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INVESTIGATING THE EXPANDING MANDATE OF REGIONAL ECONOMIC GROUPINGS IN AFRICA: THE CASE OF THE ECOWAS

BY

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THIS DISSERTATION IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON, IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

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DECLARATION

This dissertation is as a result of research work conducted by Tettey Caleb in the Legon Centre International Affairs and Diplomacy, University of Ghana under the supervision of Dr. Juliana Appiah

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DEDICATION

Blood does not necessarily unite relatives. I have grown to see that all individuals who cross my path are equally valuable, irrespective of our biological ties. This work is dedicated to everyone who has supported me by being present when it was necessary; you have inspired me to not only finish this endeavor but also ascend another rung in my own journey.

INTEGRI PROCEDAMUS

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACP – Africa, Caribbean, and Pacific

AfCFTA – African Continental Free Trade Area

AU – African Union

ECOMOG – ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group

ECOWAS – Economic Community of West African States

ESF – ECOWAS Standby Force

ETLS – ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme

IBRD – International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank)

IGAD – Inter-Governmental Authority on Development

IMF – International Monetary Fund

NAFTA – North American Free Trade Agreement

OAU – Organization of African Unity

PTA – Preferential Trade Agreement

REC – Regional Economic Community

SADC – Southern African Development Community

SAP – Structural Adjustment Program

UEMOA – Union Économique et Monétaire Ouest Africaine (West African Economic and Monetary Union)

UN – United Nations

UNCTAD – United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

WTO – World Trade Organization

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ABSTRACT

Numerous regional and international organizations are formed and developed in various regions of the world in the context of current global politics; this is done on the basis of geographical closeness and common interests or problems to be resolved. Undoubtedly, regional organizations are of utmost importance in the domain of international relations, particularly with regard to fostering integration and cooperation and tackling difficulties that are shared by surrounding governments. Over time, significant transformations have occurred within regional organizations, mirroring shifts in economic dynamics, regional agendas, and global politics, among other mitigating circumstances. A comprehensive comprehension of this expansion is crucial for gaining a thorough understanding of the dynamic regional integration landscape in West Africa. Additionally, it enables an analysis of the ramifications and obstacles that emerge from this expansion, thereby facilitating an evaluation of its efficacy and potential to bolster regional economic development. Given the aforementioned context, this research endeavors to analyze the expanding mandate of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), focusing specifically on the factors that have contributed to its expansion. It also seeks to determine the degree of success the ECOWAS has had in attaining its expanded objectives, while evaluating the obstacles and constraints encountered by the organization in the process of implementing its expanded mandate. Thus, primary and secondary data were gathered for the study through the utilization of a qualitative research design and a case study methodology. For the purpose of data collection secondary data sources were utilized with the use of semi-structured interviews for primary data collections. External pressures, including partnerships with the United Nations and the African Union, as well as internal issues such as political instability and conflicts, are cited in the study's conclusions as justifications for the extension of the ECOWAS's mandate. The ECOWAS exhibited its ability to adapt to global dynamics via the integration of democratic governance and human rights principles, as well as by confronting challenges such as terrorism and climate change. Notwithstanding the advancements, obstacles include economic complexities, trade policy administration, regional infrastructural deficiencies, and reliance on external actors. Opposition between election cycles, political instability, and dependence on former colonial powers impede the implementation of the expanded mandate. Despite having accomplished economic integration and fostered regional cooperation, the ECOWAS continues to face enduring problems that need dedication and flexible approaches, underscoring the ever-changing character of regional cooperation.

Keywords: *Regional Integration, Mandate Expansion, Neo-functionalism, Economic Integration.*

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0. Background to the Study

Given their common interests or problems to be solved, as well as their geographic proximity, a number of regional and international organisations have been founded in various parts all over the globe in the context of modern global politics. All states—developed or developing—have realised the value and enormous potential of forming regional alliances that emphasise their unique commonalities and objectives with other countries (Kipgen & Chakrabarti, 2022). Interregionalism is the term Naik (2019) uses to describe a new kind of wider association that arises when these relationships between states spread from one geographical region to another and sovereign states from those areas unite to communicate and work together.

It is without a doubt that regional organizations play a vital role in the realm of international relations, in the aspects of promoting cooperation, integration, as well as addressing shared challenges amongst neighbouring states (Denters & Gazzini, 2017; Hess & Marcus, 2018; Williams & McDuie-Ra, 2017). Over time, these regional organizations have undergone significant transformations, adapting to changing geopolitical dynamics, economic trends, as well as evolving global governance frameworks (Dogah, 2022: Botchway et al., 2022). Regional organizations over the years have undergone substantial changes throughout history, reflecting changes in global politics, regional priorities, economic dynamics as well as other extenuating factors (Howse & Langille, 2023; Siddi & Kustova, 2021). These transformations have resulted in these regional organizations assuming new mandates which expand their areas of focus, or further

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deepening the level of integration among its member states. Notably these transformations are not always captured in the name of the organization but are rather evident through changes in the organization's functions, decision-making processes, and objectives.

For regional organisations on the African continent, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is a noteworthy point of reference. With a major focus on economic integration and collaboration, the Economic Community of West African States is now made up of fifteen (15) autonomous West African states that were brought together via a multilateral agreement based on treaties (Opakunbi & Ogu, 2020). On May 8, 1975, in Lagos, Nigeria, the leaders of sixteen (16) former member nations and governments signed the first treaty (ECOWAS, 1975). Later, on July 24, 1993, in Cotonou, 15 member states signed the updated treaty in response to the necessity to address fresh issues and advancements. Since then, the ECOWAS has kept growing and has been referred to by many different names, including "economic bloc," "trading hub," and "borderless region," because of its adherence to democratic values, good governance, and the rule of law.

West Africa is a region characterized by diverse cultures, historical legacies, and socioeconomic challenges. The ECOWAS constitutes a geographical area of 5.12 million km^2 and a population of about 397.21 million persons (Ibitoye, 2022). The bridge language or trade language of this region mainly comprise English, Portuguese, and French which essentially underpin the regions history of colonization. In today's global world, uncertainties and/or challenges to regional governance and administration have remarkably hard-pressed regional organizations to now operate a more complex-based approach and institutional structures in facilitating the performance of their key mandates. This has thus seen the ECOWAS expand it functions and operations in response to changing dynamics in the region, including expansions into fields of global geopolitics,

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economic transformations, and security threats (Ateku & Owusu-Mensah, 2023; De Wet, 2014; Okon & Ojakorotu, 2022; Ramcharan, 2022).

1.2. Problem Statement

The number of regional organizations across the globe is slowly increasing. Regional organizations across the globe are becoming more multifaceted in the pursuance of security and economic concerns as their primary goals. As the line between allies and foes are continually being blurred as a result of growing globalization and increasing technologies the focus of states as well as regional organizations is being tuned towards the issues of conflict resolution and meeting transnational challenges like separatism, terrorism and extremism through joint coordinated efforts. The Economic Community of West African States, just like most other regional economic groupings, have experienced an expansion in its mandate from its original mandate of fostering economic integration and cooperation amongst its member states to an encompassing broad regional integration goal. Several reasons exist as to why regional economic groupings expand their mandates, however, most of these motivations are Eurocentric and do not capture the narrative of the West African context.

Understanding this expansion, is essential for fully appreciating the evolving landscape of regional integration in West Africa as well as examining the implications and challenges arising from this expansion in order to assess its effectiveness and potential for enhancing regional economic development. On this background, this study explores the expanding mandate of the ECOWAS with a particular focus on examining the factors that have contributed to the expansion of the ECOWAS mandate, investigating the extent to which the ECOWAS has been successful in achieving its expanded objectives as well as assess the challenges and limitations faced by the ECOWAS in implementing its expanded mandate.

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1.3. Research Questions

- What are the motivations for the expansion of the ECOWAS mandate?
- Has the ECOWAS been successful in achieving its expanded mandate?
- What are the challenges and limitations faced by the ECOWAS in implementing its expanded mandate?

1.4. Research Objectives

- To understand the motivations for the expansion of the ECOWAS mandate
- To examine the extent to which the ECOWAS has been successful in achieving its expanded objectives in terms of regional economic integration.
- Assess the challenges and limitations faced by ECOWAS in implementing its expanded mandate.

1.5. Significance of the Study

This research endeavours to add to the current knowledge on regional integration in Africa by examining the ECOWAS's expanding mandate and its consequences. Additionally, it seeks to educate and furnish policymakers, stakeholders, and researchers with valuable insights to steer future strategies and initiatives within ECOWAS and other regional economic groupings. The analysis of past instances of regional organizations mandate expansions can provide valuable lessons for future initiatives. Understanding why and how the ECOWAS expands its functional mandates can assist the regional body to stay identify and address evolving challenges in order to stay ahead of the curve and proactively address emerging issues.

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1.6. Scope of the Study

The study aims to investigate the expansion of the Economic Community of West Africa States from its inception in 1975 till date. The period from 1975 till date is justifiable for this study as it allows the researcher to gain a broader appreciation of the motivations for the expanding mandate of the ECOWAS and what exact expansions were made. It also allows a sufficient enough timeline, to efficiently analyze and assess the gradual expansion of the ECOWAS. Although it is understandable that the ECOWAS may have expanded into several dimensions, due to the budgetary and time limitations, the study seeks to limit itself to expansions into the political, peace and security dimensions.

1.7. Theoretical Framework

The Economic Community of West African States' growing role as a regional organisation in the West African subregion is evaluated by the research using the neo-functionalism theory. The theory of neofunctionalism, as advanced by Ernst B. Haas, emerged not so much from the scholar as it did from a critical analysis of David Mitrany's theory of functionalism (1973, 2002). The process by which political players in different national settings are lured to reorient their political actions, expectations, and allegiances towards a new centre, whose institutions have or seek authority over the pre-existing national governments, is known as neo-functionalism, according to Haas (1964). The idea gained prominence from the mid-1960s until the mid-1970s, when it was significantly modified, partly because of attempts to adapt it to non-Western European situations. Due to its widespread acceptance, the idea came to be known as the European Communities' paradigm (Söderbaum, 2004). As per the assertions of certain researchers (Haas, 1967; Haas & Schmitter, 1965; Nye, 1965), the idea was regarded and approved as the template for regional integration, which was to be emulated in other global regions including Africa and Latin America.

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While the idea of neofunctionalism questions the functionalist notion that politics and economics can be separated, it also builds upon the philosophy of functionalism as previously mentioned. The theory of neofunctionalism lays special emphasis on the role that social movements, interest groups, and non-state actors play in creating the necessary dynamic for further integration. In particular, this dynamic is provided by the "secretariat" of the relevant regional organisation as well as other interest associations and social groupings that form at the regional level. States are by no means the only players; they are nevertheless essential. In his book "The Uniting of Europe – Political, Social, and Economic Forces, 1950–1957," Ernst Haas made the case that, in contrast to functionalism's presumptions, regional integration is not limited to the expansion of policy cooperation within a particular functional domain (Dosenrode, 2008; Rosamond, 2005).

Ernst Bernard Haas established neo-functionalism in the middle of the 1950s as a notion of regional integration, according to Rosamond (2005), to make clear how nations remove trade obstacles. According to Schmidt and Lefkofridi (2016), neo-functionalism is a theory of regional integration that places special emphasis on the role of non-state actors, especially the supranational body of the relevant regional organisation, as well as the interest associations and social movements formed at the regional level to support the dynamics for even more assimilation within a particular region of the world.

Neo-functionalists argue that regional integration is a contentious and inherently unpredictable process. However, they contend that national governments will become more intimately involved in regional pressures and ultimately resolve their disputes by granting regional organisations greater authority and delegating more responsibility, provided that pluralistic representation and democracy are present. Satisfying their citizens' preconceived notions regarding the region will ultimately increase the likelihood that political integration will "spill over" from economic-social

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integration (Schmitter & Lefkofridi 2016). Neo-functionalism also offers the constructive notion of the spill-over effect. The concept of positive spillover effect posits that when states integrate in a particular economic sector, it generates substantial motivations for further integration in other sectors so that they, too, can completely benefit from the advantages that integration initiated in the initial sector.

"Removing barriers to trade, investment, and human mobility (negative integration) and establishing common, market-regulatory rules (positive integration) will result in a steady increase in the interdependence of member states of a regional body" (Schmitter & Lefkofridi, 2016, p.5) are the central tenets of neo-functionalism. Consequently, not only will the regional organisation as a whole experience the growing interdependence of its member states, but so will ordinary citizens of the member states comprising the organisation. Consequently, higher levels of regional interdependence will yield favourable total effects for the economies of individual member states and the regional organisation as a whole.

As stated by Schmitter and Lefkofridi (2016), a notable strength of the theories is that individuals of member states of the regional organization may benefit from enhanced security. This security protects against unwarranted exploitation by external actors and provides material advantages for insiders. Schlitter and Lefkofridi (2016) postulate that among the member states of a regional organization, the majority of citizens will likely support the establishment of the organization and subsequent expansions of its operations, due to this and other benefits that individual citizens may obtain. This support could manifest as either inert consent or active acquiescence, depending on the degree of threat visibility and the magnitude of potential benefits as the integration process of the regional organization advances.

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A number of intergovernance theory scholars, Michelle et al. (2015) being one of them, have criticised neo-functionalism. Prior to anything else, intergovernmentalists criticised neofunctionalism for its premise that the interdependence of member states of regional organisations steadily increases, thereby enabling the "secretariat" or "bureaucrat" of the organisation to subvert the sovereignty of member states and control their national interests (Ganeshalingam, 2011). Moreover, neo-functionalism is subject to criticism from intergovernmentalists due to its presumption of "spillover" effects from economic to political integration. This limitation restricts the theory of neo-functionalism to a singular domain of concern, namely economic integration. Wiener (2019) argues that the applicability of the "spillover" concept is limited to Europe and that its implementation in other regions, especially less developed countries, will be challenging (Ganeshalingam, 2011).

In conclusion, intergovernmentalists expressed disapproval and criticism towards the assertion made by neo-functionalists that a significant proportion of the populace residing in the member states of a regional organisation would presumably support its formation and future expansions (Cini & Borragan 2016). For instance, Eilstrup-Sangiovanni (2006) argues that certain factions among member states of the regional organisation hold divergent political views regarding the organization's dominance over the national interests of its constituent states and its continued existence. Consequently, according to Eilstrup-Sangiovanni (2006), factions within member states of regional organisations may be able to capture power and induce their respective states to disengage from the organisations.

Notwithstanding the aforementioned criticisms directed towards the theory of neo-functionalism, it continues to be embraced as an appropriate framework for assessing the expansion of the

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Economic Community of West African States' (ECOWAS) mandate. This is due to its capacity to facilitate comprehension of the origins of regional organisations and furnish a foundation for understanding the reasons behind the expansion of such organisations' mandates.

1.8. Literature Review

1.8.1. Conceptualizing Regional Integration

Regional integration may be characterised as a coalition among states that possess distinct perspectives and ideologies, historical contexts, and personalities, all working together towards the attainment of a common and unified goal. Therefore, regional integration can be defined as the process by which governments or nations unite in pursuit of a common goal or objective. As stated by Chingono and Nakana (2008), the concept of regional integration lacks a definitive definition, consensus regarding its substance and form, and agreement on the paradigms that ought to govern it. As hypothesised by Tanyanyiwa and Hakuna (2014), this lack of consensus and clarity regarding the guiding principles and means of achieving regional integration is one of the primary explanations for the limited progress of some Regional Integration Arrangements.

Certain scholars (Negasi, 2009; Schiff & Winter, 2003) have attempted to provide a definition for regional integration or regionalism by characterising it as a policy that aims to diminish trade barriers among a subset of nations or countries, irrespective of their physical proximity or contigency. A noteworthy characteristic of integration is the propensity for neighbouring countries to be involved in Regional Integration Agreements; hence, the term "regional." Exceptions encompass bilateral free trade agreements, BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), the Group of Three (Mexico, Venezuela, and Colombia, with the exception of Mexico, which does

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not share a frontier with the other two countries), and the agreement between Chile and Mexico (Tanyanyiwa & Hakuna, 2014). According to Mambara (2007), regional integration can be defined as the establishment of stronger economic connections between adjacent governments, primarily achieved via the implementation of Preferential Trade Agreements (PTAs) (Tanyanyiwa & Hakuna, 2014).

Furthermore, the concept entails the collaboration of member nations in order to enhance the standard of living for their respective populations; thus, it entails the unification of sovereign governments throughout a specific region into a more unified entity. However, the extent of this collaboration relies on the trust and resolve of independent states to relinquish their sovereignty in support of the progress of other constituent nations as well as their own advancement.

1.8.2. Rationale for Regional Integration

From 1945 to 2015, an extensive array of regional organisations were founded on an international scale. Over the course of time, an estimated 76 regional organisations have been formed, with each possessing expertise in around 11 unique policy domains (Panke, 2020). Regional integration, which enables nations to surmount the limitations of small markets, consolidate resources, and benefit from economies of scale in trade and production, has garnered significant international acclaim. In addition to enhancing access to investments and technology, regional integration heightens international trade competition (Tanyanyiwa & Hakuna, 2014).

Ever since the inception of substantial and notably influential economic organisations like the European Union, the majority of nations have perceived regional integration as a crucial mechanism for advancing economic growth concerns (Cheru, 2002). De Melo and Tsikata (2014) state that the principal justifications for endeavours towards regional integration have

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predominantly stemmed from enticing bilateral and multilateral accords, the advancement of infrastructure, expanded market reach and accessibility, and strengthened regional security mechanisms. Panke (2020) identifies two primary rationales for the formation or participation in regional integration organisations. These encompass the propensity for regional organisations to function as platforms or vehicles for advancing national interests, as exemplified by the United States' involvement in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, in addition to the trade incentives offered by regional organisations to their constituents.

1.8.3. Challenges of Regional Integration in Africa

Africa's regional integration, which has been supervised by the African Union, has aimed to unite nations for the purposes of developing substantial markets, capitalising on economies of scale, and establishing unified political cooperation. Nonetheless, this impetus for regional integration has encountered a number of obstacles.

The study conducted by Alexander and Garba (2021) focused on the examination of the obstacles that are present in the process of regional integration in Africa. In accordance with the theory of regional integration, data for the study were collected from secondary sources and subsequently assessed through content analysis. The results of the study indicated that regional integration is crucial for the socioeconomic development of Africa; however, substantial barriers to integration included insufficient infrastructure, low levels of human development, and duplication of efforts among regional economic groups.

In contrast to the findings of Alexander and Garba (2021), De Melo and Tsikata (2014) assert that the obstacles to regional integration in Africa are rooted in a dearth of complementarity among its partners and declining returns on resource exploitation. These factors have resulted in a diminished

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capacity to respond to market integration-focused regional policies in terms of supply. The experts also opined that the relatively unequal distribution of resources constitutes an additional barrier to the advancement of regional integration in Africa.

Gumede (2019) emphasised the approach to regional integration that had been executed in Africa prior to 2019. To underscore the inherent deficiencies of regional integration, the researcher provided a concise overview of its theoretical underpinnings. Significant social and economic statistics were also examined by the scholar, which suggested that the structural development of the African continent has occurred gradually and that the type of regional integration implemented by regional organisations has not benefited African economies. The scholar identifies several deficiencies that impede regional integration in Africa. These include a dearth of political determination, inadequate capabilities of Regional Economic Communities, domestic obstacles encountered by member states, the impact of external powers, the situation of overlapping memberships, and the conventional top-down approach to regionalization. Gumede (2019), who concurred with Alexander and Garba (2021) on certain points, further asserted that the incrementalistic strategy towards political unification in Africa, which places greater emphasis on incremental progress rather than comprehensive transformations, continues to pose an obstacle to the progress of regional integration.

"Consolidating Regional Integration Through a Free Movement Protocol: The Quest for Collective Development in the SADC" was the title of a second study conducted by Mlambo (2020) to determine whether a free movement protocol in the Southern Africa Development Community would strengthen and consolidate regional development and integration. The researcher undertook a literature review employing a qualitative approach in order to investigate the challenges, opportunities, and future prospects associated with regional integration within the Southern

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African Development Community. Consistent with the conclusions drawn by other researchers (Alexander & Garba, 2021; De Melo & Tsikata, 2014; Gumede, 2019), the study identified as obstacles to regional integration in the SADC region competing interests of member states, colonial legacies, and a lack of political will.

1.8.4. Motivations for the Expansion of Regional Organizations

The expansion of mandates was attributed to a distinct reason or motivation in the study "The Expansion of Regional Organization's Function: Case of NAFTA" by Akrami et al. (2019), which contradicts the rationales provided by Edo and Olanrewaju (2012) and Rechner (2006). By applying the cognition theory to comprehend the operational expansion of regional organisations, scholars' research indicated that the expansion of the NAFTA mandate from an economic (Free Trade Area) to a communitarian security one, facilitated by member states' ratification of the Security and Prosperity Partnership Plan, was primarily motivated by the imperative to combat terrorism (Akrami et al., 2019). Although Akrami et al. (2019) identified the threat of terrorism as a significant factor in facilitating the growth of the North American Free Trade Area, they also noted that the objectives and motives of the regional hegemon (the United States) can also account for the functional expansion of the NAFTA.

The scholars further asserted that the hegemon's diplomatic endeavours, in addition to its attractiveness, normalisation, and capacity to present alternative ideas, can significantly contribute to inspiring the growth of regional organisations. According to Akrami et al. (2019), this expansion process deviated from the expansion process as it was described by functionalist and neofunctionalist scholars. In contrast, Yu (2008) argued in "Explaning the Functional Expansion of a Regional Organisation: The Case of Security Cooperation Within APEC" that the process of functional expansion within the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation and the North American Free

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Trade Area is best explained by the hegemonic stability version of the realist theory, which emphasises the role of the hegemon in the emergence and transformation of international institutions. The scholar additionally contended that the APEC case is consistent with the realist viewpoint, which posits that the functioning of regional organisations is determined by the influence of a hegemonic state or powerful nation. The study demonstrates, through the examination of the APEC as a case study, that the hegemon possesses the capability to significantly influence both the establishment and growth of the international organisation.

Lee (2010) determined in a study entitled "Rethinking APEC's Security Agenda: The Challenges of Functional Expansion" that the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) mandate was expanded to include counterterrorism and human security concerns as strategic objectives for economic prosperity in response to the September 11 terrorist attacks in the United States of America. As stated by the scholar, this development demonstrated that the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation shifted its focus from initially promoting free trade and investment through the liberalisation of trade and investments in the region to addressing security concerns (Lee, 2010). Therefore, this research provided further support for the assertions made by Akrami et al. (2019), who identified security and terrorist threats as a driving force behind the growth of regional organisations.

By way of illustration, the Organisation of African Unity was founded in Ethiopia's capital, Addis Ababa, in May 1963 by thirty-one independent African states. In addition to eradicating colonialism and the emergence of neocolonialism from the African continent, the primary objective of the OAU was to facilitate strong relationships between independent African states and to establish strategic guidelines for such relations. Since their independence from colonial powers, many African nations across the continent have been constrained by the issue of violence,

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according to the author of the study conducted by Rechner (2006). As per the scholarly analysis, the implementation of the Organisation of African Unity, a continental organisation, had limited impact on mitigating the prevalence of violence and conflicts across the African continent.

The scholar posits that this was due to the organization's normative boundaries, which hindered its participation in the internal disputes of its member states. This deficiency, in conjunction with other structural deficiencies, was recognised as one of the impetuses for the Organisation of African Unity to broaden its mandate, ultimately resulting in the formation of the African Union. Likewise, Edo and Olanrewaju (2012) examined the expansion of the Organisation of African Unity's mandate and its subsequent transformation into the African Union, attributing this development to the deficiencies identified within the Organisation of African Unity. The literature presented by scholars (Edo & Olanrewaju, 2012; Rechner, 2006) suggests that the expansion of the OAU's mandate, which ultimately resulted in the formation of the AU, more accurately reflects the functional expansion of regional organisations from the perspectives of functionalist and neofunctionalist scholars.

An alternative investigation carried out by Eberwein and Schemeil (2005) titled "Coalesce or Collapse: Mandate Enlargement and the Expansion of International Organisations" posits that scholars contend that international organisations operate within a fiercely competitive landscape, where their primary objectives are growth and survival. The authors further assert that "cooperation is an essential requirement for an organization's survival," which is contingent upon its ability to adapt rather than a requirement for reform; As stated by the scholar, the progression from one stage to the next is reliant on the acquisition and replication of succeeding tactics (Eberwein & Schemeil, 2009).

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An examination of the existing literature uncovers a considerable gap in the understanding of the functional expansion of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). While there has been substantial scholarly focus on the enlargement of mandates in organizations such as NAFTA, APEC, and the OAU/AU, the specific trajectory of ECOWAS has not been thoroughly investigated. Current studies lack a detailed analysis of the unique factors, both internal, such as intra-regional conflict, and external, like alignment with global norms, that have influenced ECOWAS's transformation from a purely economic entity to a comprehensive organization addressing issues of security, governance, and human rights. This research intends to fill this void by offering an in-depth exploration of the motivations behind, and the challenges faced in, the expansion of the ECOWAS mandate.

1.9. Methodology

The study's research design acts as a road map for addressing issues and attaining objectives (Cooper & Schindler, 2014; Zikmund & Babin, 2007). Selecting a design may be challenging due to the availability of a large variety of research procedures, strategies, processes, plans, and protocols. In each situation, the researcher must select the best route to achieve the study's objectives. In this regard, this study used an exploratory research approach. By using the exploratory research design, the researcher can effectively fill the literary gap and produce important insights into the relationship that exists between the variables under study. This will aid in the investigation of a subject in literature that has not been sufficiently explored or clearly defined.

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1.9.1. Research Approach

The research used a qualitative research approach in accordance with its focus and aims. Some academics have claimed that the qualitative research approach is more theoretical and interpretive than the quantitative research approach (Brennen, 2017; Creswell & Cresswell, 2017). The qualitative method places a strong emphasis on comprehending intricate ideas and interpreting language, which is typically based on human interactions and experiences (Brennen, 2017). Kvale (1996) suggested that qualitative research is not objective facts to be quantified, meaningful linkages to be interpreted, and this is adequately supported by the fact that qualitative researchers are typically more interested in hidden meanings than the quantity of events. Creswell (2013) further suggested that rather than evaluating a situation using established standards, qualitative research is primarily concerned with studying or exploring the meanings people attach to social occurrences. This is founded on the justification that people construct their own social realities based on preexisting notions and viewpoints.

1.9.2. Sampling Strategy

According to Lindelof and Taylor (2017), a sampling strategy is one that helps a researcher choose which individuals to work with and also explains why they were chosen. According to the researchers, because the precise unit(s) to be investigated are predetermined and well-thought-out, this restricts or reduces the likelihood of participating in useless attempts. The approach of purposive sampling coupled with the snowballing sampling technique was deployed for the achievement of the study's primary objective. The purposive sampling technique, as its name suggests, involves the deliberate or purposeful selection of a participant or set of data to study because they have certain qualities and/or characteristics that are pertinent to the research, as opposed to the convenience sampling technique, which involves the selection of participants based

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on their availability (Rai & Thapa, 2015). According to Rai and Thapa (2015), the purposive sampling technique gives the researcher more power to carry out their work and extract the best information from the samples because it relies more heavily on their expertise, judgment, and intelligence. Snowball sampling on the other hand refers to the non-probability sampling technique whereby existing study subjects recruit future subjects. This approach to sampling is selected as a suitable complement to the Purposive sampling technique mainly for its ability to reduce selection bias by the researcher (Sulaiman-Hill & Thompson, 2011).

1.9.3. Sample Size

According to Larkin et al. (2009), who claimed that for researchers using the qualitative approach to research, a specified guideline of three to sixteen participants was enough and sufficient, the selection of a sample size of three participants were regarded appropriate for the study. Both Silverman & Silverman (2010) agreed with this assertion. The researchers claim that because of the data propensity to be comprehensive and rich, researchers were able to use smaller sample sizes and yet provide high-quality analyses of their studies (Silverman, 2010). Robinson and Smith (2010) added that the selection of three to sixteen participants prevented the researcher from becoming bogged down in data and, as a result, permitted individuals within the sample size to be given a defined identity rather than being absorbed into an anonymous part of a larger whole. To this end, the study deems a sample size of ten (10) respondents for the study appropriate, with study participants involving general experts in regional integration as well as experts in international relations.

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1.9.4. Sources of Data

To accomplish the goals of the study, two main sources of data were advanced. They contain both primary as well as secondary sources of data. Secondary data was mostly sourced from books, journal articles, internet sources, reports, and other sources whose content matched the problem and aims of this study. Primary data was primarily sourced from individuals chosen from the sample population.

1.9.5. Data Collection Instrument

For the purposes of collecting data for the study, the researcher employed the use of semistructured interviews.

1.9.6. Data Analysis Technique

Data was analyzed using content analysis or thematic analysis as a precondition for the qualitative research approach. Nonetheless, the thematic method to data analysis was used for this study's objectives. According to Braun and Clarke (2019), the act of carefully identifying, delivering, and organizing insights into patterns of meanings throughout a data set is known as thematic analysis. By concentrating on meaning shared throughout a data collection, thematic analysis enables researchers to understand the collective or shared meanings and experiences of a studied problem (Braun & Clarke, 2019).

1.10. Arrangement of Chapters

This study, per the guidelines of the Legon Centre for International Affairs and Diplomacy comprises four chapters. Chapter one provides detailed design of the study. Chapter two provides an overview of literature on the relevant topics surrounding the study. Chapter three provided an

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analysis and discussion of the study findings and the final chapter, Chapter Four, also provided the summary of the study findings, conclusions as well as recommendations of the study.

1.11. Limitations of the Study

A methodological limitation was encountered during the course of the research endeavor. Although a sample size of ten was decided upon, given the time frame for the conduct of study and the availability of study participants, the researcher was only able to secure five study participants for the conduct of the study. This, however, did not invalidate the findings of the study.

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CHAPTER TWO
REGIONAL INTEGRATION AND THE EXPANSION IN THE MANDATE OF REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

2.0. Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the existing literature on Regional Integration and the expansion in the mandate of regional organizations. The chapter also presents case studies of regional organizations to provide further understanding on how the expansion of regional organizations occurs.

2.1. Regional Integration in Africa

Multiple instances of regional economic integration and collaboration have taken place across Africa. Africans have experimented with regional integration as a long-term continental strategy of "collective self-reliance" to mitigate the lingering effects of colonial-era patterns of dependency and marginalization, as argued by Ahorsu (2007). The author argues that African countries have been driven to join both continental and regional cooperation schemes in an effort to lessen their economic vulnerabilities due to their income, reliance, structural deficiencies, cultural linkages, and shared history (Ahorsu, 2007).

Africa's high conflict rate and high communication and commerce costs may be traced back to the configuration of geographically artificial nations brought about by the colonial heritage, where arbitrary boundaries combined with enormous ethno-linguistic variety contributed to these problems (Alesina et al., 2011). Regional integration and collaboration on the continent gained momentum in the decades between the 1960s and the 1980s. Significant regional integration

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schemes were established during this time, from the Preferential Trading Area on the low end to the Economic Union on the high end of the integration spectrum. Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), Southern African Development Community (SADC), and Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) are some of the major regional integration groupings in Africa that are currently operational and recognized by the African Union (AU) within the region (IGAD).

The first decades after African countries gained their independence were a watershed moment for regional integration. The formation of the Organization of African Unity and the Economic Commission for Africa marked a turning point in Africa toward economic regionalism at this time. Colonialism and the desire to decolonize Africa inspired the creation of these organizations, which served as a political weapon to address power imbalances in the international system and a catalyst for economic and political advancement on the continent (Qobo, 2007). Pan-Africanist beliefs, such as the battle for African unity, the establishment of a United States of Africa, and the elimination of all traces of colonialism in Africa dominated this time period, as described by Nyasembi (2007). Qobo (2007) agreed with this assessment, arguing that Pan-Africanism was the dominating repeating concept that propelled Africa's integration attempts during the anti-colonial movements, with an emphasis on continental unification and strong identification of Africans. The proposed answer to Africa's development dilemma—economic unification—required political union in order to succeed. However, youthful post-independence African leaders' reluctance to yield their countries' sovereignty and territorial integrity to a supra-national authority was bolstered

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by the continent's great diversity, which hampered the integration process (De Melo & Tsikata, 2015).

The second began in the 1980s and afterwards, once the Cold War had ended. According to Kimunguyi (2006), the continent did not really pursue regional integration because of the help offered by the competing groups of the East and Western blocs in their ambition to extend their spheres of influence during World War II. Kimunguyi (2006) added that the withdrawal of the Allied forces from Africa following the conclusion of World War II and the Cold War exacerbated the continent's economic difficulties, prompting African leaders to step up their integration efforts. According to De Melo and Tsikata (2015), during this time period, inward-looking integration reflected a desire to develop independently from their colonial masters and occurred simultaneously with the heyday of central planning, when industrialization could be carried out more quickly at the regional level under free trade among members with high tariff barriers applied to non-members.

During the second stage, states and regions began working together on intrastate and extraterritorial projects driven by the market instead of geopolitics. As evidence, the adoption of the Lagos Plan of Action by the Heads of State of the African Union in 1980 can be looked upon. By dividing the continent into Regional Economic Communities (RECs), which would make up a unified economy, the African Economic Community and the Lagos Plan of Action was approved as a vehicle to channel African integration into pan-African unity and continental industrialization. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), and, much later, the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), were all backed by the Economic Commission for Africa (De Melo & Tsikata, 2015).

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The adoption and establishment of the Abuja Treaty of 1991 represents the third stage of integration. The Lagos Plan of Action, was established to handle Africa's economic issues, proved insufficient, prompting the establishment of the Abuja Treaty (Nyasembi, 2019). When looking back at Africa's history of regional integration, it becomes clear that despite the continent's great strides towards economic integration, several obstacles still linger, particularly the problem of insufficient financial resources (Qobo, 2007).

To carry out integration operations and programs, pan-African entities like the African Union Commission and the Regional Economic Communities continue to rely largely on contributions from their member nations (Qobo, 2007). Multiple schemes and overlapping memberships and responsibilities are prominent features of Africa's regional integration and cooperation process. There is not a single country on the African continent that is not a member of at least one regional integration group, and about 27 of the 54 AU Member States are members of two or more such organizations. When compared to other major regions, Africa has the most agreements for economic cooperation and integration across the globe.

2.2. Contestations to Africa's Regional Integration

In an ever-increasingly interconnected and globalized world, the quest for regional integration has become a vital quest for the African continent. The pursuit of unity and cooperation among the continent's diverse nations holds the promise of economic growth, political stability, and social progress. Since the 1960s several efforts by several Heads of States and Governments have sought to consolidate their efforts in the pursuance of the integration Agenda, however, these efforts and the journey to Africa's regional integration is not without its formidable challenges. As this vast and culturally rich continent strives to overcome historical divides and modern complexities, the continent continues to be confronted with a complex web of obstacles that demand careful

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considerations and innovative solutions. Using scholarly evidence gathered from various scholars on the Africa's regional integration agenda, this subsection attempts to highlight some key challenges impeding or constraining the efforts towards the complete and wholistic integration of the African continent.

In examining the regional economic integration discourse in Africa from a political economic standpoint, Jiboku (2015) asserted that Africa has over the years had a high concentration of subregional economic organizations, institutions and multilateral arrangements promoting the goals of integration, yet the continent remains the least integrated of the world's major regions. Jiboku (2015) asserted that the desire for regional economic integration and the achievement of its goals of integration are not matched by the required sacrifice and commitment to propel such efforts. According to the scholar, issues of state sovereignty, power politics as well as parochial interests of African governments and leaders posed a significant challenge to the achievements of the continent's integration efforts. Adding more voice to this issue Wapmuk (2021) added that another issue compounding the issue of low commitment and willpower to advance regional integration in Africa is the problem of low priority accorded to the implementation of integration programs visà-vis national ones which are very often supported and financed by influential international institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank. For example, under the structural adjustment programs (SAP) in place in most African countries, domestic considerations take precedence over sub-regional integration preoccupations (Wapmuk, 2021).

The existence of border conflicts, civil wars, coup d'états, and linguistic rivalries, especially between French- and English-speaking states, as well as racial suspicion on the continent, particularly between black Africans and Arab Africans, are additional obstacles to Africa's regional integration agenda. Due to the unfavorable global economic climate, several of the region's nations

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are obsessed with short-term recovery. In addition, the region lacks a renowned integration leader with impeccable credentials, including a domestic economic track record of monetary and financial stability, a willingness to assume necessary responsibilities, diligent implementation of community programs, and a dominant position in regional trade and finance (Wapmuk & Akinkuotu, 2018).

The state-centric structure of regional integration is an additional barrier to Africa's regional integration ambitions. Regional integration in Africa, according to researchers (Oloruntoba, 2016; Wapmuk, 2021), is restricted to a small group of political technocrats and politicians, with no or minimum engagement of the general public in considering continental integration plans. More strongly, Oloruntoba (2016) argued that civil society in the majority of African nations receives little serious study or focus on integration concerns. The adoption of continental and regional decisions is accompanied by limited involvement and debate at the national level. This difficulty was obvious in the negotiation process for the African Continental Free Trade Area (Wapmuk, 2021). The Nigerian Labor Congress and other civil society groups criticized the signing and ratification of the AfCFTA by the Nigerian government because, according to Wapmuk (2021), various stakeholders were not consulted in the negotiating process of the AfCFTA.

The presence and influence of external powers in Africa's internal affairs is a further significant obstacle to the continent's unity. While the great powers, such as the United States, Russia, Germany, Britain, and France, have remained influential in African affairs, the intensification of relations with emerging powers from the South, primarily China, Brazil, and India, has increased competition for access to the continent's resources and markets, a phenomenon known as The New Scramble for Africa (Wapmuk, 2021).

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Inadequate Governance is another barrier to achieving the full scope and objectives of Africa's regional integration process. The failure of African governments to provide their citizens with an acceptable level of living has led to several struggles for power and control. Throughout addition, elections are prevalent in Africa, although the legitimacy of these elections is a matter of contention. Some African governments are experiencing democratic reversals as a result of the resurgence of military coups, a scenario fraught with regional reaction problems. In Guinea, Mali, and Chad, military coups have removed the leaders of state from power. These coups are not only political military adventurism (Ani, 2001). These countries' governing elites are significantly separated or distanced from the populations they govern. Rather, they indicate a new trend of democratic renegotiation in which populaces are resolutely opposed to government systems that fail to give socioeconomic benefits to their inhabitants.

Closely connected to the aforementioned concern is question of poverty among African states (Eke & Ani, 2017). Although self-determination and self-governance are desirable objectives for politically subjugated people, independence is not a panacea for poverty, as the problems following political liberation may appear to be greater than those previously overcome, as is currently the case in South Sudan, where a more intense conflict has engulfed the newly independent state. The majority of former colonies remain economically undeveloped as a result of Western imperial activities; as a result, they have endured persistent poverty, sickness, starvation, and illiteracy (Eke & Ani, 2017). Greater proportion of African states are impoverished, making it harder for them to participate effectively to their various regional and sub-regional organizations. In other words, poverty has had a significant negative impact on regional integration on the African continent. For instance, it has compelled some regional organizations in Africa to rely on the contributions of non-member states or organizations such as the United States, China, the United Nations, the

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European Union, and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank), among others, in order to finance significant capital projects (Eke & Ani, 2017).

Other researchers have highlighted further obstacles to Africa's integration progress. According to Babic (2020), the greatest obstacle to Africa's regional integration process is the existence of overlapping membership within Regional Economic Communities (RECS) as well as the competing national interests of member states as a result of the continent's enormous variety. In support of Babic's (2020) assertion, Akinyi (2020) identifies the issue of sovereignty, external interference, overlapping membership of states, ideological difference, and the absence of political goodwill and will as some of the most significant obstacles hindering the regional integration process in Africa.

In conclusion, the obstacles confronting Africa's regional integration process are complex and deeply established, posing significant obstacles to the continent's goals for unity, stability, and shared prosperity. This subparagraph addressed the many hurdles African states confront as they attempt to negotiate the tough route to regional integration. Consequently, it is clear that the obstacles facing Africa's regional integration process are strong and numerous, reflecting the continent's complexity. Nevertheless, these obstacles should not obscure the tremendous benefits and transformational power of regional integration for Africa. The continent's extraordinary variety may be utilized as a source of power, cultural richness, and economic vitality. Through diplomatic efforts, conflict resolution methods, and reconciliation procedures, historical injustices can be remedied. Via focused policies and regional cooperation, economic imbalances may be reduced, while political stability and good governance can be fostered through concentrated efforts and strong regional institutions.

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The path to regional integration in Africa is unquestionably difficult, but it is also fraught with great promise and opportunity. African states can overcome these problems and usher in a period of improved regional cooperation and prosperity with unshakable dedication, new methods, and a common vision for an unified and thriving continent. Faced with complex and multifarious hurdles, Africa's regional integration process is a resilient and dynamic undertaking that holds out hope for a brighter future for the continent and its different peoples.

2.3. History of the ECOWAS

The formation of an economic union in the sub-region of West Africa preceded a number of occurrences. William Tubman, the former president of Liberia, was the first to discuss subregional integration. In 1965, Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast, Guinea, and Liberia signed an agreement based on his economic unity concept (Adepoju, 2015). Gnassingbe Eyadema and Yakubu Gowon resurrected the concept in April 1972, with the two heads of state preparing ideas and treaties for the new community, which would be examined by possible members in Lome, Togo in December 1973. In 1975, in Monrovia, Liberia, the document served as the foundation for the Lagos Treaty. ECOWAS ultimately came into existence on May 28, 1975. (Ademola, 2016).

The ECOWAS was founded as a regional economic bloc with the objective of achieving collective self-sufficiency by forming a single trading bloc for its member states and integrating them into a single market area (Agyei & Clottey, 2017). The objective of the Community is to raise the living standards of its citizens, preserve and strengthen their economic security, and stimulate interstate economic cooperation. Five Anglophone states; Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone; nine Francophone states; Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, and Togo; and two Lusophone nation states; Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde, which joined in 1976, were the original sixteen members of ECOWAS. Mauritania terminated its

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participation in 2000 (Bosiakoh, 2012), although a fresh membership agreement was just completed in 2017. Morocco formally applied to join ECOWAS in February 2017 and their request was certified in June 2017 at the summit of Heads of States.

According to Awumbila et al. (2014), the fundamental principles of ECOWAS as stated in its Treaty are to "promote equality and interdependence of member states, inter-state cooperation, solidarity and collective self-reliance, harmonization of policies and integration programmes, nonaggression between member states, maintenance of peace; stability and security; peaceful settlement of disputes; promotion and protection of human rights; promotion and consolidation of decentralization." Even though its member nations share various historical trajectories (colonization, language, and administrative cultures), they have comparable socioeconomic situations, which gave rise to these principles. Therefore, integration of their economies was necessary for them to be internationally competitive (Ayamga, 2014).

Regional integration was consequently viewed as the means to achieve growth and improve people's living conditions (Devillard et al., 2015). However, ECOWAS fell short of its ambitions to economically integrate the subregion due to a multitude of obstacles. Africa had a severe economic and political slump in the 1980s (ECOWAS, 2008). Numerous academics refer to it as the "lost decade." During this time period, the sub-regional organization faced several political problems, including civil wars, armed conflicts, and coup d'états. These obstacles prevented ECOWAS from achieving its aims in a significant way. The terrain of war shifted from interstate to intrastate conflict. ECOWAS subsequently repositioned itself as a security community organization in light of the correlation between security and development (Fayomi & Adeola, 2016).

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2.4. Evolution of ECOWAS Regional Integration

2.4.1. ECOWAS according to the 1975 Treaty

In light of the considerable importance of inter-community collaboration in the quest for economic advancement and prosperity, leaders from the West African subregion endorsed the ECOWAS agreement in Lagos, Nigeria, which aimed to integrate numerous aspects of economic activity (Adepoju, 2015). An important objective of the treaty was to remove barriers that hindered the unrestricted movement of commodities, income, and West African citizens. To achieve this, the ECOWAS agreement on the freedom of movement of persons, freedom of residence, and freedom of migration of workers within the subregion was necessary.

The principal objective of the ECOWAS Treaty of 1975, according to Wulf and Debiel (2009), was to foster economic cooperation. According to Zouhon-Bi and Nielsen (2007), the ECOWAS Treaty of 1975 was executed with the dual purpose of fostering economic union among its constituent nations and advancing political unity and economic convergence in West Africa. Consequently, the objective of ECOWAS's establishment being the integration of the economies of West African governments is manifest. A regional institutional framework for the advancement and synchronisation of economic cooperation in West Africa was established by the Treaty of 1975.

Without any uncertainty, the primary objective behind the establishment of the West African Community was to promote integration and cooperation, with the ultimate goal of establishing an economic and monetary union that would stimulate economic growth and overall development in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) region. This is evident, considering that the Lagos Treaty was initially proposed as an economic undertaking. However, political

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circumstances during that period prompted its modification in 1993, resulting in an enlargement of its jurisdiction and authority (Sulemani, 2019).

2.4.2. ECOWAS according to the Revised Treaty of 1993

The ECOWAS treaty was rewritten to improve economic and political collaboration among ECOWAS member nations and to accomplish economic objectives, especially the common market and single currency project (Razanaparany, 2020). According to Rene, the reformation of the ECOWAS treaty of 1993 represents a significant milestone in her organizational endeavors and in the development of the identity of the West African community. In contrast to the "overly bureaucratic intergovernmental agency of the past", there has been a shift towards "peoplecentered organizations." Many of the ECOWAS objectives outlined in the 1975 treaty were thwarted by security and political issues inside the subregion; hence, the ECOWAS updated treaty was broadened. In addition to fostering commerce, policy harmonization, and free movement, the updated treaty highlights social and political themes like as climate change, conflict resolution, the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises, and the strengthening of international law.

The amended treaty of 1993 made it possible to form new institutions such as the Community Court of Justice, the Community Parliament, the Fund for Cooperation, the Economic and Social Council, and Compensation and Development. Transport, Communications, and Tourism Commission; Food and Agriculture Commission; Administration and Finance Commission; Human Resources, Info Social and Cultural Affairs Commission; Industry, Science and Technology & Energy Commission; Trade, Customs, Taxation, Statistics, Money & Payments Commission; Environment & Natural Resources Commission; and Political, Judicial Commission.

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2.4.3. Expansion of Regional Organizations

Regional organizations have evolved as significant actors in the rich tapestry of international relations, each incorporating its own distinctive thread into the fabric of global administration. The last several decades have witnessed an unparalleled development of regional organizations around the globe, as governments increasingly grasp the potential advantages of pooling their resources, aligning their policies, and pursuing common goals within their geographic vicinity. This rise in regional integration attempts marks a seismic change in the established paradigms of international relations, making the study of these occurrences topical and necessary.

This section will thus serve as an introduction to a series of case studies examining the spread of regional integration. Our objective is to give a thorough context for analyzing the complicated dynamics of regional organizations, providing significant insights into their origins, motives, and the complexities of the difficulties they face. This introduction provides the groundwork for a comprehensive assessment of case studies that explain the spread of regional integration in a variety of circumstances. By examining these individual cases, we want to discover the intricacies of regional organizations' growth, evaluate their accomplishments, and identify the lessons underlying their triumphs and failures. Through careful research, we want to contribute to a deeper understanding of the enormous changes changing the international relations scene.

2.5. Case Studies

2.5.1. OAU to AU

The Organization of African Unity (OAU) was created on May 25, 1963, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The OAU was founded by 32 newly independent African states and was designed to foster African unity, solidarity, and collaboration. The organization's founding was a key milestone in the history of Africa, symbolizing a new era in the continent's quest for freedom and selfdetermination

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(Legum, 1975; Adejumobi, 2002). The OAU was created on the ideals of respect for national sovereignty, non-interference in the internal affairs of member states, and the peaceful settlement of conflicts. The organization's principal objectives were to foster unity among African nations, support the struggle against colonialism and apartheid, and promote economic development and collaboration among African states (Mazrui, 2010).

During its early years, the OAU played a vital role in assisting the independence movements in Africa (Markakis, 1966). The organization gave political and diplomatic support to liberation movements in nations such as Angola, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe (Naldi, 1985). The OAU also supported the anti-apartheid campaign in South Africa and enforced economic sanctions against the apartheid regime (Adejumobi, 2002). The OAU was also essential in fostering economic development and collaboration among African nations. In 1963, the OAU formed the African Development Bank to provide financial support for development initiatives in member states. The OAU also founded the African Economic Community (AEC) in 1991, which aims to enhance economic integration and collaboration among African nations (Lizak, 2016).

Despite its achievements, the OAU encountered various problems during its existence. One of the main complaints of the OAU was that it was unable to properly solve conflicts and crises on the continent. The organization's policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of member nations often precluded the organization from taking action to address conflicts and crises (Adejumobi, 2002). In addition, the OAU was attacked for its lack of financial resources and organizational capacity. The organization heavily depended on external funding, and its bureaucratic processes frequently exhibited sluggishness and inefficiency. The aforementioned issues prompted demands for organizational reform and finally resulted in the formation of the African Union (AU) in 2002 (Nash, 2020)

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The transition from the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to the predecessor Union (AU) was motivated by a multitude of events and rationales. One of the primary factors contributing to this phenomenon was imperative for Africa to assume a more proactive stance in tackling the political and economic obstacles confronting the region (Witt, 2016). The OAU's primary objective of fostering African unity and facilitating collaboration among its member states served as its denominator. Nevertheless, as time elapsed, it became evident that the organization's capacity to tackle the intricate issues confronting the continent was constrained. As an illustration, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) faced constraints in terms of resource availability and lacked the authority to effectively implement resolutions adopted by its member nations.

In light of these constraints, an increasing acknowledgement emerged among African leaders regarding the necessity for a novel institution endowed with a more expansive scope. Consequently, as a result of these developments, the African Union was established in 2002 with the primary objective of fostering integration, cooperation, and advancement throughout the African continent (Akokpari et al., 2008). The transition from the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to the African Union (AU) was primarily motivated by the aspiration to foster economic growth and development across the African continent. The Agenda 2063 of the African Union (AU) provides a comprehensive and forward-looking framework that delineates the continent's aspirations, encompassing lofty objectives pertaining to economic expansion, employment generation, and alleviation of poverty (DeGhetto et al., 2016).

An additional aspect that necessitated attention was the imperative to confront the political obstacles encountered by the continent. The African Union (AU) has assumed a significant role in the advancement of peace and security within the African continent, primarily concentrating on the prevention, mediation, and resolution of conflicts. The African Union (AU) has actively

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engaged in the promotion of democracy and good governance, exemplified by its efforts through the African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance (Glen, 2012). The African Union (AU) has also endeavoured to enhance regional integration and cooperation, exemplified by the establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). The primary objective of the African Continental Free Commerce Area (AfCFTA) is to facilitate and enhance commerce as well as foster economic integration throughout the African continent. This initiative seeks to establish a unified marketplace for the exchange of goods and services.

The transition from the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to the African Union (AU) was primarily motivated by a multitude of elements and rationales. These encompassed the imperative to effectively tackle the intricate obstacles confronting Africa, foster economic progress and advancement, and enhance regional integration and collaboration. Despite encountering several obstacles such as resource constraints and persistent wars, the African Union (AU) have the capacity to assume a pivotal position in advancing a more prosperous and harmonious trajectory for the continent of Africa.

2.5.3. European Union (EU)

It is possible to trace the development of the European Community back to the immediate aftermath of World War II. After the war's devastation, there was a growing realization that Europe needed to unite in order to avert future wars and maintain peace and security on the continent (Wolf, 1982). The unification of the coal and steel industries of France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg, provided the impetus for the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community in 1951 (Gillingham, 2005).

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The foundations for the creation of the European Community go back considerably further. With multiple wars and territorial conflicts over the centuries, Europe has a lengthy history of strife and division (Mearsheimer, 2018). As a result, there was a strong sense of nationalism and a conviction that each nation should protect its own interests. But after the devastation of World War II, many Europeans realized that collaboration and unity were crucial for the survival of the continent. The economic interconnectedness of European nations led to the establishment of the European Community. Many European nations were in ruins as a result of the war's destruction, and they urgently needed to restore their economy (Tilly, 2017). As a result, there was an expansion in international trade and economic cooperation, which sparked a sense of shared destiny and interests.

The start of the Cold War also contributed to the development of the European Community. Many European nations were concerned by the Soviet Union's expanding influence in Eastern Europe and recognized the need for tighter collaboration to offset Soviet dominance (Duchene, 1973; Bomberg et al., 2012). Overall, a number of circumstances, including the destruction brought on by World War II, the economic interdependence of European nations, and the growing Soviet threat, contributed to the formation of the European Community. Due to these preconditions, there was a sense of urgency for greater collaboration and unification, which ultimately resulted in the founding of the European Community and the subsequent European Economic Community.

The expansion from the European Community (EC) to the European Economic Community (EEC) and ultimately to the European Union (EU) was a gradual process that took place over several decades (Dinan, 2004). The EC was established in 1957 by the Treaty of Rome, which aimed to create a common market for goods and services among its member states. The EEC was created in 1958 with the same goal of promoting economic integration and cooperation among member

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states. The Maastricht Treaty, signed in 1992, created the EU by formally establishing a political union among the member states (Cini & Borragan, 2022).

The experience from the EC to the EU was driven by several factors, including the desire to promote political integration and cooperation among member states, as well as the need to address new challenges that arose after the end of the Cold War (McCormick, 2020). The EU was seen as a way to promote economic growth and stability, as well as political stability, in Europe. The Treaty of Lisbon, signed in 2007 (Dougan, 2008), further expanded the powers of the EU by creating a new legal framework for its institutions and policies. This included the creation of a European Parliament with greater powers, the establishment of a President of the European Council, and the creation of a High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (Hofmann, 2009).

Despite the benefits of the expansion from the EC to the EU, there have also been downsides. One of the main criticisms of the EU is that it is too bureaucratic and that it has become disconnected from the needs and concerns of its citizens. There have also been concerns about the loss of national sovereignty and the erosion of democratic accountability within the EU. This constituted part of the reasons for the dismemberment of Britain from the EU. Furthermore, the EU has faced several challenges in recent years, including the global financial crisis, the refugee crisis, and the rise of populism and nationalism in some member states. These challenges have tested the EU's ability to respond effectively to new and emerging threats (Hix, 2013; Hix & Hoyland, 2022).

Overall, the expansion from the EC to the EU has been a complex and gradual process driven by various political, economic, and social factors. While there have been significant benefits to this shift, such as increased economic and political cooperation among member states, there have also

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been downsides and challenges that must be addressed moving forward. Several reasons contributed to the 1992 adoption of the European Union. The goal to encourage political unification and collaboration among member states was one of the key causes. As new problems surfaced with the end of the Cold War, the European Community gave way to the European Union. The EU was moreover considered a means of fostering political stability, economic prosperity, and stability in Europe (Bache et al., 2020). By establishing a new legal foundation for its institutions and programs, such as the appointment of a President of the European Council and a High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the 2007-signed Treaty of Lisbon increased the EU's authority even further.

The European Union (EU) establishment included a protracted and intricate progression characterized by a sequence of treaties, protocols, and political determinations. The European Union (EU) has emerged as a prominent model for regional integration on a worldwide scale, owing to a multitude of variables and rationales. These include its robust economic and political stability, capacity to foster peace and security, and unwavering dedication to democratic principles and the safeguarding of human rights (Jin & Hosli 2017). The treaties of Rome, Paris, and Maastricht have contributed to the continuous expansion of the European Union (EU) and the consolidation of its institutional framework. The Maastricht Treaty holds great significance in the history of the European Union, primarily due to its establishment of key elements such as a unified foreign and security policy, a shared currency, and a framework for collaboration in matters of justice and home affairs (Pipkorn, 1994).

The success of the European Union (EU) in regional integration can be traced to a multitude of causes. One of the foremost determinants of its success lies in its unwavering dedication to maintaining economic and political stability, a characteristic that has facilitated its emergence as

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one of the world's largest and most affluent regional bodies. The European Union's single market, characterized by the unrestricted movement of products, services, capital, and individuals, has established an equitable environment for businesses and consumers, fostering economic expansion and employment opportunities (Howorth, 2014).

Another element that contributes to the European Union's (EU) success is its function in fostering peace and security within the European region. The European Union (EU) has assumed a pivotal role in the resolution of conflicts and the facilitation of reconciliation among its constituent member states, notably in the post-World War II era (Bickerton et al., 2011). The European Union's dedication to democratic principles and the protection of human rights has additionally contributed to the fostering of stability and economic well-being within the region. The institutional architecture of the European Union has established a robust basis for the process of regional integration. The decision-making processes of the European Union (EU) encompass the participation of two key institutions, namely the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union) (Wallace et al., 2020). These processes are designed to uphold principles of democracy, transparency, and accountability, ensuring that decisions are made in a manner that is consistent with these values. The European Court of Justice serves as a vehicle for resolving disputes and preserving the rule of law (Wallace et al., 2020).

In summary, the European Union's expansion in regional integration can be ascribed to a confluence of elements, encompassing its steadfast dedication to economic and political stability, active promotion of peace and security, and well-established institutional structure. Despite encountering several hurdles throughout its history, the European Union (EU) continues to serve as a prominent exemplar of regional integration on a global scale, showcasing the efficacy of cooperative and collaborative efforts.

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2.6. Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of regional integration in Africa, as well as some contestations to regional integration in Africa, an overview of the historical evolution of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and some helpful cases that explain the expansion of regional organizations in Europe and Africa. The "how" of regional organization's growth was partially explained by the insights presented in this chapter. The purpose of the next chapter is to address the topic of "why" regional organizations expand, with a focus on the ECOWAS, as well as to highlight the expansions that have occurred and the obstacles that prevent regional organizations from fulfilling their full potential.

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CHAPTER THREE
ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

3.0 Introduction

The Economic Community of West African States was founded in 1975 as a result of the collaboration of other subregional heads of state and government and the leadership effort of Nigeria and Togo. The establishment of the Economic Community of West African States was motivated by the recognition that a regional platform was essential for the collaboration and prosperity of the subregion. Numerous treaties have been signed, numerous institutions have been created, and numerous protocols have been approved since the organization's creation in order to achieve the goal conditions for which the regional body was established. The trajectory of integration and regionalism in Africa has undergone several transformations, influenced by the dominant socioeconomic and ideological circumstances on a global and national scale. Differing initiatives have been devoted to establishing and/or developing regional organizations in West Africa; hence, this chapter presents a literature review and debate, as well as respondent data, about the ECOWAS mandate's expansion. More precisely, this chapter provides an examination and evaluation of the information gathered regarding the obstacles and constraints encountered by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) during the implementation of its expanded mandate, the underlying reasons for the expansion of the ECOWAS mandate, and an assessment of the organization's success in fulfilling its expanded mandate.

3.1. Areas of Expansion of the ECOWAS

In the contemporary global landscape, regional economic integration has emerged as a pivotal force driving socio-economic development and fostering geopolitical stability. Among the various regional blocs, the Economic Community of West African States stands out as a beacon of

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cooperation and integration within the West African sub-region. Founded in 1975 with the primary objective of promoting economic integration and cooperation among its member states, the Economic Community of West African States has evolved significantly over the years, adapting to the dynamic challenges and opportunities of the global arena. The ECOWAS framework has traditionally since its inception focused on economic cooperation, trade liberalization, and harmonization policies to facilitate intra-regional trade and investment. However, as the global landscape evolves with new challenges emerging, there arises a pressing need to reevaluate and expand the scope of ECOWAS' activities to address contemporary issues facing the region comprehensively. This section thus aims to examine the areas of expansion within the ECOWAS with the aid of research participants.

3.1.1. Peace and Security Dimension

There has been a noticeable shift in the mandate of ECOWAS towards security cooperation and peacekeeping within the region. This according to (Kabia, 2011) was in recognition of the fact that economic development cannot occur without a stable political and secured environment. The expansion of the ECOWAS mandate to include a comprehensive security component represents one of the most significant evolutions of the organization since its inception. As West African nations faced various security challenges including political instability and the threat of terrorism, the Economic Community of West African States recognized that such issues, if left unmanaged, could severely hinder regional integration and economic success. In interviews with the study participants, a key expansion of the ECOWAS' mandate was revealed to be that of expansionism into the Security and Stability dimension of regional integration.

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According to insights gleaned from interviews with research participants, the regional organisation (ECOWAS) has devoted significant attention to community security matters and conflict management since 1978. The regional organization's focus on community security and conflict management was a contributing factor to the formulation of article 4 of the revised treaty, which outlined the fundamental principles of the community, according to interviews with the first respondent. The participant added that principles five and six of Article 4 of the revised treaty to further highlight the expansion of the regional organization into the peace and security dimension. To quote the participant's exact words, "*…the ECOWAS expansion into the peace and security dimension can be realized in the revision of the ECOWAS treaty in 1993 specifically principles 5 and 6 which highlight the maintenance of regional peace, stability and security through the promotion and strengthening of good neighborliness and the peaceful settlement of disputes among member states, active co-operation between neighboring countries and promotion of a peaceful environment as a prerequisite for economic development….*". This assertion by the research participant was revealed to be equally shared by Babalola (2021).

In another interview with the third participant, it was revealed that the establishment of the ECOMOG (ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group) and its deployment during to Liberia during the Liberia crisis marked a significant point in the ECOWAS' expansion into the security dimension. Accordingly, the participant added that, since the deployment of the ECOMOG, the interference in domestic affairs has since been ubiquitous in West. To quote the participant verbatim, "*the ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group although in not getting express permission from the United Nations to the use of force as per Article 2(4) of the United Nations Charter used force to halt the crisis in Liberia….thus, the deployment of the ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring*

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Group's army signalled what would start the ECOWAS' transition (expansion) into a security community…".

Sharing a similar claim, the fourth respondent claimed that ECOMOG could be referred to as the regional organization's first attempt at a regional security initiative thus marking its expansion into a regional security organization. To quote the respondent verbatim, "…*within Africa, ECOMOG represented the first credible attempt at a regional security initiative since the Organization of African Unity attempted to establish an 'Inter-African Force' to intervene in the Chad crisis in 1981*". These claims were equally shared by Eyo and Aniah (2021) as well as Aleman (2018) in his study titled "The Evolution of ECOWAS: How the Economic Organization Transitioned into Peace and Security".

The expansion in the mandate of the Economic Community of West African States towards security cooperation and peacekeeping efforts reflects a crucial evolution that recognizes the link between security and development. The interviews with some research participant coupled with some scholarly evidences have confirmed this expansion highlighting the establishment of Article 4 of the revised treaty and the deployment of the ECOMOG during the Liberia crisis as some key milestones. The deployment of the ECOMOG during the Liberia crisis could be realized as a form of functional spillover from economic integration to security cooperation. The crisis threatened economic stability, prompting ECOWAS to take security measures to protect its economic interests. As ECOWAS intervened in security matters, it further strengthened regional cooperation and trust among member states, thus potentially leading to deeper integration in security affairs over time.

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3.1.2. Political Dimension

The expansion of the ECOWAS mandate from an economic standpoint or dimension into a political dimension occurred gradually over time. In an interview with a third research participant, it was held that the ECOWAS' expansion into the political dimension began in the 2000s after several years of primarily focusing on economic integration and in recognition of the need to address political instability and promote good governance in order to consolidate the gains of democracy and ensure sustainable development. To quote the third research participant verbatim, "..*ECOWAS expanded its mandate into the political dimension in the 2000s, in response to the increasing political instability and conflicts in West Africa. The organization recognized that economic integration alone was not enough to foster stability and development in the region. To address these challenges, ECOWAS developed a comprehensive political framework known as the Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, which was adopted in 2001. The Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance established the principles and standards for democratic governance, human rights protection, and the rule of law within member states. This expansion into the political dimension represents a broadening of ECOWAS' scope beyond economic integration.*"

Although this assertion was largely shared amongst the other research participants, the fifth respondent provided a contrary assertion which was revealed to be supported by some scholarly works (Ajayi & Olu-Adeyemi, 2015; Aminu & Raja, 2021; Terwase et al., 2015). According to the research participant, the expansion of the ECOWAS mandate into the political dimension could be traced as far back as 1978 through the establishment of the ECOWAS Protocol on NonAggression , followed by the adoption of the ECOWAS Protocol on Mutual Assistance on Defense in 1981 and a later major step into the political arena through the Supplementary Protocol on

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Democracy and Good Governance in 1999. To quote the participant verbatim "…*Over time, ECOWAS gradually expanded its mandate to include the political dimension. It started with the ECOWAS Protocol on Non-Aggression in 1978, which sought to prevent member states from using force against each other. Then, it adopted the ECOWAS Protocol on Mutual Assistance on Defense in 1981, which aimed to strengthen defense and security cooperation among member states. In 1999, ECOWAS made a major move towards political integration by adopting the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance…*"

From the responses gathered, it is evident that the ECOWAS has played a crucial role in its mandate as a political organization with achievements such as the promotion of democracy and good governance, the strengthening of democratic institutions, the promotion of human rights as well as the establishment of the ECOWAS Court of Justice and ECOWAS Parliament amongst others. These achievements evince the regional body's expansion into the political dimension and its achievements as a political organization, as well as its commitment to promoting values of democracy and promoting political stability and economic development.

The Economic Community of West African States initially focused on the economic integration and development of its member states. However, given the interdependence between economic development and political, the ECOWAS has progressively expanded its mandate into the political dimension. The adoption of protocols and frameworks related to democracy, good governance, and human rights can be seen as functional spillover from economic integration with the establishment of institutions like the ECOWAS Court of Justice and Parliament interpreted as institutional spillover, where the need for legal and political frameworks to support economic integration led to the creation of new political institutions.

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This evidence further supports the neo-functionalist assumption that as cooperation in one area deepens, it creates pressures and incentives for further integration in other areas, contributing to the overall development and cohesion of the regional organization.

3.1. Motivations for the Expansion of the ECOWAS Mandate

The proliferation of regional institutions and the diversification of their operations during the last century have significantly contributed to an excessive preoccupation with the study of regionalism. Recognizing the facts of the present international order, which is predominately interdependent, sovereign states have developed an appreciation for it. Despite the fact that these sovereign governments continue to implement real safeguards for their sovereignty with the utmost avarice, the trend of states rigidly adhering to sovereignty is fast passing (Nwangu et al., 2019). Over time, sovereign nations have developed a noteworthy recognition of the necessity for collaboration in the use and exploitation of worldwide resources, which serves the common interest of all international community members (Nwangu et al., 2019). The notion of a global village has materialized as a result of the revival of regionalism's aspirations and the revolutions in information and communication technology development; this has increased economic interdependence (Nwangu et al., 2019). In a similar vein, Nwangwu and Okoye (2014) assert, with reference to Robinson Crusoe, that the anecdote of a legendary hermit who endured and prospered in seclusion is wholly antithetical to the present-day global landscape, where the convergence of sovereign states has become an absolute necessity for survival and international significance.

The preamble to the Treaty of the Economic Community of West African States, signed in May 1975, provides an eight-point rationale for the significance of an economic community and the manner in which it ought to be established. Nwangwu et al. (2019) assert that the principal objective of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is to advance

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development and cooperation across all sectors of the economy with the dual-purpose of strengthening member nations' bonds and facilitating the advancement and prosperity of the African continent. The establishment of the Community was essentially compelled by the economic pressures that plagued the area throughout the early 1970s. Several West African nations were already grappling with economic challenges by the mid-1970s, which had been precipitated by the worldwide oil price shock of 1973. As time has passed, the economic scope of ECOWAS has been augmented to embrace a more extensive array of political, social, and security concerns. A significant and conspicuous expansion took place during the 1990s when the economic coalition engaged in the political uprisings in Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Guinea Bissau, therefore advancing the organization's mission in the areas of political stability and conflict resolution. Analogous enlargements of the ECOWAS mandate have been documented. For instance, in the realm of democracy and good governance, the organization has conscientiously revoked the membership of numerous defaulting member-states (e.g., Ivory Coast, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Burkina Faso, and Niger) over the course of the last decade (Nwangwu et al., 2019). The ECOWAS has further broadened its scope to include social development and human rights by creating the ECOWAS Court of Justice in 2001. This institution serves as a forum for resolving human rights breaches and providing justice within the region.

To summarize, the ECOWAS has expanded its mission throughout the years to encompass a diverse array of concerns that extend beyond its original economic orientation. As the years have passed, the group has emerged as a major advocate for human rights, sustainable development, and regional stability in West Africa and the whole continent. In order to enhance comprehension of the evolution of the ECOWAS organization, the research gathered data from participants about the rationales that have driven the enlargement of the ECOWAS mandate throughout the years. To

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identify some key motivations for the expansion of the regional organization's (ECOWAS) mandate, respondents highlighted the expansion to be attributable to a combination of some internal and external motivations.

In interviews with a participant, an International Relations scholar, it was revealed that the issue of political instability, insecurity and the high incidence of conflict within the region was a significant factor that motivated the expansion in the mandate of ECOWAS. According to the respondent, there couldn't have existed social and economic integration without political stability and peace and as such, the issues of political instability had to be added in the mandate of the ECOWAS to ensure progress in curbing political instability which was necessary for achieving the overall aim of economic prosperity. To quote the participant verbatim, *"……..the West African heads of states after some time realized the fact that economic prosperity could not be possible without the region being safe and harmonious….this ensured that in 1993, the official treaty was revised to entail 22 chapters and 93 articles which made it more detailed than its predecessors……..to function as a regional organization this expansion was essential for instituting new legal frameworks that could enforce political decisions on member states to reduce the incidence or occurrence of political instability within the region…*"(Participant 3).

Buttressing the claims of the earlier respondent, another participant also expressed that, it is without a doubt that the Economic Community of West African States was fundamentally formed to support cooperation and integration in order to set the stage for an economic and monetary union which would yield economic prosperity and development in the ECOWAS region, which is evident in the Lagos treaty however, political events at the time led to its revision and expansion in the scope and powers in 1993. To quote the respondent, "*…..there is absolutely no denying the fact that the West African Community (ECOWAS) was fundamentally set up to support the activities of*

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integration and cooperation in order to set the stage for a monetary and economic union that would yield development for its member states. This is evident, since the Lagos treaty was originally touted as an economic initiative; however, political events of the time led to its revision and for that matter an increase in the scope and powers of the regional integration to include other equally important aspects of the African development, such as conflict resolution, political stability and cultural integration……"(participant 5)

The assertion held by Participant 3 and 5 on the need for political stability as a key motivation for the expansion of the ECOWAS mandate was equally shared by the first and fourth respondent who shared similar views to that stated above. These assertions by the respondents reasonably highlight the assumptions of functional necessity and spillover effects in the integration process. Similarly, these views were equally held by Kabia (2011) and Gupta (2015) who opined that after the deployment of the ECOMOG, the West African Heads of States realized that it was essential for the ECOWAS to expand its mandate as it was a prerequisite for the development of states within the region.

In other interviews with respondent, a key determinant for the expansion of the ECOWAS mandate was revealed to be as a result of global norms and standards. In interviews with respondents it was highlighted that the global shift towards democratic governance and human rights concerns influenced the ECOWAS to incorporate these principles into its mandate thus expanding the mandate. In interviews with the second participant, it was expressed that *"…..the expansion of the ECOWAS mandate has been to an extent influenced by global norms and standards, especially in response to international developments and commitments….an example of this is the organization's commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the African Charter*

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on Human and People's Rights….this integration of human rights principles into the organization's mandate reflects a commitment to upholding international standards…"

(Participant 2)

In responses gathered from the fourth participant, it was iterated that the ECOWAS mandate has expanded owing to some extent, the influence of global norms. In making the claim, the respondent argued the point that in response to the global challenge of terrorism, the regional organization expanded its mandate to include counterterrorism initiatives. The adoption of the ECOWAS Counter Terrorism Strategy aligns with global efforts to combat terrorism. The participant also added that in response to the global issue of climate change, the ECOWAS Climate Change Policy was incorporated into the organization's mandate as a means of demonstrating the regional organization's commitment to aligning with global norms, such as that outlined in the Paris Agreement. To quote the respondent verbatim, "……*the ECOWAS has also over the years been motivated by global standards and key developments, in response to new developments across the globe and even in Africa in regards to terrorism, ECOWAS incorporated counter-terrorism into its mandate…the adoption of the ECOWAS Counter-Terrorism Strategy aligns with global efforts at combatting terrorism….another way to recognize how global standards and key developments influence the expanding mandate of the ECOWAS is the organization's adoption of the ECOWAS Climate Change Policy and other related initiatives to demonstrate a commitment to aligning regional efforts with global norms, such as those listed in the Paris Agreement….*" (Participant 4)

In interviews with the first participant, it was further argued that the international partnerships with other organizations such as the United Nations and the African Union has significantly influenced the expansion of the institutions mandate. According to the participant, collaboration with

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organizations such as the United Nations and African Union has influenced the organization's mandate of regional security and comprehensive peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction efforts through infrastructural support. According to the participant, the United Nations provided guidance to the ECOWAS in developing a force structure, rules of engagement, and operational procedures that adhered to international norms, thus ensuring that the ECOWAS Standby Force could seamlessly collaborate with UN Peacekeeping efforts when necessary. To quote the respondent, "*…….the establishment of the ECOWAS Standby Force was guided by principles aligned with United Nations Peacekeeping standards…..the UN provided guidance to ECOWAS in developing a force structure, rules of engagement, and operational procedures that adhered to international norms, ensuring that the ESF could seamlessly collaborate with UN Peacekeeping efforts when necessary..*" (Participant 1)

Yaya (2014) echoed the participants' assertions regarding the impact of significant developments and global norms as the impetus for the ECOWAS's mandate expansion. She described how the emergence of new challenges, particularly conflicts, following the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s compelled the ECOWAS to engage in peacekeeping, conflict resolution, and conflict management in Liberia in 1991. Yaya (2014) further observed that the supplementary protocol on democracy and good governance and the protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping, and Security—both of which promote democratic governance—were influenced by earlier instruments, including the Cairo Declaration of June 29, 1993, which called for the establishment of a mechanism to prevent, manage, and resolve conflicts in Africa, and Decision AHG.DEC 142. While neo-functionalism primarily focuses on internal dynamics driving integration, it also acknowledges the influence of external

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factors such as global norms, geopolitical considerations and international agreements as identified above by the respondents.

From the above assertions, the motivations for the expansion of the ECOWAS mandate include internal motivations such as the Issue of Political Instability, the need for Democracy and Good Governance and the need for Peace and Security as well as external motivations such as the need to conform or stay ahead of global norms, standards and key developments.

3.2. Challenges and Limitations Faced by the ECOWAS in the Implementation of its Expanded Mandate

Since its establishment in 1975, the mission of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has undergone substantial changes. ECOWAS, which was initially founded to facilitate economic integration among West African nations, has since expanded its purview to include an array of political, security, and social issues that have an effect on the sub-region. By strategically expanding its mandate, the organization demonstrates its capacity to respond to the dynamic conditions faced by member states, acknowledging the interconnectedness of political stability, economic development, and security. However, upon embarking on this bold initiative to expand its jurisdiction, ECOWAS was certain to encounter a multitude of challenges and limitations that may have impacted the implementation of its broader objectives.

The organization's recognition of the multifaceted nature of regional development is seen in the expansion of the Economic Community of West African States' mandate to encompass not just economic cooperation but also political stability, democracy promotion, human rights, and peacekeeping. Notwithstanding the presence of more than twenty subgroupings and schemes of multilateral cooperation in West Africa (excluding various bilateral arrangements among West African states) and the evident benefits that arise from economic cooperation among member

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states, the region's vision, objectives, and obstacles to the fulfillment of the ECOWAS mandate continue to impede progress. The following challenges are present, albeit not exhaustive:

3.2.1. The issue of Political Instability and Political Will

Africa, and more specifically West Africa, has been typified by political turmoil over the last four decades (Ogundiya, 2010). West Africa has seen political instability, ranging from coups to fullfledged civil wars. Since the forming of the ECOMOG on August 7, 1990, following the outbreak of the civil war in Liberia (Arinze et al., 2016), several other instances of political instability have emerged across the region, with notable examples including Guinea-Bissau (1999), Mali (2012;

2020), Burkina Faso (2015; 2022), Guinea (2021), Chad (2021), and Niger (2023), among others. In conversations with respondents, it was widely agreed that political instability was a major impediment to ECOWAS achieving its purpose. According to discussions with the first participant, civil upheaval caused by insurgencies and coups, among other things, has the potential to impede the ECOWAS' ability to deliver on its commitments. The participant went on to say that political instability has a detrimental influence on the ECOWAS integration agenda because it produces an unsafe and unwelcoming climate for ECOWAS and its member nations' overall progress. To quote the participant verbatim. "*Civil turmoil from insurgencies and coups hinder ECOWAS's ability to deliver. This has significant ramifications for achieving economic unification because the climate for such a shared market is unstable. Political instability among member nations can significantly impact their ability to contribute to the regional economic bloc's success*." (First participant)

In a similar vein, an additional participant (participant 4) stated that notwithstanding ECOWAS's 1982 initiative to establish a National Cell in every Member State to advance integration and promote ECOWAS's activities, the persistent challenge of conflicts and instability impeded

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regional integration, with certain member states (e.g., Mali and Burkina Faso) experiencing glaringly adverse socioeconomic consequences and significant levels of displacement. To directly cite the respondent "*The regional integration project has been significantly impeded by the region's political instability. Notwithstanding specific accomplishments in combating political instability, the ECOWAS region continues to face a multitude of deficiencies and obstacles in its pursuit of regional integration. The ECOWAS Council of Ministers suggested in 1982 that each Member State establish a National Cell tasked with further integration and promoting ECOWAS's operations. Nonetheless, hostilities and instability continue to be obstacles to the integration process, with direct socioeconomic repercussions and the forced relocation of millions of residents among the victims...*" (Participant 4)

Moreover, the participants in the survey also identified the absence or insufficiency of political determination as an additional obstacle to ECOWAS's execution of its mandate. During an interview with the fifth participant whose explanation was more nuanced than that of the other research participants in articulating this issue, it was said that the discrepancy between regional rhetoric and national execution posed an obvious obstacle to ECOWAS's implementation of its increased mission. The participant noted that this impedes the integration of domestic policies and laws into a supranational framework such as that of ECOWAS. The participant additionally mentioned the absence of continuity between election cycles in West Africa and how recently elected leaders frequently abandon previously established positions in an effort to establish their own identity and distinguish their governments from those of their predecessors. Regional protocols frequently encounter a dearth of support from law, procedures, and regulations at the national level, resulting in a general absence of uniformity and enforcement.

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To quote the participant, "*National implementation of decisions that have been agreed upon at the regional level is beset by a significant absence of political will. Significant disparities exist between regional discourse and national execution. Although the primary focus of regional groups is policymaking, national governments continue to bear the responsibility for their execution. Nevertheless, some member-states exhibit a paradoxical adherence to their national sovereignty while also advocating for regional integration. The harmonization of national policies and regulations into a supranational framework is impeded by this paradox. Moreover, consistency is sometimes lacking between election cycles in West Africa. In their eagerness to distinguish their governments and seize control of the nation from their predecessors, newly elected politicians sometimes forsake previously held beliefs. As a result, laws, regulations, and procedures at the national level frequently fail to endorse regional practices, leading to a breakdown in overall enforcement and uniformity.*" (Participant 5)

The participant posits that this circumstance engenders deficiencies in regional institutional capacity, tenuous interconnections across national and regional institutions, a lack of genuine political dedication to the process of regional integration, and procedures for prioritizing policies. This perspective was discovered to be consistent with the results reported by Nwangwu et al. (2019) and Ajide & Raheem (2016).

The statement that political stability and political will pose a barrier to the ECOWAS mandate's implementation was concurred with by the remaining study participants and was additionally supported by research conducted by Ajisola (2023), Eke and Ani (2017), Fagbadebo (2007), Nwangwu et al. (2019), and numerous others.

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3.2.2. Economic Challenges

Ongoing challenges have plagued the ECOWAS area in terms of intra-regional commerce. The World Trade Organization (WTO) reports that intra-African trade is presently valued at 17 percent, but intra-Asia and intra-European trade are valued at 58 percent and 68 percent, respectively. Even lower, intra-regional commerce in West Africa comprises less than 10 percent of the total trade of any nation (UNCTAD, 2019). Gammadigbé (2019) asserts that although the notable endeavors of the West African regional grouping to integrate itself, the average intra-regional trade rate throughout the period 2014-2018 remained at a mere 9.2 percent. The author posits that this was due to member nations' ongoing commercial relations with their previous occupiers and, to a greater extent, with growing economies like China. Despite its origins as a regional organization dedicated to fostering economic integration, collaboration, and progress, the organization has encountered persistent economic obstacles that remain unresolved despite its efforts to address them.

During interviews with participants aimed at identifying the obstacles to the regional organization's mandate implementation, it was revealed that the organization's endeavors to accomplish its established mandate concerning economic development remain hampered by the persistent inconsistency or inadequate management of regional trade policies. The participant in the research asserts that "*.....notwithstanding the implementation of various mechanisms by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), including the Common External Tariff (ETLS) and the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS), among others, these mechanisms remain insufficiently administered and inconsistently implemented among member states, afflicted by enforcement challenges, as evidenced by the recent closure of Nigerian retail outlets in Ghana in*

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October 2019 and the closure of Nigerian borders in August 2019; both incidents underscore the ineffectiveness of the region." (Participant 3)

Buttressing this claim, another respondent (Participant 2) also added that, "*although trade liberalization schemes of the community are meant to follow a three phase implementation approach, its member states have over the years continued to practice economic protectionism which runs counter to the goals of the ETLS*"

The aforementioned claims were corroborated by Agbodji's (2007) research in 2007, which demonstrates the protracted nature of the challenge pertaining to the inconsistent and inadequate administration of regional trade policies throughout the West African regional economic bloc's history. Adding to this, the third participant in the survey cited the inadequate and substandard state of infrastructure as an additional obstacle hindering advancements towards the regional organization's increased mission. As per the respondent's assertion, transport infrastructure plays a pivotal role in fostering economic development. Consequently, the inadequate state of transport infrastructure throughout the region impedes the fulfillment of the ECOWAS mandate. For instance, substandard road infrastructure may impede trade barriers by impeding member states' ability to conduct seamless cross-border transactions; compromised connectivity further restricts the efficient flow of goods and services. As stated by the responder, "*Infrastructure is vital to economic development, regional integration, and the general welfare of states...however, the inadequate state of transport infrastructure in the ECOWAS area is a substantial obstacle to the achievement of the organization's regional goals. Among other things, the inadequate infrastructure in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) area hinders the fulfillment of the organization's objectives and exacerbates trade barrier difficulties.*" (Participant 3)

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This assertion was equally supported by the findings of Gammadigbe (2017; 2021) and Oloruntoba (2016) among others and equally shared by the participants interviewed.

3.2.3. The Challenge of Dependency on External Actors

A persistent concern linked to regional economic integration within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is the enduring issue of foreign meddling and reliance on former colonial powers, and more recently, emerging hegemons like China. Adeniran (2012) argues that the inability of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to establish a unified external tariff system is due to colonial influences that persistently threaten to divide the area into two major blocs—the Anglophone bloc and the Francophone bloc. Additionally, the researcher emphasized that the Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest Africaine (UEMOA) has been embroiled in conflicting endeavors and has contributed to the escalation of animosity between Anglophone and Francophone nations. Further supporting the aforementioned claim, Thomas (2018) said that the ECOWAS nations' external reliance on established metropoles is a significant impediment to the development of a regional economy in West Africa. A participant in the research shared a perspective comparable to that of Adeniran (2012) and Thomas during an interview (2018). As per the participant, an important obstacle impeding the endeavors of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is the intervention of external actors, including regional economic blocs like the European Union and certain emerging economies like China, in addition to former colonial powers. As reported by the participant, "*…One of the primary obstacles to ECOWAS' economic integration is its excessive dependence on other players, including former colonial powers, growing hegemons like China, and the European Union, which persistently pursue Economic Partnership Agreements. Because of their asymmetrical interconnectedness with the rest of the world, emerging economies (including those of ECOWAS member nations) are*

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susceptible to foreign economic forces that hinder collaboration and the achievement of the organization's mandate within the region…" (Participant 2)

Furthermore, an additional participant stated that the trade patterns of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) members demonstrate a strong inclination towards vertical relations with industrialized nations and a comparatively weaker inclination towards horizontal relations among themselves. This dynamic exacerbates the problem of an unjust balance of trade payments, which hampers the progress agenda of the region. As stated directly by the respondent, "The trade pattern of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) member states indicates a significant reliance on vertical relations with industrialized nations and little on horizontal relations among themselves." This dynamic exacerbates the balance of payment dilemma and consequently hinders the advancement of the ECOWAS region's development agenda.

In summary, the Economic Community of West African States encounters a multifaceted collection of obstacles in the course of carrying out its official duties. The member nations are beset by political instability, disputes, institutional weakness, challenges in implementing policies, and reliance on external players as the EU, USA, and China, among others.

3.3. Examining the extent to which the ECOWAS has been successful in achieving its expanded objectives in terms of regional economic integration.

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) exemplifies the dynamic nature of regional cooperation by evolving from a purely economic organization to one equipped with a comprehensive mandate that includes political stability, social growth, and security. Central to this advancement has been the intentional and resolute pursuit of regional economic integration, a foundational objective that bolsters the organization's endeavors to advance the welfare of its

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component countries as a whole. Hence, a critical evaluation of the extent to which the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has accomplished its expanded objectives of regional economic integration constitutes the objective of this sub-topic.

Since its inception, the Economic Community of West African States has undergone a continuous evolution, expanding its focus beyond conventional economic issues in order to address the interconnected challenges faced by West African nations. A comprehensive assessment of the ECOWAS's accomplishments and deficiencies must consider not just institutional procedures and policy frameworks, but also the tangible impacts on the economies of member states. Prior to embarking on this inquiry, it is imperative to acknowledge the diverse economic circumstances and stages of progress that define the member states of ECOWAS. The region encompasses economies that vary in status from low-income nations to emerging markets, each with its own set of advantages, challenges, and growth trajectories. Through the execution of this inquiry, the segment aspires to offer an intellectually discerning and academic addition to the discourse concerning the efficacy of the Economic Community of West African States in achieving its overarching objectives of regional economic integration.

Concerning the effectiveness of ECOWAS as a regional organization, there is a complex discussion that is contingent on a variety of factors and points of view. Since its inception in 1975, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has been instrumental in promoting integration and regional collaboration in West Africa. There are several determinants that contribute to its apparent success; conversely, obstacles serve to underscore the necessity for enhancements in some domains. The subsequent allegations were uncovered through interviews with respondents in an effort to determine whether or not the ECOWAS has achieved its increased mandate.

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Based on interviews conducted with the second participant, there was a prevailing belief that ECOWAS has emerged as a formidable political entity, frequently engaging in domestic conflicts across West Africa. The participant maintained that ECOWAS has been shaped into a military danger and a steadfast regional watchdog. Nevertheless, the participant maintained a firm conviction that the organization has achieved only marginal success and has mostly failed in the realm of economics. As stated by the study participant, "*...In terms of the economy, ECOWAS has achieved only little success on the whole (... Politically, the situation is comparable, with only a few notable accomplishments and the majority consisting of a series of interventions that are only momentarily successful before the intervening nation descends back into anarchy a few years later...... Nevertheless, perhaps, all things considered, these two fronts of largely unsuccessful endeavors are triumphs due to the circumstances. In any case, the limited political and economic integration that ECOWAS has managed to attain is far more than what might have been accomplished in its absence....*" (Participant 2)

It was found that the participant's claim was nearly identical to that of Novicoff (n.d.), who also maintained that the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has accomplished more for West Africa than it ever would have managed on its own. Nevertheless, the participant argued that the region's actual growth rates remain significantly below what several countries in East Asia, as well as the majority of South and Southeast Asia, have accomplished.

According to a separate interview with a participant in the research, while the ECOWAS has undeniably achieved success, any discernible, far-reaching effects inside West Africa or among its member nations remain difficult to ascertain. The participant maintained that a substantial portion of the ECOWAS's policies and programs, including its liberalization program, have failed to yield quantifiable economic benefits or substantial changes. As a consequence of this deficiency, the

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participant argued, economic development in the region has remained inadequate. The member nations of the organization persistently grapple with challenges like as smuggling operations, political instability, wars, domestic crises, and pervasive corruption. Nevertheless, the respondent highlighted the accomplishments of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), including the successful construction of the West African Gas Pipeline, the elimination of barriers impeding the unrestricted movement of individuals, commodities, and services, and the enhancement of the right of residence and establishment of citizens among member states. Furthermore, the organization's track record in peacekeeping operations and conflict resolution challenges the notion that it is an unqualified failure. To paraphrase the participant exactly: *"While the Economic Community of West African Nations (ECOWAS) has made certain advancements, the absence of discernible and extensive consequences for the region of West Africa or its member states remains problematic. Research and experience indicate that the majority of ECOWAS policies and programs, including the liberalization program, have failed to produce quantifiable economic benefits or significant changes. The persistence of inadequate economic growth in the West African area, and more precisely, in its member nations, might be seen as an indication of failure. …… Massive corruption, illicit trade, and internal strife have characterized the member nations... It is difficult to label the organization a failure, however, due to its limited achievements in achieving the free movement of persons, services, and goods, as well as the rights of establishment and residence of citizens of member states. This is in addition to its achievements in peacekeeping and conflict management, which include the successful facilitation of the West African Gas Pipeline and the ECOWAS passport, and its track record of successes.* (Participant 1)

The aforementioned perspectives were also shared by two other participants (respondents third and fifth), who expressed apathy toward the claim of ECOWAS's success or lack thereof over its four

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decades of existence. This viewpoint is also held by Hillary (2017) and Novicoff (n.d.), among a number of others. Interviews with the fourth participant, however, unveiled an opposing viewpoint. As per the research participant, the Economic Community of West African States

(ECOWAS) has encountered both successes and obstacles in its capacity as a regional player. Nevertheless, the participant contended that the narrative of contemporary times is more characterized by obstacles rather than a combination of triumphs and difficulties. As per the reply, the ECOWAS's security accomplishments, which were previously a source of great pride, have been significantly tainted in recent years by an increasing number of coup d'états in the area. In a similar vein, the responder maintained that intra-ECOWAS trade in West Africa has stayed below 10 percent of the region's overall trade shares since 2001, which is much less than the proportion of trade conducted with the European Union and China. The assertion was demonstrated to be supported by the research conducted by Adetula (2009) and Gammadigbé (2019). Additionally, the participant maintained that in order to classify a regional organization as successful, it must be purpose-driven and backed by transparent mechanisms for implementation, monitoring, and evaluation; therefore, it would be challenging to label the ECOWAS as a success, but more accurately, a failure.

To quote the respondent verbatim "*As a regional security player, ECOWAS has encountered both successes and obstacles, most notably the restoration of democratic administrations in a number of member nations... A notable accomplishment that the organization always took pride in, namely its security accomplishments, has experienced a substantial deterioration in light of the recent string of coups that have occurred in Niger, Burkina Faso, and Mali... Furthermore, when considering the economic dimension, the area has made little progress in enhancing its intraregional commerce, which has remained below 10 percent since 2001... ECOWAS's goals and*

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purposes must be supported by proper implementation, monitoring, and evaluation processes in order for it to be considered successful; unfortunately, this does not appear to be the case." (Participant 4)

Nwedu (2022) expressed a similar viewpoint in the essay "The Position of the Economic Community of West African States in Regional Integration in Africa," which corresponds to the respondent's argument.

From the information gathered from respondents and backed by secondary literature, it can be deduced that ECOWAS has achieved noteworthy progress in its endeavors to foster economic integration, peace, and regional collaboration. Despite this, the organization continues to face obstacles, including political instability, economic inequities, and institutional capability, in order to increase the efficacy of its efforts to fulfill its goal. Attaining regional success necessitates ongoing dedication, cooperative efforts, and flexible approaches.

3.4. Chapter Conclusion

This chapter presented an evaluation and discussion on the information gathered from the research participants. More precisely, the chapter provided information gathered from research participants on the areas of expansion, the challenges and constraints facing the expansion of the Economic Community of West African States, the motivations for the expansion of the Economic Community of West African States and an assessment of respondent views as to the successes of the ECOWAS' mandate in light of its expanded mandate.

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CHAPTER FOUR
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.0. Introduction

This chapter presents the results, insights gained, obstacles encountered, and suggestions put forth by the research guided by the theory of neo-functionalism. The suggestions in this study are derived from observations and data collected from the literature and interviews that comprised the study's findings. To ensure that the summary of the findings is consistent with the study's research goals, a satisfactory match has been established. Therefore, this chapter presents a comprehensive overview of the research, its findings, suggestions for policymakers and activists, and proposals for further investigation.

4.1. Summary of Findings

The purpose of this research was to examine the rationales for the extension of the ECOWAS mission, assess the extent to which the organization has achieved its enlarged mandate, and identify the obstacles and constraints encountered throughout the implementation of the increased mandate.

Exploring the fulfillment of the study's purpose, the research findings unveiled that the ECOWAS growth was compelled by economic difficulties during the 1970s, most notably the worldwide oil price shock of 1973. In the 1990s, the group expanded its purview to encompass political turmoil in Guinea Bissau, Sierra Leone, and Liberia, with a particular focus on promoting political stability and facilitating the settlement of conflicts. The ECOWAS mission experienced additional expansion in the domains of social development, human rights, democracy, and good governance, culminating in the establishment of the ECOWAS Court of Justice in 2001.

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In order to get insight into the ECOWAS mandate expansion's underlying reasons, participant interviews unveiled a confluence of internal and external elements. Political volatility, regional insecurity, and internal strife emerged as substantial impetuses. The importance of political stability to economic growth was underscored by the participants, which resulted in the 1993 amendment of the ECOWAS Treaty, which included an expansion of 22 chapters and 93 articles.

External factors like global standards and norms acted as incentives for the expansion of ECOWAS. The incorporation of democratic governance and human rights concepts into the organization's mandate was prompted by the trend toward these ideologies. Furthermore, in accordance with international standards such as the Paris Agreement, ECOWAS was compelled to implement counterterrorism measures and climate change policies in response to global concerns like terrorism and climate change.

It was noted that international alliances, including those with the African Union and the United Nations, played a significant role in ECOWAS's mission expansion. By establishing the ECOWAS Standby Force in collaboration with these organizations, the organization ensured that its operations were in accordance with international peacekeeping norms.

In conclusion, the extension of ECOWAS mandates is motivated by a variety of causes, including external and internal considerations such as alliances and global standards, as well as political stability. Beyond its economic origins, the organization has transformed into a significant actor in the promotion of human rights, sustainable development, and regional stability throughout West Africa and the wider area.

With the aim of identifying the obstacles and constraints encountered by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in carrying out its expanded mandate, the study's results unveiled several economic challenges. These included inadequate regional transport infrastructure,

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persistent or excessive reliance on external actors including the European Union, the United States of America, and China, as well as former colonial powers, and a growing number of political disputes. Therefore, it can be inferred that there are numerous obstacles hindering the realization of the expanded mandate. It is imperative that these obstacles be resolved in order for the organization to successfully pursue its objectives, advance the fulfillment of ECOWAS's mandate, and contribute to the overall progress of the region.

Concerning the aim of determining whether the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has effectively executed its broadened mandate, it was disclosed that significant advancements have been achieved in the promotion of economic integration, peacebuilding, and cooperation among member states. Nevertheless, persistent challenges like political instability, economic disparities, and institutional capabilities impede ECOWAS's ability to effectively achieve its objectives. Consequently, sustained commitment, collaborative endeavors, and adaptable strategies are necessary. This assessment highlights the ever-changing character of regional collaboration and emphasizes the imperative for ongoing enhancements within ECOWAS.

4.2. Conclusion

Subsequent deductions can be made in light of the study's results. The rationales for the enlargement of ECOWAS's mission were uncovered by an exhaustive investigation of both internal and external circumstances. Complementing internal factors such as political instability and wars in the area were external influences such as collaborative collaborations with organizations such as the African Union and the United Nations, as well as global norms and standards. By incorporating democratic administration, human rights values, and addressing global concerns such as climate change and terrorism, ECOWAS demonstrated its ability to respond to shifting world dynamics.

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Notwithstanding these obstacles, the execution of the broadened mandate has encountered some resistance. Barriers to ECOWAS's progress towards its objectives have been seen as economic difficulties, uneven trade policy management, insufficient regional infrastructure, and an excessive dependence on foreign players. The difficulties were exacerbated by political instability, a lack of resolve between election cycles, and a continued dependence on former colonial powers.

Although ECOWAS has made noteworthy strides in promoting economic integration, peace, and regional cooperation, persistent challenges like political instability, economic disparities, and institutional capacity require continued commitment and adaptable strategies. This assessment underscores the ever-changing character of regional collaboration, placing particular emphasis on the necessity for ongoing enhancements within ECOWAS.

As stated earlier, it is imperative to acknowledge and tackle the complex obstacles that ECOWAS encounters in order to achieve its objectives, promote progress within the area, and guarantee the organization's lasting influence on the sociopolitical terrain of West Africa. In the growing trajectory of ECOWAS, it will be critical for the organization's long-term development and impact that it adopts a proactive stance towards surmounting obstacles and capitalizing on achievements.

4.3. Recommendations

Following talks with respondents and in light of the study's findings, the following recommendations were emphasized:

- ECOWAS need to encourage economic diversity among its member nations in order to mitigate the risks associated with external economic disruptions and foster commerce within the region.

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- Investing in regional transport infrastructure to solve deficiencies in transportation networks that impede economic operations in order to promote the freer flow of people and products.
- Enhanced financial allocations towards the development of ECOWAS institutions' capabilities to efficiently execute, oversee, and assess the organization's broadened objectives. This will almost certainly result in the reinforcement of institutional frameworks designed to improve policy coordination and implementation.
- To sustain regional stability, bolster ECOWAS's role in conflict prevention and resolution via investments in diplomatic efforts, early warning systems, and peacebuilding activities.

The implementation of these suggestions would significantly aid in surmounting the challenges that have been identified and bolster ECOWAS's capacity to carry out its broadened mandate, which includes the promotion of sustainable development and the advancement of regional integration in West Africa.

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