-seated national interests.

The essence of the conclusion is as to whether such transformation will contribute to ECOWAS's ability to manage decisively, the political test case confronting the organization in the post-Cold war period; namely the collapse of Liberia and Sierra Leone as functional states and subsequent intervention. The chapter explained critically the nexus between ECOWAS's transformation from an economic to a security set-up.