Beyond The Promotion Of Economic Cooperation: The Economic Community Of West African States Peacekeeping Involvements In West Africa

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Abstract

In order to raise the living standards of its people, maintain and improve economic stability, foster relations among Member States, and contribute to the advancement and development of the African continent, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was established. Its goal is to promote cooperation and integration that will result in the creation of an economic union in West Africa. According to a set of guiding principles, such as impartiality, the parties' consent, and the non-use of force unless necessary for self-defense, a third party intervention known as "peacekeeping" is conducted. The study examines the role played by ECOWAS in preserving stability and peace on the African continent, focusing in particular on the ECOMOG intervention in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea Bissau. The regional security complex theory was accepted. The research was qualitative, and its historical analysis heavily drew on secondary sources. The essence of the resolutions of the UN Security Council and the ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council, and consequently the legal foundation for peacekeeping and peace enforcement are contained in peace agreements. As a result, peace agreements are essential to the management and resolution of conflicts. However, it is erroneous to assume that the heads of armed factions are sane political actors motivated by genuine grievances and that they will thereby agree to mediated agreements. The offering of carrots (the confidence-building approach) must therefore be combined with strong diplomacy supported by a credible enforcement capacity in order for peace to be successfully implemented in the West African region. The study recommends, among other things, that the framework for the ECOWAS legal system governing peace and security should be the member states. This is because the majority of democracies in the sub-region elect postcolonial states with a predominance of coloniality of power disguising itself as democracy and causing conflicts in the majority of countries within the West African security complex, ECOWAS must exert pressure on its member states to step up their efforts to improve democracy in their respective countries.

Keywords: *ECOWAS, peacekeeping, regional integration, regional security complex theory*

Introduction

Africa's foreign policy has been influenced by the allure of regionalism as a form of regional cooperation and integration where countries have common political, economic, and

security interests. The aggressive efforts of such architects of regional integration and the establishment of an African peace and security mechanism have generally been attributed to the marginalization of Africa following the end of the Cold War, along with the vicious cycle of poverty, underdevelopment, disease, and internal conflicts (Abbas, 2017). In preventing internal conflicts in Africa from reoccurring and assisting in the reduction of violence in many West African nations, the UN and the international community only took a passive role. Sub-regional organizations, like the Economic Community of the West African States (ECOWAS) intervened in numerous countries to put an end to the fighting between various factions and try to find a peaceful solution to these conflicts due to the perceived inadequacy of their combined response. ECOWAS has become a new player in West Africa's regional response to security issues. ECOWAS was once solely concerned with economic development. As a result, ECOWAS has undergone a number of changes over the years in order to increase its efficiency in meeting the demands of securing peace and stability in the sub-region (Eugene & Abdussalam, 2022).

The problems of incessant violence and killing of people in the sub-region organized by militant terror, ethnic groups, rebel and religious groups demanding social justice, sustainable development, and economic empowerment have called for global attention as it is already taking a toll on global security and international economy issues in African nations and, if not properly investigated, will cast a negative image for cooperation by this stakeholder in the region. The escalation of conflicts in Africa, as well as the inability of Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) to resolve them, continues to be a major challenge for African governments, ECOWAS, and the United Nations. Peacekeeping has taken a central role in the international community's response to many complex violent conflicts, including those in Africa, since the end of the Cold War. As a result, peacekeeping is increasingly mentioned by conflict management theorists as a crucial tool for transforming conflicts for the better. Conflicts of this kind have resurfaced as a result of this. Another issue is that the international community has been slow to provide timely funding for PKO in the African Continent. The lack of mechanisms to deal with such instances of indiscipline among its troops was clear evidence of ECOWAS's lack of readiness to participate in peacekeeping missions. The inability of ECOMOG to apply the lessons learned in Liberia to

the Sierra Leone operation and other interventions may have been one of the major failures; as a result, these mistakes were made again in Sierra Leone (Zartman 2015).

The ECOWAS intervention in Liberia under the aegis of ECOMOG is without doubt historic, despite the antagonisms and sporadic failures in politics, diplomacy, and the military. This is especially true because, in contrast to the UN, ECOMOG lacked both the institutional and structural mechanisms for maintaining peace. However, the group ultimately succeeded in this crucial mission despite the limitations of its members, competing national interests, and the complexities of the civil war's ethnic nature. However, it should be noted that without the support of the United Nations, the operation's outcome would have been more challenging. In order to achieve this goal, it might be argued that a regional effort to address regional issues with the aid of the international community could serve as a model for the "New International World Order" (Kwaja, 2017). In light of the aforementioned, this study examines ECOWAS's role in maintaining stability and peace on the African continent. A focus on ECOMOG's military and peacekeeping operations serves as the foundation for assessing ECOWAS's overall effectiveness in maintaining peace and security.

Literature Review

Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

There is no doubt that the widespread trend toward some kind of regional economic grouping in both developed and developing nations is a result of a growing understanding of the significance of economic interdependence for promoting the economic well-being of these peoples as well as for resolving and making easier some of the challenging economic issues that individual countries face; even developed nations, who avoided regional integration in the 1950s, have since changed their opinions and behavior. For instance, the European Coal and Steel Community and the European Common Market were established in 1952 and 1957, respectively. These were some of the forerunners to the modern European Union and European Economic Community. Regional integration has also been supported by the UN. In fact, developing nations were urged to continue their efforts to implement plans for sub-regional and regional development in the Resolution on the International Development Strategy for the Second UN Development Decade (Udogu, 1999). It has also been acknowledged that developing countries'

increased independence and cooperation will strengthen their position in the new global economic order. Initiatives launched by the Economic Commission for Africa can be linked to the genesis of the concept of regional economic grouping in West Africa. On several occasions, the Commission has called meetings for the representatives of the various African nations. A few of these conferences include the Niamey Conference on Economic Cooperation in October 1963, the Lagos Conference on Industrial Coordination in West Africa in November 1963, and the Accra Conference in April 1967, where the Article of Association for the creation of an Economic Community for West Africa was signed. The Protocol establishing the West African Regional group was signed at a meeting of the heads of state of the West African group in 1968 in Monrovia, Liberia. The preparation of priority studies of potential areas of cooperation by Nigeria and Guinea was the only accomplishment of the group. Trade, transportation, communication, education, information exchange and culture, research, health, energy, and heavy industries were the areas of cooperation that were agreed upon. Numerous attempts at regional cooperation have failed, but this hasn't stopped the leaders of West Africa from looking for other ways to work together. To this end, Togo and Nigeria made a concerted effort to establish regional economic cooperation.

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was founded when the heads of state and government of fifteen West African nations signed the ECOWAS Treaty on May 28, 1975, in Lagos, Nigeria. With the stated goal of fostering regional economic integration, the 15 Heads of State and Government of Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Sénégal, and Togo signed the Treaty of Lagos. The minister of foreign affairs spoke on behalf of the president of Senegal. In 1977, Cabo Verde acceded to the union. Mauritania, the only member who speaks Arabic, withdrew in December 2000. In August 2017, Mauritania formally ratified a new associate membership agreement. The ECOWAS region is made up of the following countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Sénégal, and Togo. Its total area is 5.2 million square kilometers.

ECOWAS was established to promote the ideal of collective self-sufficiency for its member states and is regarded as one of the cornerstones of the African Economic Community. As a trading union, it also aims to unite all nations into a single, sizable trading bloc. The region has a combined GDP of $734.8 billion, and integrated economic activities are those that revolve around industry, transportation, telecommunications, energy, agriculture, natural resources, commerce, monetary and financial issues, social as well as cultural issues, among other things. The ECOWAS Secretariat became a Commission in 2007. The Commission, which is led by the President and includes seasoned bureaucrats who are leading this new direction, is also assisted by a Vice President, thirteen Commissioners, and the Auditor-General of ECOWAS Institutions. For its second meeting, the United States-ECOWAS Trade and Investment Framework Agreement Council were hosted by USTR in September 2016. A review of current initiatives supporting common trade and investment goals, a vision for the medium- to long-term trade relationship between ECOWAS and the US, and expanding ECOWAS-US trade and investment cooperation to new areas were among the subjects covered in the discussion.The community's goals include the following:

i.   The unification and coordination of national policies, as well as the promotion of integration initiatives, projects, and programs, particularly in the areas of trade, money and finance, taxation, and economic reform policies, as well as human resources, education, information, culture, science, and technology, services, health, tourism, and legal issues;

ii.   The encouragement of the creation of joint production enterprises;

iii.   Harmonization and coordination of environmental policy;

iv.   The creation of a common market using;

v.   The liberalization of trade through the elimination of non-tariff trade barriers and customs duties imposed on imports and exports between Member States in order to create a free trade area at the Community level;

vi.   The removal of barriers to the free movement of people, goods, services, and capital, as well as the right of residence and establishment, between Member States;

vii.   The adoption of a common external tariff and the adoption of a common trade policy with regard to third countries;

viii.   The establishment of an economic union through the adoption of common policies in the economic, financial, social, and cultural sectors, as well as the creation of a monetary union;

ix.   The encouragement of joint ventures by businesses in the private sector and other business actors, particularly through the adoption of a regional agreement on international investments;

x.   The adoption of measures to promote the integration of the private sectors, particularly by fostering the growth of small and medium-sized businesses;

xi.   Creating a favorable legal climate;

xii.   Harmonizing national investment laws to enable the adoption of a single Community investment law;

xiii.   Harmonization of measurements and standards. The promotion of balanced development of the region, paying attention to the special problems of each Member State particularly those of landlocked and small island Member States;

xiv.   The adoption of a Community population policy that takes into account the need for a balance between demographic factors and socioeconomic development;

xv.   The encouragement and strengthening of relationships and the promotion of information flow, particularly among rural populations, women's and youth organizations and socio-professional organizations like associations of the media.

The Concept of Peacekeeping

Without peace, societal progress and human security are demonstrably impossible, according to the cumulative human experience over time. But peace isn't just the absence of conflict and commotion; it also refers to how justice is carried out. This explains why Martin Luther King Jr. claimed in 1968 that people have started to place a high value on peace. Whether you focus on the French Revolution, the Nigerian Civil War, or the Darfur (Sudan) War, the same narrative holds true: violence and war "kill" peace, destroy property and human lives, impede development, and divert resources away from development to wage wars (Adar, 2004). A few guiding principles serve as the foundation for the concept of peacekeeping, including the consent of the parties engaged in hostilities, the limitation of the use of force to self-defense, and most importantly, claims of impartiality. It is well known that these principles, which serve as the cornerstones of traditional peacekeeping, have proven challenging in numerous intra-state conflict situations (Carment & James, 1998; Gambari, 2001; Offu & Iroh, 2019). The goal of "peacekeeping" is to ensure that a society that was once hostile returns to peace. It entails using civilian, police, and military personnel primarily as a model for enforcing cease-fires between the belligerents. The peacekeepers' task is to establish the conditions necessary to prevent hostility between and among parties to a conflict. Mutual respect for each other's freedoms and rights is essential to maintaining peace while working to ensure that the long-lasting peaceful relations in war-torn nations are restored or maintained (De-Coning, Aoi, & Karlsrud, 2017).

A peacekeeping organization, according to James (James, 1990:1), is "a traditional-looking military force, composed of several battalions and the command of a commander". The commander is chosen by the international organization that designed the operation, and he or she answers to them. The different national armies from which the battalions were detached or supplied will have accomplished this. When ethnic groups are engaged in violent conflict, Ryan (1995) argues that peacekeeping is frequently the most urgent and crucial of all peace strategies because it is the only one that directly addresses the warriors on all sides who are engaged in mutual destruction. Ryan claims that until this violent behavior stops, all attempts at resolution will be ineffective. Peacekeeping is therefore more of a palliative than a cure and only offers temporary relief.

An effective pursuit of collective security and maintenance of world peace are the goals of a peacekeeping mission. Collective security can be interpreted to mean that every member of the international system has a duty to aid in preventing and/or eliminating an unexpected development in the system in its most basic sense. This assertion implies that any member state in need must be helped, in other words (Omede, 1994). According to the constitution, peacekeeping operations are prohibited (Hultman, Kathman, & Shannon 2013). This does not imply that maintaining peace is a bad idea. Since they are frequently used to deal with crises, peacekeeping missions theoretically have the status of a legal instrument. International experts haven't offered a solid theoretical foundation for the growth of the peacekeeping mission because the acceptability issue existed in the mission from the beginning. Despite this, because conflicts are only occasionally managed, the UN Secretary General frequently creates supporting documents for the Security Council that has been helpful resources (Muritala et al., 2017). According to Onoja (1996), a peacekeeping mission is an operation that uses military personnel but has no legal standing to uphold international peace and security in conflict zones. In order for peacekeeping to be successful, according to this argument, three principles must be carefully taken into account: consent, cooperation, and acceptance by all parties. Another way to look at peacekeeping is as a conflict management strategy whose main objectives are to reduce hostility, manage global conflicts, or prevent conflicts from spiraling out of control. Negotiations on a government, political, or diplomatic level cannot begin until peacekeepers have created such a secure environment.

ECOWAS Peacekeeping and Conflict Stabilization Interventions in Bad Neighbourhood

According to Human Rights Watch (1993) and the Integrated Regional Information Network for West Africa (1998), the ECOMOG has significantly contributed to the peace and security of the sub-region by carrying out peacekeeping operations in other nations. Therefore, the ECOMOG's role can be used to explain the relative stability in West Africa's security complexes (Pitts, 1999). It is noteworthy that the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of sovereign states was disregarded in order for ECOWAS to achieve its goals of economic integration. The Mano River region had never experienced a near-genocide before

(Osadolor, 2011; Birikorang, 2013). The large ECOWAS member states made a contribution by utilizing the supranational organization to manage security concerns in small states that were deemed harmful to the sub-region. The ECOWAS security architecture has proven to be effective at different times in putting an end to hostilities between warring groups, ensuring that parties to conflicts do not disregard the laws of war and the protection of non-combatants, and guiding the subregion's transition to democracy (Obi, 2009; Maiangwa, 2015; Okere, 2015).

The brutal Liberian civil war of 1989 was the catalyst that made ECOWAS leaders realize they could no longer ignore the need to create a regional mechanism for peace, security, and conflict management. The Liberian civil war had devastating regional repercussions, including a significant influx of refugees into nearby nations, widespread population displacement within Liberia, flagrant violations of human rights, mass killings, and extensive property destruction (Francis, 2000). A humanitarian catastrophe that directly endangered regional peace and security was directly caused by the brutal and bloody civil war. Charles Taylor, the head of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), led the civil war against President Samuel Doe's brutal dictatorship. Other West African nations like Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso, as well as Colonel Gaddaffi of Libya, supported Charles Taylor's insurgency. However, despite the unfolding humanitarian catastrophe, the international community did not act immediately when the Liberian civil war broke out. The United States (US), which had a special relationship with Liberia, was preoccupied with the international coalition fighting Saddam Hussein's Iraq in the Gulf War during this time. With its new post-Cold War responsibilities for maintaining global peace and security, the United Nations (UN) was also overburdened. This perception of international neglect of Africa provided Nigeria, the sub-regional hegemon, with the opportunity to assume military and political leadership in the management and resolution of the Liberian conflict (Francis, 2006).

In Sierra Leone: Soon after the Liberian Civil War became apparent, the Revolutionary United Front, led by Corporal Foday Sankoh, launched an offensive against the All Peoples Congress (APC) party government, led by President Joseph Momoh, in the neighboring country of Sierra Leone. In addition to overt support from Gaddaffi's Libya, Burkina Faso, and Côte d'Ivoire, Charles Taylor's NPFL also provided direct support for the RUF rebellion (Francis,

2000). As a result, in 1990, Charles Taylor opposed the use of Sierra Leonean soil to support ECOMOG's military operations in Liberia. Taylor threatened to attack Sierra Leone because he believed that it was a major obstacle to him being elected president of Liberia. The ECOWAS and ECOMOG intervention in Sierra Leone was prompted by the military coup carried out in May 1997 by the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), which was headed by Major Johnny Paul Koroma (Obi, 2009). The signing of peace treaties like those in Abidjan (1996), Conakry (1997), and Lomé (1999) and the deployment of UN peacekeeping missions like the UN Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL, 1998) and UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL, 1999) were made possible by the ECOWAS Peace Plan for Sierra Leone (Francis, 2006).

The AFRC military junta was overthrown and President Kabbah's administration was reinstated in March 1998 as a result of the Nigerian-led ECOMOG II peace enforcement intervention. Because this was the first time a military junta was overthrown in the name of democracy and constitutional order, the Nigerian-led pro-democracy intervention in Sierra Leone was not only a significant development in the political history of West Africa but also had significant implications for the international relations of ECOWAS and Africa in general (Obi, 2009). Nothing more than an effort to improve the damaged domestic and international reputation of Nigeria, particularly its military leader General Abacha, was made in the "defence of democracy" in Sierra Leone or the attempt to restore Haitian President Aristide in 1994 in American fashion (Francis, 2000). Generals Babangida and Abacha's military government in Nigeria overturned the people's desire for democracy by nullifying the results of the general elections held on June 12, 1993. They also repressed all democratic forces in the nation, leading to Nigeria's suspension from the Commonwealth in 1995. Why would General Abacha defend democracy denied in his own country if he lacked democratic credentials and legitimacy? The civil war in Sierra Leone gave the Nigerian military leader the chance to repair his damaged international reputation and establish his domestic democratic credentials (Obi, 2009). General Abacha's pro-democracy expedition in Sierra Leone was a plot to increase his international stature and intimidate his detractors, especially following the political end to the Liberian civil war in 1997. The British military intervention (Operation Palliser) and the joint deployment of

ECOMOG and UNAMSIL helped to create the favorable conditions for the end of the civil war in 2001 and the establishment of a power-sharing government (Francis, 2006).

In Côte d'Ivoire: Côte d'Ivoire, long referred to as the 'oasis of peace and prosperity' in a region troubled by armed conflicts and political instability, became a clear example of the bad neighborhood dynamics and the spillover of civil conflicts in West Africa. General Robert Guei, the head of the army, led a military coup against President Bedie in December 1999. Following a period of rule, General Guei organized democratic elections. However, his attempt to rig the results in his favor sparked a people's revolution, which ultimately forced General Guei out of office (Obi, 2009). In the general elections held in October 2000, Laurent Gbagbo of the Front Populaire Ivoirien (FPI) was declared the victor. Guei and Gbagbo's supporters frequently clashed and were unstable, which eventually resulted in a military coup in September 2002 and the start of a civil war (Francis, 2006). The nation split in two, with the pro-government south being ruled by government forces and supporters and the north-west being ruled by three rebel factions, including the Movement Patriotique de Côte d'Ivoire (MPCI), Ivorian Popular Movement for the Far West (MPIGO), and the so-called New Forces - Movement for Justice and Peace (MJP). The MPCI is the main rebel group. Other rebel factions include the MPIGO and the Western Yacouba ethnic group. The Linas-Marcoussis Accord, which established a ceasefire that was largely supported by the rebels but opposed by government supporters, was signed in January 2003 as a result of the French-mediated peace negotiations. The peace accord called for the establishment of a transitional power-sharing government that would include both rebel and opposition political parties. The UN Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (MINUCI) and the deployment of French and ECOWAS peacekeepers were both made possible by the ceasefire. The deployment of ECOMICI (ECOMOG IV), a largely Francophone peacekeeping mission, and the establishment of a power-sharing government between the New Forces rebels and the government were made possible by the ECOWAS Peace Plan for Côte d'Ivoire (Francis, 2006).

In Guinea Bissau: ECOMOG was forced to engage in yet another regional peacekeeping and conflict management endeavor when the civil war in Guinea Bissau broke out in 1998. By jeopardizing the regional peace and security as well as the national security of the states that were immediately neighboring it, Senegal and Guinea, this civil war strengthened the

impression of a bad neighborhood. Guinea and Senegal, both of which were already hosting thousands of refugees from the conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone, were ill-prepared for the effects of yet another sizable influx of refugees from Bissau (Francis, 2000). Nigeria, the ECOWAS Authority's chair at the time, was contacted by President Vieira to send military assistance to help resolve the conflict. ECOWAS Foreign and Defence Ministers meeting in Abidjan in July 1998 made the following recommendations in response to Vieira's request: "affirmed support of the democratically elected government of President Vieira and the need to restore his authority, employing a combination of dialogue, sanctions, and use of force," and the creation of an ECOWAS Committee of Seven to carry out the decisions. The Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP) had already mediated a cease-fire between the warring factions by the time the committee could meet in Accra, Ghana, in August (Obi, 2009). A ceasefire agreement was subsequently signed between the parties following a joint ECOWAS-CPLP meeting in August in Praia, Cape Verde, which also called for the deployment of an international observer force to oversee the agreement. The persistent fighting for control of the capital city, however, led to the collapse of the Praia agreement. In December 1998, the ECOMOG peacekeeping force under Togolese leadership was sent out with a Chapter VI mandate as a result of ECOWAS peace mediation (Francis, 2006).

The effectiveness of ECOWAS in maintaining peace and security depends on the leadership of the regional organization and lead nations, particularly the dominant state, Nigeria. The 1970s administration of General Yakubo Gowan in Nigeria was essential to the creation of ECOWAS. Similar to how General Babangida's leadership was crucial in establishing ECOMOG. In the 1990s, ECOWAS was able to get involved in regional peace, conflict, and security issues thanks to the political leadership of important West African figures, particularly the then-military head of Nigeria, General Babangida. General Babangida successfully oversaw the formation of ECOMOG as a military dictator with overwhelming financial resources, political clout, and military power. He did so by citing the necessity of Nigeria's foreign and security policy as the rationale for the creation of the regional peacekeeping and intervention force. The remaining ECOWAS members were merely asked to back the "regional initiative," and those that were hesitant primarily the Francophone states were cajoled and "bribed" with

preferential oil shipments to persuade them to take part in the regional military expedition (Francis, 2000).

What are the practical effects of ECOWAS's leadership in terms of peace and security? Dr. Abass Bundu and Dr. Mohamed Ibn Chambers served as the two proactive Executive Secretaries of ECOWAS between 1990 and 2003. The effectiveness of their leadership made it possible to implement the political commitments of the ECOWAS heads of state and government, including the effort to mediate the political settlement of the civil wars in West Africa, into military and operational peacekeeping and peace support operations deployment. The civil war peace agreements that resulted in the administration and political resolution of the wars in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Côte d'Ivoire involved both Executive Secretaries. The caliber of leadership may be more crucial at the military level of ECOMOG peacekeeping and conflict resolution. Nine ECOWAS Field Commanders were appointed by the organization between 1990 and 1998; their effectiveness in carrying out the peace and security mandate in each of the war-torn nations varied. Maj. Gen. Dongoyaro (Nigerian) took over for Lt. Gen. Quainoo (Ghanaian) following the disaster of September 1990, when Samuel Doe, the de facto president of Liberia, was killed by the INPFL (Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia) after being captured under the watchful eyes of ECOMOG. Dongoyaro quickly gained a reputation as a no-nonsense military peace enforcer in Liberia. Despite the fact that ECOMOG's initial peacekeeping deployment was given a Chapter VI mandate, Gen. Dongoyaro was frequently ready, based on the military needs on the ground and without the consent of his political masters, to expand the mandate of ECOMOG to peace enforcement in a desperate attempt to bring some level of stability and order to the war-torn country. Similar to this, between December 1996 and January 1998, Maj. Gen. Victor Malu was sent to Sierra Leone to oversee ECOMOG's peacekeeping operations at the height of that country's brutal civil war. In Sierra Leone, it is widely acknowledged that President Kabbah's military leadership of ECOMOG during this time forced the RUF to the negotiating table and resulted in the restoration of President Kabbah's government. Academics disagree over whether agency or structure matter more to the efficiency of foreign policy and regional organizations in responding to issues of peace and security.

Peacekeeping efforts are followed by peace enforcement. Peace enforcement is required when peacekeeping fails to achieve its intended goals of bringing conflicting parties to a point of restraint. As a result, enforcing peace entails employing a variety of coercive techniques, including the use of force, particularly in situations involving a threat, a breach of the peace, or aggression. Given that the situation surrounding the relationship between the parties to the conflict is becoming or has become precarious and, more importantly, there is a violation of human rights and freedom of the people, peace enforcement as a technique is intended to end hostility and, before it comes into operation, the Security Council must approve of it (De-Coning, 2017). The aim is to eliminate existential threats to life and property that are thought to affect or have a propensity to spread to other states in the sub-region. However, a recognized existential threat that is justified and calls for extraordinary measures to address it must exist before peacekeeping or peace enforcement is implemented (Waever, 1995; Agbo, Lenshie, & Boye, 2018). In addition to being essential to ECOWAS's regulation of security in West Africa, security, peacekeeping, and peace enforcement are also the cornerstones of achieving economic growth and development through trade relations. It is clear that using force to prevent violent intrastate conflict constitutes a fundamental breach of impartiality. James (2001) contends that peacekeepers are more likely to become targets during intrastate conflicts than they are to serve as mediators. By contrast, Betts (2006) contends that if forceful intervention takes a limited form, it cannot be expected to maintain objectivity. According to him, intervention will only result in stability in cases where the outside power seizes total control of the conflict and imposes a peace agreement. Smaller-scale interventions carried out with the aim of impartiality will typically prevent either belligerent from defeating the other, but they won't stop the rivals from going to war to try.

ECOWAS and the Challenges of Regulation of Regional Security

There have been difficulties in the ECOWAS' efforts to maintain and enforce the peace. The coordination of ECOWAS in peacekeeping and peace enforcement operations spans a large geographic area with patchy transportation and communication infrastructure and a variety of conflict dynamics among West African states. Changes in ECOWAS security governance from

peacekeeping to peace enforcement were motivated by the pattern of conflicts in the West African sub-region. In very different ways, the ECOWAS interventions in Sierra Leone and Liberia signaled the start of peace enforcement. The pattern of ECOWAS security governance prior to the conflicts in the Mano River region was on an as-needed basis or contained in protocols (Adebajo & Adebajo, 2002). These protocols framed how security challenges were perceived and dealt with in relation to external threats. For instance, the 1981 protocol relating to Mutual Assistance on Defense was signed in Freetown and the 1978 non-aggression protocol was signed in Lagos based on the aforementioned security paradigm of externalities of threats (Kabia, 2009; Osadolor, 2011). Due to the predominance of small and light weapons among various ethnic groups, which makes the conflicts in the region highly intractable and far-reaching in terms of humanitarian consequences, the post-Cold War security threats are more internal to West Africa (Agbo et al., 2018). These developments demonstrated that ECOWAS had miscalculated the nature of West Africa's security challenges.

The reason why ECOWAS does not prefer to regard internal conflicts as member state internal affairs is due to the new challenges of security governance in the sub-region that most states in West Africa are facing. By deploying the first contingents of the ECOMOG military intervention to bring peace and security to Liberia in the 1990s, the Mano River region conflicts undoubtedly forced ECOWAS to reevaluate its security mechanism and disregard the noninterference in internal affairs of states doctrine (Adebajo & Adebajo, 2002; Kabia, 2009). ECOMOG changed its mode of operation to enforce peace due to the level of violence in Liberia caused by the haphazard military operation that had no regard for human rights and was also in violation of the laws of war (Kabia, 2009; Engel & Gomes, 2016). Despite the fact that the import of peace enforcement under the Nigerian leadership of ECOMOG was viewed with suspicion, it appeared that the militarization of the region was necessary to contain both actual and potential violent threats to life and property in the region. However, this militarization's very nature became a threat to peace and ideas of sovereignty and independence.

The division of its member nations along lines of colonial history causes ECOWAS to face additional challenges and seriously hinders its capacity to address the security issues facing the sub-region. The legacy of colonialism has an impact on ECOWAS's effectiveness because it

has made it difficult for the supranational organization to forge a united front for West Africa by dividing member states' Governments and Heads of States along Francophone, Anglophone, and Losophone identities. Because the Heads of States and Governments of ECOWAS are more inclined, sympathetic, and passionate about issues and resolutions that affect their own people, the differences in the colonial histories and languages of West Africa also have an impact on the various patterns of ideological orientation of member states. The implication is that there is mistrust and suspicion between some of the states, which causes tension (Iwilade & Agbo, 2012). The most alarming feature is the presence of French military bases in most, if not all, of the sub-region's Francophone nations. France frequently uses these bases to support authoritarian regimes that swear allegiance to Paris. An illustration is the crisis in Cote d'Ivoire (Kabia, 2009). Even though ECOWAS responded to the shifting security landscape in West Africa quite forcefully, it has not yet developed the capacity to address the various conflict dynamics in the sub-region. For peacekeeping and peace enforcement operations, the ECOWAS continues to rely heavily on the logistical assistance of the international community, particularly of the Western nations. The legitimacy of the ECOWAS peacekeeping mission in the current Cote d'Ivoire crisis has been seriously impacted by the support that would have otherwise been given by the United Nations and France (Obi, 2009; Maiangwa, 2015). To maintain or enforce peace in the sub-region, however, ECOWAS also depends on the willingness of regional hegemonic nations like Nigeria to shoulder the associated political, military, and financial costs (Iwilade & Agbo, 2012).

The Boko Haram insurgency also follows, which limits Nigeria's ability to support ECOWAS in addressing West African security challenges (Maiangwa, 2015). Institutional and democratic deficiencies are another one of ECOWAS's most under-reported but most serious challenges. In ECOWAS member states, the institutions that support democracy are very frail. These flaws open the door for authoritarianism in member states, which has the knock-on effects of marginalized and disenfranchised groups agitating and confronting the state, often leading to civil wars. Institutional safeguards that could have stopped that major conflict in West Africa have not been strengthened by democracy in the majority of states. It explains why ECOWAS is unable to effectively combat the authoritarian currents that still run strong throughout West Africa. Jallow (2015) asserts that as a result of these issues, the ECOWAS region is currently a

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place of mediocrity and dysfunction. ECOWAS has significantly lessened the negative effects of violence on other states in the sub-region despite its challenges (Bah, 2005). The ECOWAS organization has the opportunity to strengthen its ability to strike a balance between the values of West African economic integration and development and those of peacekeeping and peace enforcement.

Theoretical framework

The Regional Security Complex theory is used in the study of peacekeeping and peace enforcement. Buzan and Waever (2003) proposed the regional security complex theory. These researchers broadened the securitization theory to include regional security, specifically how regional security complexes affect interactions between different regions. According to Buzan, Waever and Wilde (1998), regional security issues are connected to international security, which is concerned with how human collectivities behave in the face of perceived threats. Some threats and vulnerabilities, whether latent or manifest, have the potential to undermine the interactions of the different actors in the region. According to Buzan (1986), regional security complexes are localized anarchies that, in this context, reflect the international system. A group of states exists in the context of the region based on perceptions and concerns that their security is sufficiently intertwined that it would be implausible to assert that their national security perceptions are separate. By excluding a set that is external to the sets of states, this conception of security strongly encourages interdependence (Buzan, 1986). All states in the system are entangled in a global web of security interdependence; claim Buzan and Waever (2003). However, due to the frequent association of proximity with insecurity, this interdependence is not always present. Anarchy creates a pattern of regionally based clusters where security interdependence is noticeably higher between states within the complex than between those outside of it due to the distance effect, geographical diversity, and anarchy.

According to the preceding, the regional security complex theory depicts a situation in which state security is interdependent in an intrinsic pattern of common and conflicting interests, interconnected perceptions, and interdependent behavior. When there is a high level of threats or fears among states within a region, interdependence is denied or conditioned by enmity and

amity, rivalry rather than a shared interest (Buzan & Waever, 2003). In terms of animosity, regional security actors perceive enemies in others, intensifying conflict formation in the region; in terms of amity, despite the presence of regional conflict formations, cooperation and mutually acceptable forms of behavior among regional security actors achieve security in their interactions, implying the formation of a security community. To put it another way, conflict between two states within a region affects the security architecture of that region because of the widespread nature of the fears either manifest or latent that result from such interactions. The security architecture of states within a region, in the context of interdependence, necessitates coordinated action against a referent object posing threats to or having an impact on a sector in a nation within the region (Buzan & Waever, 2003). The intention is to lessen the possibility of unstable relationships. As a result, the idea of a security threat is a social construction based on the fact that security issues are almost always present in the area. The threat to security is a factor within the region between states because of the inherent nature of security interaction between actors in the security complex.

The regional security complex theory provides an understanding of security from both the horizontal and vertical planes. On the horizontal plane, security is extended to include non-military sectors such as politics, economics, society, and the environment, whereas on the vertical plane, it extends beyond the state as the primary actor in international relations to include individuals, social groups, and humanity as a whole. Both the horizontal and vertical planes have the potential to shape a region's security architecture and to encourage security interdependence among different actors within the region in order to respond to challenges (Buzan & Waever, 2003). Security complexes exist geographically, but not always between or among states; however, the majority of these complexes exist within states in a region, posing a security threat to the security of other states in the region. As a result, adopting strict criteria for defining a security complex becomes problematic because security complexes are defined by the geographical proximity of actors whose security interacts, which is acted upon by force internal to the region due to rivalry between two or more actors (Buzan, 1991). In this context, a region is a subsystem that is distinct and significant in terms of security relations, which exist between a set of states closely locked geographically and are proximate to one another.

The theoretical framework is applied to ECOWAS, which is depicted as existing on a security complex made up of states in the West African sub-region. However, the supranational organization driven by cooperation rather than competition came to be of great interest to ECOWAS. As a result, the interdependence of the member states with regard to securitization is more apparent. The states' roles as major players in ECOWAS are shaped by a rule-governed practice that is rejected, determined, and directed by the organization's charter, which they all ratified (Bah, 2005; Balzacq, 2005). Practices that violate ECOWAS rules may be subject to sanctions, suspension, or both. Additionally, when a member state faces a threat to its internal security, other members step in and intervene while keeping in mind the fundamental principles of peacekeeping (Ukeje, 2015). Peace must be established in order to ensure the safety of people and property. If peacekeeping efforts fail, military intervention is used to enforce peace by defusing tensions within or between member states. If they do not act, such situations could lead to security complexes that could threaten the foundation for West Africa's economic integration and development.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The emergence of ECOWAS as a regional force shows that the conventional paradigms of international institutional politics cannot fully account for security communities in Africa. The emergence of ECOWAS as a security community is better understood under the UN's Collective Security theory than it is under the African Union. ECOWAS demonstrated the potential for a security community to emerge from actual politics. In order to address the problems, opportunities, and challenges resulting from the ECOMOG experience since 1990, the 1999 Protocol on Regional Peacekeeping, Conflict Management, and Security Mechanism was created. However, there is no way that the adoption of the protocol could have changed how conflicts were resolved after 1999. The unusual regional "collective" peacekeeping or "coalition of willing states" established by ECOWAS was more convincingly justified by the threat that rebel insurgency posed to the security and continued existence of the regimes in the sub-region. Insurgency or guerrilla warfare was a relatively recent phenomenon in post-Cold War West Africa. It provided access to state power and its patrimonial assets as well as a counterargument

to military takeovers. To combat the "power of the Liberian example" and to defend and secure the survival of their regimes, the leaders of ECOWAS met in Liberia to discuss "regional collective security" and peacekeeping. The majority of these regimes had questionable legitimacy and democratic credentials. Nigeria's leadership was motivated by the need to stifle, contain, and deter some Francophone countries from supporting the NPFL rebel insurgency in Liberia. Thanks to the alleged international neglect of Africa, Nigeria developed and implemented the much-touted "Try Africa First" approach to conflict management and resolution. Nigeria never misses an opportunity to demonstrate its benevolent hegemonic leadership in West Africa. The geopolitics of West Africa and its limitations on the formulation and implementation of common foreign and security policies, Nigeria's leadership role, the role and contribution of extra-regional actors like the former colonial powers and the UN, as well as the quality of leadership of both ECOWAS and ECOMOG, are therefore significant factors that merit consideration when evaluating ECOWAS effectiveness in regional peace and security issues.

Particularly the conflict in Liberia in the 1990s, the majority of conflicts in West Africa and elsewhere were not only violent but also nearly genocidal in nature. That provided yet another impetus for the conversion of peacekeeping operations into peace enforcement, which reduced and altered the climate of violence and facilitated talks for peace, stability, and the restoration of democracy in the country. ECOWAS, a supranational organization founded on the interdependence of security architecture, has helped to lessen security threats and promote peace and security in West Africa despite the enormous challenges. The security frameworks for West Africa still leave a lot to be desired in terms of ECOWAS. In order to strengthen ECOWAS's capabilities, the rules of peace and security should begin from the perspectives of the people after the peacekeeping operation is over. However, it is still true that the economic conditions of the population, which the state neglected to address, were what led to the conflicts that engulfed ECOWAS member states. ECOMOG has been praised as an example of ECOWAS's efforts to ensure security and peace in the area. It is significant to note that ECOWAS has not done well in this area because the goals of economic integration and development have not resulted in the emancipation of the underprivileged in the majority of West Africa. Most ideals of economic

growth and integration have not yet been put into practice. If it had been possible, economic integration would have protected ECOWAS from the severity of the current conflicts in West Africa. But ECOWAS ought to research what the EU has to offer. New members must first raise their internal democratic institutional frameworks, governance, and economic systems to the required levels before being accepted into ECOWAS.

In conclusion, peace agreements contain the core of the resolutions of the UN Security Council and the ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council, and as a result, they serve as the legal framework for maintaining and enforcing peace. Peace agreements are therefore crucial for conflict management and settlement. The assumption that the leaders of armed factions are rational political actors driven by legitimate grievances and will thereby consent to mediated agreements is fallacious. Therefore, for peace implementation in the West African region to be successful, robust diplomacy supported by a credible enforcement capacity must go hand in hand with the offering of carrots (the confidence-building approach). After reviewing Nigeria's involvement in peacekeeping operations since becoming independent, the following recommendations are made to assist Nigeria and ECOWAS in future interventions:

1. The member states should serve as the foundation of the ECOWAS regulatory framework for peace and security. Because most of the democracies in the sub-region elect postcolonial states with a predominance of coloniality of power disguising itself as democracy and causing conflicts in the majority of countries within the West African security complex, ECOWAS must exert pressure on member states to step up their efforts to improve democracy in their respective countries.

2. ECOWAS should encourage its members to bolster their institutions and oversight groups. In order for West Africa to ensure its economic integration and development, it is essential that ECOWAS be able to compel member states to pass an internal democracy test modeled after the EU, which has institutional building that enhances democratic consolidation, the rooted nature of the rule of law and the protection of fundamental human rights of the people, as well as respect for and protection of minorities, as requirements for admission into the organization. Without meeting these requirements, the ECOWAS' goals cannot be achieved.

3. All of the member states' internal regulatory organizations and institutions were colonially inherited, and the political elites continue to use them without altering their oppressive and repressive nature. This means that the majority of member states' regulatory institutions and agencies serve only to safeguard the ruling regime and are not focused on ensuring the security of individuals.

4. Raising awareness of peace agreements, creating expert security forces, and giving mediators specialized training are all necessary for maintaining and enforcing peace.

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