

**UNIVERSITY OF GHANA**



**A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ECOWAS AND ECCAS  
TOWARDS IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ABUJA TREATY**

**BY  
KEVIN SELASSIE NYASEMBI  
(10484569)**

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**DECLARATION**

With the exception of the quoted and acknowledged sources, I hereby declare that this dissertation is a result of an original research conducted by me under the supervision of Dr. Juliana Appiah and that no part has been submitted anywhere for any purpose.

.....

**KEVIN SELASSIE NYASMBI  
(STUDENT)**

.....

**DR. JULIANA APPIAH  
(SUPERVISOR)**

**DATE:.....**

**DATE:.....**

**DEDICATION**

*This dissertation is dedicated to the Lord Almighty, who has been my strength and my provider.*

*It is also dedicated to my family for their unwavering support and prayers throughout my course work.*

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### ABBREVIATIONS

AEC	-	African Economic Community
AMU	-	Arab Maghreb Union
AU	-	African Union
CENSAD	-	Community of Sahel Sahara States
COMESA	-	Common Market for East and Southern Africa
CU	-	Customs Union
EAC	-	African Economic Community
EAC	-	East African Community
ECCAS	-	Economic Community for Central African States
ECOWAS	-	Economic Community of West African States
EU	-	European Union
NAFTA	-	North American Free Trade Agreement
OAU	-	Organisation of African Unity
PAP	-	Pan-African Parliament
RECs	-	Regional Economic Communities
SADC	-	Southern African Development Community),

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## ABSTRACT

The Abuja Treaty is the blueprint and reference point for continental-level economic integration that was first established in 1991 to see to the creation of an African Economic Community (AEC). The Treaty acknowledges that, the African continent, as a unified unit of countries, wields immense power in the international system, in terms of trade and political influence, and thus it seeks to bring to fruition a highly integrated Africa. This study strives to evaluate the progress made on the implementation of the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community (AEC) by comparing two regional blocs, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which serve as 2 of 8 building blocks for the realisation of the AEC. Accordingly, the research method used was qualitative and employed a purposive sampling method that draws on the selection of experts in the field of regional integration to shape the outcome of the study. The research findings include the fact that regional integration, on the continent, has progressed positively although it manifests slowly. Additionally, it found that both the ECOWAS and the ECCAS have progressed in terms of the implementation of the stages of the Abuja Treaty, although the former surpasses the latter in this regard. Yet, in spite of their progress, both RECs have faced challenges unique to their regions. ECOWAS for instance faces the problem of inability to completely enforce protocols on free movement of persons. The lack of national implementation of free movement legislation creates avenues for its ineffectiveness. Border checks are commonplace and there is very little standardization of official forms. ECCAS on the other hand faces a problem of overlapping goals and ideas with CEMAC as well as the failure of member states to carry out agreed decisions within their states due to issues such as conflict and instability in the region. On a whole, the study refutes the common idea that the Abuja Treaty has not been implemented at all but only sees its implementation as slow-paced.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **A COMPARATIVE ASSESSMENT OF ECOWAS AND ECCAS IN IMPLEMENTING THE ABUJA TREATY**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

The international arena is made up of several regional and sub-regional bodies that have a vision of integrating amongst themselves at various levels. This could be at the economic or political levels such as the African Union (AU), the European Union (EU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) that have made efforts to integrate their communities. According to Kahnert et al (1969), economic integration is “the process of removing, progressively, those discrimination which occur at national borders” (Hosny, 2013). Balassa (1961) also defined economic integration as “the abolition of discrimination within an area”.

The concept of economic integration has fully been a part of the agenda of the African continent since the struggle for independence in the latter part of the 1950s as African states saw themselves as artificial creations of the Berlin Conference and too small in size to compete against the West economically. After some African states had gained independence, the way forward regarding integration became problematic, as there were two opposing schools of thought. The Casablanca group, supported a borderless Africa with a unified front to the international community, while the Monrovia group, could not fathom ceding sovereignty of their newly independent states for the formation of a unified Africa.

Regional integration has certainly been an establishing principle of the AU since its transition from the OAU (Organization of African Unity). It stands as the foundation for policies designed

to overcome a legacy of fragmentation and conflict, to uphold peace, security, stability, and cooperation, and to drive economic and social development on the continent (Tuhuly, 2016). The leadership of the African Union received active operational support from the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) to promote the organizing of the continent into geographic building blocs, referred to as Regional Economic Communities (RECs). The goal of these RECs was to advance in a sequential progression, from free-trade areas (FTA) to customs unions (CU) and to a single market, finally converging toward a continent-wide economic and monetary union.

The idea of regionalism and economic integration, on the African continent, predates the wind of independence in the 1960s. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the South African Customs Union (SACU) was formed but it was short-lived and was later replaced, in 1980, by the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC). Dr Kwame Nkrumah highlighted the necessity for integration; both political and economic. During his speech for Ghana's independence in 1957 he emphasized that Ghana's Independence was meaningless unless it was linked to the total liberation of Africa (Sakyi & Osei Opoku, 2014). In December 1958, also, the call for African Economic integration was made during the All African People's Congress held in Accra. This was geared towards the removal of barriers and customs concerning intra-African trade. In the same vein, Professor Adebayo Adedeji, the former Executive Director of the Economic Commission for Africa states that "economic integration among African states is a *sine qua non* for the achievement of national socio-economic goals, and not an 'extra' to be given thought to after the process of development is well advanced" (Asante, 2016).

On June 3<sup>rd</sup> 1991, in Abuja, thirty-four African leaders met to sign a treaty for the establishment of an African Economic Community by 2028 in a quest to attain economic integration on the African continent and to create a framework for the development and utilization of Africa's human and material resources in a bid to be self-sufficient. Economic cooperation is now perceived as a catalyst to reinforce political and economic strength and give the African continent influence and power when relating to other trading blocs like the European Union (EU) and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Moreover, the establishment of a single economic community would help to resolve problems associated with overlapping membership and differences between neighbouring Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and would thus highlight the potential that inter-regional trade possesses on the African continent.

The implementation of the Abuja Treaty is a process that will be executed in six (6) different stages over a period of 34 years, that is, from the time of its establishment to the year 2028. The treaty provides for the African Economic Community to be set up through a gradual process, which would be achieved by coordination, harmonisation and progressive integration of the activities of existing and future Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in Africa. The RECs are regarded as the building blocks of the African Economic Community. There are currently eight existing RECs that are recognized by the African Union. These are UMA (The Arab Maghreb Union), ECCAS (Economic Community of Central African States), COMESA (Common Market of Eastern and Southern Africa), SADC (Southern African Development Community), the EAC (East African Community), CEN-SAD (Community of Sahel-Saharan States), IGAD (Intergovernmental Authority on Development) and ECOWAS (Economic

Community of West African States). The two RECs the study delves into are the Economic Community of West African States(ECOWAS) and the Economic Community of Central African States(ECCAS).

The treaty of Lagos that established the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was signed on 28<sup>th</sup> May 1975. As of 2013, ECOWAS' total population represented to 29.4 per cent of Africa's population (318.5 million people) of which 44.9 per cent live in urban areas (UNCTAD, 2018). Currently, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) stands at US\$ 716.7 billion and the GDP per capita is US\$ 2,130.4 (Uneca.org, ECOWAS). The regional group consist of 15-member states namely: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Senegal and Togo. Its mandate is to promote economic integration in these countries. The vision of ECOWAS is to create a borderless sub-region in which the inhabitants have access to the region's resources and are able to exploit some through the creation of opportunities under a sustainable environment. Essentially, ECOWAS' purpose is to allow free movement to the West African population, have access to quality education and healthcare systems, commercial markets at the same time preserving an atmosphere peace and security (ecowas.int). ECOWAS is considered as one of the pillars of the African Economic Community to uphold collective self-sufficiency of all member states as well as creation of a trading union, through the process of economic cooperation as a single trading bloc (ibid).

The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) comprises of ten countries including Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Central Africa Republic, Chad, Republic of the Congo,

Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Rwanda and Sao Tomé and Príncipe. The ECCAS, in 2013, represented 13.1 per cent of Africa's population which corresponds to 141.9 million people and at least 39.6 per cent reside in urban areas (Sakyi & Osei Opoku, 2014). Today, the GDP of the community stands at \$257.8 billion and the GDP per capita is \$1,631.4 (uneca.org, ECCAS). The aims of ECCAS include encouraging and reinforcing a harmonious cooperation in order to attain a balanced and self-sustained economic development in various fields like transportation, energy, agriculture etc. The objectives fall within the ambit of the Abuja Treaty as ECCAS as it purports among other things the establishment and maintenance of an external common customs tariff, the abolition of quantitative restrictions and other trade barriers (Ibid).

After the 1980s, when the independence of African nations had been secured the focus of regionalism moved from political to economic integration to boost the economies of African states. For this reason, the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community was signed to develop Africa's economic situation through the RECs. The study assesses the efforts made by two prominent RECs, ECOWAS and ECCAS. A common feature found within both RECs is that their aims and objectives fall in line with the stipulations of the Abuja Treaty. They are directed towards enhancing and encouraging economic development and continental self-sufficiency via close cooperation among the member states in all fields of activity. For this reason and many others an analysis of the two RECs as they embark on their individual paths to the establishment of an African Economic Community is indeed necessary.

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

Even though there are several regional economic communities, eight are recognized by the African Union and serve as the building blocks for the establishment of the African Economic Community. To bring the concept of a single economic community to fruition, The Abuja Treaty was adopted in 1991 by the OAU to create an African Economic Community by the year 2028. This was going to be done by merging the various Regional Economic Communities to create a single Economic Community. We are in the year 2019 and this gives Africa 9 more years for the establishment of the African Economic Community. There is the need, therefore, to know the extent to the implementation of the Abuja Treaty as the lack of progress by some Regional Economic Communities has the tendency to impede the actualization of the Treaty. The pace of progress by the RECs also gives an indication as to how quickly the Treaty would be implemented. This study seeks to examine this with focus on two regional economic communities, ECOWAS and ECCAS.

### **1.2 Research Questions**

1. What is the composition of the Abuja Treaty?
2. To what extent have ECOWAS and ECCAS implemented the Abuja Treaty?
3. What are the challenges confronting the implementation of the Abuja Treaty by ECOWAS and ECCAS?

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

1. To understand the composition of the Abuja Treaty.
2. To examine the extent to which ECOWAS and ECCAS have implemented the Abuja Treaty.
3. To understand the challenges impeding the implementation of the Abuja Treaty.

### **1.4 The Scope of the Study**

The study will focus on the progress of ECOWAS and ECCAS with regard to the implementation of the treaty. Relating to specific prerequisites the Abuja Treaty lays out for the creation of an African Economic Community at various stages, assessments in this study will be carried out within the bounds of the periods and conditions the Treaty relays to the major RECs on the African continent. In addition, the analysis will focus on the journeys of two selected RECs that are the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) especially their efforts to promote and achieve continental economic integration.

### **1.5 Rationale of the Study**

African nations have come to the realization that operating as a large trading bloc will give them clout with other trading units in the international system. The widely differing stages of development within the continent, however, is one of the obstacles impeding the realization of a unified economic community thus the establishment of the Abuja Treaty to enhance the creation of the economic community by 2028. This study, therefore, seeks to make an analysis of how far the continent has reached concerning the implementation of the Treaty establishing the African

Economic Community by looking at ECOWAS and ECCAS. This is important because the failure of an economic community to achieve the objectives of the treaty will hinder the total merging of all the RECs thus impeding the actualization of the Abuja Treaty. The rationale for the case study of the two RECs is the similarities between both RECs in terms of language and cultural affinities of the people and proximity. This is justified by the 2019 Africa Regional Integration Index (ARII) which assesses the regional integration status and efforts of countries that are members of the eight regional economic communities recognized by the African Union, posits that some countries and regional communities are more integrated than others due to proximity and notes that historical links, comparative advantages, regional policies, and topography also play a role.

#### **1.6 Theoretical Framework**

This research is situated within the theory of neo-functionalism. Neo-functionalism is one of the most prominent theories of European integration and a core part of the wider debate between supranational and intergovernmental perspectives in the furtherance of integration in Europe. The theory was developed in the second half of the 1950s and is a theory of regional integration that has been built on the work of Ernst B. Haas, an American political scientist whose reputation is linked to the theory. The theory of neo-functionalism is predicated on certain assumptions.

Primarily, it argues that, when countries agree to cooperate in a given sector, it creates an atmosphere for them to extend that cooperation to other sectors. This then implies that the benefits that may be derived from cooperating in a particular sector will be made possible by cooperation in another sector thus leading to a “spill over”. The process of ‘spill-over’ triggers the economic and political dynamics driving further cooperation amongst states (idebate.org).

In the context of early European integration, it was argued that cooperation in core sectors such as coal and steel (while beneficial) could not be fully achieved without also integrating into other sectors, such as transport for example, that were central to the integration of coal and steel (Rosamond, 2000, p.60). Rosamond further states that the concept of spill over, however, rests on two logics, which are, the expansive logic that supports the example of the steel and coal case in Europe regarding how integration in one sector can create incentives and pressures to integrate into other sectors. The second logic refers to deepening of integration in the same sector and the example is given of a customs union that would work more effectively if states agreed on exchange rate uniformity. This according to Rosamond is likely to increase incentives for wider monetary cooperation such as a currency union.

Another argument of neo-functionalism is that integration has the tendency to lead to increased interaction between actors in the integrating region. Consequently, sub-state actors begin to cooperate politically across borders to lobby their political leaders. Interest groups begin to flourish at a regional level and domestically, interest groups lobby their governments to advocate for further integration. In addition, the supranational body, which is designed to oversee integration, will begin to pursue strategies to deepen integration in already integrated sectors and expand integration to other sectors. This will be achieved by promoting the benefits of further integration by supporting both regional and local groups that are pushing for integration within the region.

Mainly the intergovernmentalists have criticised the neo-functionalist theory. Firstly, they dismiss the attention placed on non-state actors in neo-functionalism (Eilstrup-Sangiovanni, 2006, p.97) and they argue that states continue to remain the main arbiters of external policies

and are the core actors in international relations. They argue that states, mainly through their foreign offices, remain the ultimate authorities on integration and are able to resist integration when they want to (EilstrupSangiovanni, 2006, p.97-8). Intergovernmentalists also reject the notion of a spill over and argue that states decide what they want and get what they want by cooperating with other states. To them, the process of integration does not automatically bring about a spill-over and that, states make decisions as to whether or not they want to integrate by taking a look at their own interests. Indeed, Ernst Haas later criticised the theory he helped build on and called obsolete, after the process of European integration started stalling in the 1960s, when Charles de Gaulle's 'empty chair'<sup>1</sup> politics caused problems in dealings with the institutions of the European Coal and Steel Community, European Economic Community, and European Atomic Energy Community (idebate.org).

Despite the criticisms levelled against neo-functionalism, it is suitable for the conduct of this study because even though the study has to do with comparing two regional bodies in the implementation of the Abuja Treaty, it also essentially focuses on the levels of integration within these regional bodies thus making it relevant for integration in Africa .That is, how it works and fits in the “spill over” feature of the neo-functionalist theory, which talks about cooperation in a particular sector leading to cooperation in another and this is evident in the integration schemes in West and Central Africa. In West Africa for example, the first attempts at integration date back to 1945 with the creation of the CFA franc which led to the creation of a single currency union among the francophone countries. An agreement was also signed in 1965 by the four states

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<sup>1</sup> In July 1965, Charles De Gaulle boycotted European institutions due to issues he had regarding new political proposals by the European Commission. This event, known as The **Empty Chair Crisis**, affected the European Community and it was one of the major crises the European Economic Commission has gone through.

of Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone following a proposal for an economic union in West Africa by Liberian president William Tubman in 1964 (ECOWAS, 2016). The International Democracy Watch also noted that in Central Africa, some countries also came together and formed the Central African customs and economic union (UDEAC) in 1964 to facilitate trade among themselves. These attempts at integration within both regions exemplify some form of cooperation among countries within both regions even before the establishment of the two RECs to address regional integration challenges. The use of the neo-functional theory will allow for an analysis of the study considering the early attempts of integration within West and Central Africa and how these attempts were stepping stones for the eventual formation of ECOWAS and ECCAS.

### **1.7 Literature Review**

The concept of economic integration is one that has dominated discussions anytime discussions regarding integration arise. Different scholars have defined the term "economic integration" in several ways. Carbaugh (2004) defines economic integration as a process of eliminating restrictions on international trade, payments and factor mobility. Kahnert et al (1969) economic integration is "the process of removing progressively those discriminations which occur at national borders. According to Balassa (1961), economic integration is the "abolition of discrimination within an area. His work has been reviewed by several scholars. According to Allen's (1963, p.450) review of Balassa's book, the basic ingredient of any integration form is the elimination of barriers to trade among two or more countries. In discussing economic integration, a question arises: Why the need to study economic integration theories? This is answered by Chou (1967) when he argues that the reason for studying economic integration theories is to

evaluate the desirability of a customs union. Economic integration comes in different forms and one cannot talk about them without mentioning the work of Balassa (1961) which is considered a foundation for anything that has to do with economic integration.

Bela Balassa's book on *The Theory of Economic Integration* (1961) distinguishes between economic integration and international cooperation. His classification of integration comes in different forms. While cooperation deals with actions that minimize discrimination, economic integration is concerned with suppressing some forms of discrimination. One of the many useful elements of the Balassa (1961) book is that it evidently defines integration, clearly differentiating between it and cooperation. Cooperation are the actions aimed at lessening discrimination and economic integration is the suppression of some forms of discrimination. For better clarification, he explains that whilst trade policies fall under international cooperation, the removal of trade barriers is an act of economic integration. He proposes that economic integration is both a process and a state of affairs. That is a process, which entails "measures designed to abolish discrimination between economic units belonging to different national states", and as a state of affairs, it is "the absence of various forms of discrimination between national economies" (Balassa, 1961, p.1).

Balassa (1961) avers that the various forms economic integration can take varying degrees of integration. First, a Free Trade Area (FTA) tariffs and other quantitative restrictions between members are abolished while each country retains its own tariffs for non-members. Second, a customs union has to do with both the suppression of discrimination in terms of trade among members of the union as well as the equalization of tariffs in trade with non-members.

Third, a common market is a higher form of economic integration whereby in addition to the removal of trade restrictions among members, there is also the free movement of capital and labour. Fourth, in an economic union along with suppressing restrictions on commodity and factor movements, there exists a degree of harmonization of national economic policies to eliminate discriminations arising from disparities in these policies. The last stage is total economic integration involves the unification of monetary, fiscal, social and countercyclical policies and requires the setting up of a supranational authority whose decisions are binding for the member states.

Balassa further explains the origins of economic integration on the global scene. He explains that although there had been attempts to integrate the economies of Europe, the first significant customs unions were formed only at the near end of the Second World War. The prior attempts had failed because of political impediments. The degree of integration achieved during World War II (WW II) was part of the *Grossraum* policy of the Germans, when the *Hitlerites* sought to integrate economically the satellite and occupied territories with Germany as part of the country's imperialist expansion (p.3). In the Post- WW II period, there was a movement of interest directed towards the problems of economic integration. This resulted in the creation of the customs union, the economic union of the Benelux states, the European Coal and Steel Community (Common Market), and the European Free Trade Association. Balassa highlights that in 1960, Latin America also showed the greatest progress in economic integration with the signing of the Montevideo Treaty to establish the Latin American Free Trade Association (p.4).

In Africa, also, plans about economic integration had been discussed among North African Arab countries as well as between Ghana, Guinea, Mali and other French dependencies (Ibid, p.4).

Balassa addresses the reasons for economic integration and explains that political factors play a great role. For instance, in Europe the search for economic integration was to secure certain political objectives like the avoidance of future wars between Germany and France, the creation of a third force in world politics, the reestablishment of Western Europe as a world power. The author reiterates that political motives may prompt the initial move towards economic integration but it is also possible for economic reasons to be the initial motives for economic integration, which react on the political sphere to encourage political unity later on. Thus, for example, it is highly possible for the objective of exploiting the potential benefits of economic integration to affect the decision-making process within states (Ibid).

Balassa's *The Theory of Economic Integration* (1961) is important to the study because it provides a basic understanding of what economic integration entails and the processes involved in ensuring its attainment. Its scope, however, is quite expansive and broad as it delves into in-depth economic explanations of economic integration. Although, this piece of literature is dated it provides a succinct historical background to how economic integration as a theory developed in different parts of the world which is beneficial to this study.

Kayizzi-Mugerwa, Anyanwu and Conceição state that a major aspiration for the African continent since independence has been regional economic integration – “the free movement of goods, services, people and capital between national markets” (Kayizzi-Mugerwa *et al* 2014).

They assert that largely, there is widespread consensus on the benefits of economic integration for the continent yet the process has been sluggish and sporadic. This is primarily due to the difficulties in its promotion and the characteristic contentions created among countries in the process of achieving deep integration.

Further, Kayizzi-Mugerwa *et al* (2014) in “Regional Integration in Africa: An Introduction” explain why regional integration is important for Africa. For the attainment of equitable and sustainable economic growth in order to alleviate poverty, unemployment and inequalities, regional integration is necessary. Once Africa’s producers have access to larger markets on the continent their capabilities and competitiveness will rise to global standards and generally, living standards will improve. Deeper integration means that there is export diversification hence development and growth for African nations. It also portends the transmission of technological innovation and there allows smaller economies to compete with far more advanced nations. However, the most valid case made for regional integration in Africa pertains to geographical characteristics. With a third of Africa’s population living in 15 landlocked countries it means many have little access to major markets and shipping routes and transportation costs for trade within the continent remain high (ibid).

Further, the writers depict the status of regional integration on the continent. Among the numerous efforts taken, include the promotion of intra-regional trade through the creation of various RECs. The RECs pursue integration through free trade, developing a customs union and a common market. In all there are 17 regional trade blocs on the continent, some with overlapping memberships but only 8 of these are officially recognized by the African Union and

are recognized as the groundwork for the attainment of an African Economic Community in the future according to the Abuja Treaty of 1994. The progress towards this goal, and even the creation of a continental free trade area, is retarded by a plethora of factors, according to Kayizzi-Mugerwa *et al* (2014). These factors include infrastructure constraints (poor road and rail networks), small production capacities, the widespread existence of non-tariff barriers (e.g. rules of origin, regulatory policies, and lengthy processes at borders), the commonness of overlapping memberships in RECs, lethargic implementation of regional trade agreements and barriers to external markets access (Ibid).

Equally, the writers examine the challenges that possibly impede Africa's progress. For instance, the distribution of net benefits are uneven allowing some countries to gain more than others and thereby ensuring that they commit to regional integration efforts on varying degrees. They establish that the historical and political factors on the continent bring about regional imbalances, which in turn affect regional cooperation. In addition, the inability of African countries to produce the type of goods that are in demand within their economies (i.e. manufactured goods) stands as a challenge to integration processes (Ibid).

Nevertheless, Kayizzi-Mugerwa *et al* (2014) strongly believe that the time is ripe for the acceleration of Africa's advancement towards regional integration. They suggest a form of sustainable regional integration, which aims at reducing inequalities among states. The article is significant as it gives general overview of the underlying concept of this study. Yet still, its generic nature does not permit it to study the efforts of any of the RECs on the continent, something this study seeks to do specifically.

Richard Mukisa and Bankole Thompson (1995) in their work “prerequisites for economic integration in Africa: an analysis of the Abuja Treaty” compare the Abuja Treaty to the Charter that established the OAU and asks if economic integration can be achieved without political integration. To them, the term integration implies a fusion or a merger at differing levels of two or more entities that will in turn create a larger entity. They argue that, the OAU, which created the Abuja Treaty more or less, engages in political cooperation and not political integration because each member state has the right at all times to make decisions independently. Furthermore, cultural and social integration are also highlighted as essential forms of integration. The work highlights the fact that the Abuja Treaty also focuses on social, cultural, and economic integration as a conduit through which economic integration will be achieved.

They emphasize that all forms of integration, whether political, social cultural or economic are relevant and essential for the achievement of economic development on the African continent. They state the fact that the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA, with other members of the OAU) recognized economic development in Africa can best be achieved through economic integration. This argument was made based on the belief that African states are too small to be economically viable and that, it is difficult for them to meet international commodity agreements. They also highlight that despite this claim, not all analysts agree with the assertion that economic integration or other forms of integration are the way forward to solving Africa’s economic problems. The point is made that the World Bank and IMF do not seek to encourage any form of integration in Africa but rather promote internal remedies like the structural adjustment programmes (SAPs).

The primary argument of the work by Richard Mukisa and Bankole is not that Africa can develop when it integrates, but it rather highlights the role of political, social, and cultural integration as a means to achieving economic integration on the continent. The essence of integration and for that matter political integration is captured in the work as the words of Edward V.K Jay-Cox, a former Vice President of the World Bank in charge of operations in Sub-Saharan Africa from 1984 to 1996 are highlighted. He stated that “some progressive degree of integration will be important for the competitiveness of Africa in the world economy. These small economies cannot produce economies of scale. The infrastructure, to the extent it is duplicated, is a waste if you can get the same production with non-duplication. It is a very pragmatic question, but it obviously depends on political will” (Ibid, p.68).

The authors create a model for change in Africa to help identify the prerequisites for economic integration. They begin by identifying the Pressures for Change in Africa prior to the signing of the Abuja Treaty. These were Domestic Crises such as civil wars, extreme poverty, starvation, political upheavals and pessimism that are further aggravated by the effects of global change and international debt – debt and debt service ratio had risen faster for Africa than any other region and at least 31 sub-Saharan countries were classified as debt-stressed. They identify the Agents of Change to include donor countries and the World Bank that explicitly demanded political change as a pre-requisite for further loans to Africa. Another Agent of Change was the OAU, by its adoption of the Abuja Treaty it held the position that economic development had to be secured through economic integration (p.59-63).

Next, they address the Desired Change and explain that if economic integration is seen as a way to attain economic development in Africa then in order to achieve economic integration it is first important to seek political integration, social integration and cultural integration, these three components of their model refers to Desired Change. In terms of the Abuja Treaty, as an agent of Change, it highlights solely the importance of social and cultural integration to achieve the goal of economic integration but the authors task agents to seek political integration as well in order to be effective. That is, an elimination of all types of obstacles to free movement of goods, capital and person through the unification of countries will lead to economic development. Further, they identify economic integration as the Intermediate End that will to an Ultimate End of Economic Development (p.63-74).

They also outline the benefits of economic integration include (but are not Limited to) first, specialization in order to replace some domestic production with intra-regional imports. Second, enlargement of the domestic market that can lead to economies of scale; third, is that economic integration gives countries access to resources that are usually unavailable to them and fourth, it gives a collective bargaining power that accrue to the partnering states (p.69-70). The article identifies the perquisites of Economic Integration and relates these to the Abuja Treaty and the OAU Charter. It asserts that the Abuja Treaty treats integration as a means and economic development to be the end. However, the Abuja Treaty fails to reflect a strong desire for political unification and admits that this is critical. Essentially, this piece by Musaika and Bankole is of immense importance because it gives a well-analysed appraisal of the Abuja Treaty and its goals for integration and by extension economic development. This study, however, will constitute a

current study of the Abuja Treaty and the efforts made by two important RECs to push this agenda forward.

Tres Ricks (2016) in “From the Abuja Treaty to the Sustainable Development Goals: Realizing Economic Integration in Africa” speaks of the OAU’s adoption of the Abuja Treaty, in 1991, as a means of addressing the continent’s financial distress through economic and political unity. He states that the aim of the treaty is to unify the African economy through free trade and monetary union to institute an African Economic Community (AEC) eventually. The article highlights the history of African development prior to the Abuja Treaty that is, the economic and social factors that led to its creation. Ricks affirms that in 1963, the OAU had come into existence because of the struggles for independence by the Pan-African movement in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Initially, between 1963 and 1975, its mission focused more on ensuring the liberation of all African countries from colonialism and attaining continental political unity.

He asserts that economic development of the continent only became a goal in the 1970s when the Cold War had reached a crescendo. The events during this time undermined the influence of the OAU as African states were forced to choose either side of the divide. Also, in 1973 when the Arab Oil Embargo struck and the commodity’s price soared, African countries took on huge foreign debts and its debt serviced quadrupled in 7 years (from \$2 billion in 1975 to \$8 billion in 1982). Ricks avers that the OAU opted to advance an agenda on economic development because Africa’s debt crisis threatened the global financial stability. Thus, the OAU passed the Lagos Plan of Action in 1980 – a blueprint for collective self-reliance, social and economic development – and in 1991 the Abuja Treaty as a framework for African development (p.257-8).

Ricks is certain that history must play a role in helping to predict the practicability and achievability of the Abuja Treaty. He delves into the lessons that Africa can learn from Europe on its own journey of establishing an economic union and a common currency. The European Union was founded on the Maastricht treaty that also stipulated an agenda for the adoption of the Euro as a common currency. Countries were expected to attain specific criteria before qualifying to adopt the Euro, for example, a budget deficit of less than 3% of GDP or public debt of under 60% of GDP. At the time of the economic downturn in 2009 (in Greece, Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Spain), the EU created a European Stability Mechanism, as a permanent bailout fund for the stabilisation of the euro (p.259-260).

Ricks asks whether the African Union can tackle similar problems if a common currency (Afro) is adopted. He suggests the need for monetary sovereignty and strict criteria for countries seeking to adopt the currency like the Maastricht treaty in the case of the euro. Nevertheless, he asserts that requirements for Afrozone membership must be different from the Europe's criteria; for instance, the AU must slowly integrate countries that meet the criteria to ensure economic and political unity. He avers that Brexit is a stark reminder of the risks and challenges associated with the political and economic sphere (p.262-263).

Yet still, Ricks concludes that despite the risks involved with integration, as illustrated with

European integration, Africa needs to develop at a more rapid pace to achieve its own integration. With the recent the passing of the SDGs and the establishment of the Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA) in 2015 – which brings together 26 countries from SADC, EAC and COMESA with a combined continental GDP of 51% - the goals of the Abuja Treaty have become more attainable (p.272). In his opinion, a combination of the SDGs and the goals of the Abuja Treaty is the sort of thinking that Africa will need to achieve continental economic integration (p.274). In brief, the author throws more of a positive light onto the path of the Abuja Treaty, despite its slow progress, particularly with the adoption of the SDGs. This gives the researcher a complementary view upon which assessment of the Treaty has been done and this way can make a more informed assessment of my own.

Stevens, Hoebeke and Vlassenroot in "Politics of regional integration in Central Africa" use the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) as a case study to analyse the politics of regional integration in Central Africa. The DRC was chosen because of its geographical location, economic potential and the fact that it simultaneously belongs to four RECs: Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), South African Development Community (SADC), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries (CEPGL) (p.166). The DRC is a key player in the regional integration process in Central Africa, such that the authors liken it to Nigeria, South Africa and Kenya in their respective regions. However, its concurrent membership in several regional bodies, which are in some cases redundant, creates drawbacks such as “high costs, membership arrears, division of meagre diplomatic, economic, human capacities and energies, conflicting interests and a lack of external credibility (p.180).

However, more significant to this study is their analysis of the prospects and challenges of regional integration in Central Africa. The authors acknowledge that regional co-operation dynamics in Central Africa have been lagging far behind that of western, eastern and southern Africa. The authors place the integration process in the central African region in both a historical and current international context that is in terms of global geopolitics and the influence of international actors (p.166). They assert that within certain regional bodies, the impact of colonialism still exist such as in CEMAC, the CEPGL and the EAC. International actors like the EU and UN have had significant influence on security and economic integration efforts on the continent (p.167).

Furthermore, they describe the status of regional integration in Central Africa to be in a gradual process of rationalisation, since 2005, as ECCAS and CEMAC are increasingly closer due to co-ordination initiatives and co-operation programmes in areas like a common external tariff and harmonisation of commercial laws. The region lacks a unique community in charge of the integration of the whole region. Stevens et al assert that current weakness in terms of the integration process is that no country in the region is either purely competitive or co-operative. There are two barriers to co-operation is the problem of freeloader states or self-interested states that seek short-term goals and the question of co-ordinating common objectives (p.178).

In addition, the central African region has no driving force that could possibly push the integration agenda. This article bears some significance to the study as it gives a total picture of regional integration in the central parts of Africa and concludes that the integration process here has reaped poor results compared to other sub-regions and in terms of the delivery on the

economic, political and security benefits, thus gives key background information for the analysis (p.181). However, the focus on the DRC limits the assessment of regional integration to the role of one country in the region. This study seeks to do a more thorough appreciation of integration by carrying out a comparative study between ECCAS and ECOWAS based on the stipulations and objectives outlined by the Abuja Treaty.

“ECOWAS and Regional Integration in West Africa: From State to Emerging Private Authority” by Samuel O. Oloruntoba looks at the status of ECOWAS and regional integration in the sub-region. He states that the establishment signifies recognition that a regional approach to development is advantageous, much so that even the colonial powers adopted a regional approach to resource management and development (p.297). The community at its inception was mostly for economic cooperation purposes but in 1993 the founding treaty, Treaty of Lagos, was modified to address political issues like democracy, good governance, peace and security in the region (p.298).

He affirms the aims of the organization are to promote economic cooperation and integration in order to secure an economic union in West Africa. These will in turn improve living standards in the region, maintain and enhance the economic stability, develop member states’ relations and generally contribute to the continent’s development. Other objects of the community include a gradual removal of the barriers to the movement of factors of production, synchronization of economic policies, increasing industrialisation, free movement of people etc. (p.298).

Oloruntoba (2016) implies that the creation of ECOWAS merely followed world trends, specifically regionalism and integration in Europe. The creation of the EU was due to decades of hostilities and destruction among European states. Thus to secure peace, scholars like Mitrany, Haas and Schmitter push for “peaceful relations among member states which could have spill over effects on [their] economies” (p.298). This refers to the functional and neo-functional theories of regionalism that purport peaceful coexistence and economic integration. He also argues that the creation of ECOWAS follows specifically the market integration theory under which one finds the customs union theory, whereby there is a removal of obstructions to the free movements of factors while a common external tariff is adopted to help create and divert (p.298).

Oloruntoba (2016) avers that despite advances made in terms of regionalism in the West African region the results of economic integration have been dismal. To him, the relevance of ECOWAS is currently only found in the advancement of trade liberalisation by a neoliberal global order. Sceptics of the market integration theory believe that the theory is not fully applicable especially in a region where the costs of integration are covered by one or two countries. He further speaks of a new regionalism, which involves indigenous MNCs like banks, CSOs and cross border networks (p.299).

ECOWAS has chalked successes in terms of the movement of peoples within the sub-region, ensuring the security of the people since 1990 through ECOMOG in Liberia, the establishment of the West African Parliament, the ECOWAS Court of Justice. These successes are generally in terms of security management, economic integration and development of institutions. On the other hand, the challenges ECOWAS faces include a lack of structured economies in the region,

insufficient resources for project implementation, the division of francophone and Anglophone countries (p.301).

Conclusively, the most important aspect of this article is its purpose of readily providing evidence for the advancement of regionalism in the West African sub-region. It also delves into the history and creation of the community and as well as the realizations of its objectives. However, the article carries a general assessment of the ECOWAS thus fails to go in-depth. This study, on the other hand, seeks to carry out its analysis within the bounds of the objectives of the Abuja treaty and in comparison with regional integration in the Central African sub-region.

### **1.8 Research Methodology and Sources of Data**

For this study, the qualitative method of collecting and analysing data will be employed. Data will be collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data will be collected by conducting in-depth interviews. The sampling method used here is purposive. This is because those to be interviewed are deliberately selected due to their knowledge in the area of integration. The interviews will be recorded and transcribed for analysis. The secondary sources of data will be collected from journal articles, internet sources and relevant books. Content analysis of these materials will be done in order to analyse data from these sources. The qualitative research will enable us to have access to the psychological world of informants through detailed, in-depth and intensive discussions as well as observations.

### **Primary Sources**

1. Professor S.K.B Asante
2. Mr. Albert Siaw- Boateng (Director, free movement of persons, migration and cross border cooperation.
3. Mr Harold Agyeman (Director for Africa and Regional Integration Bureau).
4. Ambassador William Awinador-Kanyirige

### **1.9 Arrangement of Chapters**

Chapter one is the Introduction to the study and details how the study has been conducted. Chapter two gives a historical overview of the Abuja Treaty. Chapter three focuses on Regional integration in ECOWAS and ECCAS and Chapter four lays out the Summary of findings, conclusion and recommendations for the study.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE PATH TO THE ABUJA TREATY

#### 2.0 Introduction

Pan-Africanism emphasizes a united Africa that is working harmoniously to secure a better future for African countries. In the post-colonialism era, the concept of regional integration has played a lead role to advance this aim of pan-Africanism on the continent. Mainly by striving to address problems like poverty and underdevelopment that are inherent on the continent. This chapter seeks to examine the various forms regional integration has taken in the post-independence period that is with the establishment of the Organization for African Unity (OAU). It addresses the formal frameworks established to achieve African Economic Integration on the continent, particularly the Lagos Plan of Action (1980) and the Abuja Treaty (1991) which are symbolic for the continent's advancement in economic integration.

#### 2.1 Phases of African Regional Integration

Africa has adopted a number of regional endeavours in its regionalism development journey and these are generally categorized into five main phases or 'generational sequences' by some scholars (Olivier, 2010). The first phase of African regional integration was dominated by Pan-Africanist ideas: the fight for African unity and the creation of a United States of Africa and the goal of ridding Africa of all colonial vestiges. The second phase focused on the shift from a geopolitical approach to the sub-regional economic domain of market-driven intrastate or extra territorial cooperation. The UN Economic Commission for Africa specified the five economically viable sub-regions to be West Africa, North Africa, East Africa, Central Africa and Southern Africa. This led to the establishment of Regional Economic Communities like the Arab

Maghreb Union (AMU), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Community for Central African States (CAEC), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the Southern African Development Coordinating Conference (now SADC) (Ibid).

The third phase of African regional integration was the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) and the Final Act of Lagos (FAL). These signified more inward looking efforts African states took towards economic integration and development of the continent. This period saw a reintroduction of pan-African ideals towards development and cooperation. The Abuja Treaty of 1991, the center of this study, symbolizes the fourth chapter of regional integration. It was introduced to address the inadequacies of the LPA. The fifth and most recent phase of African integration is marked by the 2002 launching of the AU in Durban, South Africa. It virtually continued the existing paradigm of integration as it reiterated the founding principles of the OAU, unity, solidarity, cohesion and cooperation, whilst appending Westphalian-conferred rights in the form of Sovereignty and non-interference (Ibid).

## **2.2 The Organization of African Unity**

Regionalism in Africa began as a means of pursuing the political co-operation and unity at the pan-African level through the establishment of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). The OAU was founded, on 25<sup>th</sup> May 1963, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia by 32 signatory states (Vickers, 2017). Its purpose was promoting regional cooperation among newly independent African states that emerged from European Colonialism (Sharpe, 2013). The organization largely focused on

coping with the challenges of the colonial past and the issue of flawed colonial boundaries, these brought about the fear of intervention in the internal affairs of other states (Hestermeyer, 2002).

The aims of the organization as stipulated in its Charter include: promoting unity and solidarity among African states; coordination and intensification of their co-operation and efforts to achieve a better life for Africans; defending the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of African states; the eradication of all forms of colonialism from Africa; and promoting international cooperation (OAU Charter, 1963). In addition to the OAU had other aims, for instance to ensure that all African people enjoyed human rights, to improve the living standards of the people and to settle disputes between members using peaceful and diplomatic negotiations. These motives are summarized in a speech given at the maiden conference of the OAU by the Gambian historian and pan-Africanist Elieue Ebrima Cham Joof, who entreated African leaders of the time to realize that:

*Your success will inspire and speed up the freedom and total independence of the African continent and eradicate imperialism and colonialism from the continent...Your failure...will prolong our struggle with bitterness and disappointment.... Realizing that the entire world has something earthly to learn from Africa, you would endeavor your utmost to come to agreement, save Africa from the clutches of neo-colonialism and resurrect African dignity, manhood and national stability (The Point, 2011).*

The creation of the OAU and the realization of African unity stemmed from the conciliation of three groups of alliances that emerged in 1960 and 1961. These blocs shared a desire to see more unity on the continents but disagreed on how to achieve this. The Casablanca group made up of Ghana, Mali, Guinea, the United Arab Republic, the Kingdom of Morocco and Algeria were perceived as the radicals that demanded for the immediate unification of the African continent. The Brazzaville bloc was made up of the 12 former French colonies, these are Central African

Republic, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, People's Republic of Congo (Congo), Dahomey, Mauritania, Gabon, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Chad and Madagascar. These states preferred a gradualist approach towards Africa's unity first beginning with the region's economic and cultural co-operation.

The third bloc, the Monrovia group comprised of Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Togo, Ivory Coast, Congo, Gabon, Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Somalia and Tunisia. The Monrovia bloc sought a gradual approach to African unity and were called the moderates. They supported a unified Africa but without forgoing nationalism and independent statehood (Genge, 2000). With the establishment of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the evidence points that the values of the Monrovia group had taken center stage by 1963. It marked a compromise between the two ideological factions of that characterized the relationship among African states (Schalk, Auriacombe & Brynard, 2005).

The main organ of the OAU was the Assembly of Heads of State and Government that operated by consensus and met once a year. Here each state had one vote and the resolutions of the Assembly, outside of procedural matters, required a two-thirds majority. A key function of the Assembly was to harmonize policies and to review the acts of all other organs or agencies (Padelford, 1964). The Council of Ministers was made up of foreign ministers that met biannually and in special sessions requested by two-thirds of the members. The council was the driving force of the OAU and its responsibilities were to prepare the Assembly's agenda, implement the Assembly's decisions, coordinate intra-African cooperation under the guidance of the Assembly and adopt the budget. Another organ is the General Secretariat that was headed by a secretary-general, appointed by the Assembly. The secretariat dealt with the administration of

the OAU. The role of the secretary-general was initially conceived as an apolitical administrator, however, it developed a proactive role. The Commission of Mediation, Conciliation and Arbitration was intended to be the OAU's dispute settlement mechanism to oversee the adjudication of disputes among member states. However, the Commission never became operational because African governments were skeptical of third-party adjudication. In 1987, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights was established as a treaty monitoring body to promote and protect human and peoples' rights on the continent (OAU, Encyclopedia.com).

The OAU lasted for thirty-nine years from 1963-2002 and achieved a number of successes in line with the objectives it set out to fulfill. One of the greatest achievements of the OAU was the assistance it provided to liberation movements and the restoration of territorial integrity to many of these formerly colonized African states (sahistory.org, 2011). For example, the total eradication of the dominance of colonialism and the apartheid regime in South Africa (Jongur, 2014). In April 1992, President Mandela during the OAU Summit Arusha had declared that, "the African continent has reached the end of the last chapter of the long nightmare of apartheid and colonialism" (Schalk, Auriacombe & Brynard, 2005). Further, the OAU maintained the Africa group at the UN that guided and coordinated the African position in world politics and the organization introduced the group of 77 south-south states that exist today as a committee of developing nations within UN conferences on trade and development (Jongur, 2014).

Additionally, the OAU encouraged the development of Regional Economic Communities such as the Economic Community of Western African States (ECOWAS), the South African Development Coordinating Commission, the Greater Arab Free Trade Area and the Central

Africa-Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries (sahistory.org, 2011). In terms of human rights, the OAU successfully put into force the Banjul Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1982) that sought to help eradicate the unrestrained behavior that had existed in the past (Schalk, Auriacombe & Brynard, 2005).

The OAU's major failure was its inability to be an effective and efficient peacemaker in Africa. The way it was set up did not give the organization enough powers and the dependence on consensus meant that the organization relied on the appeals to member states in order to achieve desired results. Therefore, the OAU's dependence on the political willingness of its members was a major contributor to the organization's failure. The OAU was only as good as the sum of its parts (Ibid). Its failure to respond effectively to the tyrannies and kleptocracies of the time undermined its credibility. Its influence was insufficient to address the problems Africa faced including, "internal and external conflicts, poor governance, human rights abuses, poverty and underdevelopment" (OAU, Encyclopedia.com). Overall, the OAU's failures outweighed its successes and therefore led to the creation and establishment of a replacement body in the form of the African Union in 2002.

### **2.3 Lagos Plan of Action and Final Act of Lagos (1980)**

In the last two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the African continent faced economic decline: "a stagnation in output, a worsening balance of payments brought about by deteriorating terms of trade; increasing payments for the import of high-level skills, capital goods, spare parts and equipment, raw material inputs, marketing, shipping and insurance services; widespread unemployment and mass poverty" (Ikome, 2006). Consequently, to strengthen the capacity of the economies for participation as important and effective partners in the global economy in the

next century, African states opted to promote regional economic integration (Asante, 1997). African leaders took various initiatives to accelerate the process of the economic and political integration of Africa. In July 1979, at the 16<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session in Monrovia, Liberia, African Heads of State and Ministers met to assess the continent's economic problems (Edoun, 2015).

The Monrovia Conference was a culmination of a series of meetings by African leaders on the continent's economic dependence (Kouassi, 2007). This resulted in the Monrovia Declaration that sought for collective self-reliance as well as economic and social development of the continent. In order to deliberate distinct measures for the implementation of the declaration they resolved to hold an Extraordinary Session, devoted to economic issues, in Lagos, Nigeria. Thus in April 1980, African leaders adopted the Lagos Plan of Action and the Final Act of Lagos (LPA and FAL) with the aim of executing the Monrovia strategy for economic development, whilst giving the OAU the authority to prepare a treaty for the attainment of an African Economic Community (AEC) (Ibid).

Consequently, the idea of African economic integration came to a peak in the 1980s with the establishment of the Lagos Plan of Action and Final Act of Lagos. The framework ensured that African governments committed to the establishment of an African Economic Community by the year 2000 in order to achieve economic, cultural and social integration (Ibid). This gave the strategy of regionalism a "new lease of life" as its essence was to create "the national, sub-regional and regional levels, of a dynamic and interdependent African economy" (Asante, 1997).

The Lagos Plan of Action, (hereafter the Plan), symbolized a collective response by African states to the World Bank's Berg Report, which placed the blame of Africa's demise solely on African leaders. In contrast, the Plan placed the blame on structural dislocations of African

economies (through Structural Adjustments Programs) and their vulnerability to external economic shocks (Eyoh, 1998). Thus, the Plan represented a development strategy for Africa focused on self-reliance, a democratization of the development of the development process and a fair and just distribution of wealth (Baah, 2003). It listed what countries had to do to put the continent on a self-sustaining growth path, which include “a reduction of dependence on primary commodities, the acceleration of industrialization within the framework of regional integration, more equitable global economic relations and increased development assistance (Eyoh, 1998). Altogether the LPA’s thirteen chapters focused on economic and social sectors including: food security and agriculture, industry, natural resources, human resource development, science and technology, trade and finance, transport and community, economic and technical cooperation, the environment, energy, development planning, women, statistics and population (Ikome, 2004). To attain these goals, some acts were adopted to facilitate the transformation of the OAU to the AU, which further to adopt the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) in 2001 to drive the LPA’s objectives.

Gerrit Olivier avers that the failure of the LPA to remedy the economic problems of Africa is placed on numerous peripheral factors. These include the realities of the global political economy influenced by the oil crises of the 1970s, the new trade and monetary policies introduced by the Bretton Woods institutions, the deterioration of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) regime. He, also, refers to the ideological differences of the Cold War, the failure to breach the gap between the advanced North and less-advanced South and the intellectual inconsistencies about economic policy and development strategy. Yet still he places the blame squarely at the feet of African governments and their inability to follow through on

many initiatives but merely pay lip service to it in subsequent years. In essence, the LPA “conveys a sense of déjà vu” recalling the African Unity period of the 1960s (Olivier, 2010).

The fundamental objective of the LPA was to establish an economic community for the African continent. However, this was contingent on progress made within Regional Economic Communities (RECs) at the sub-regional level and at the regional level. Consequently, the LPA’s poor performance towards achieving a continental economic community inspired the introduction of the Abuja Treaty, a somewhat intended corrective to the shortfalls of the LPA (Ibid).

#### **2.4 The Abuja Treaty**

The African continent had continually faced financial distress for the most part of the immediate post-colonial era. There was the need to remedy the woes of Africa through political and economic unity (Ricks, 2016). For four decades and more, the dominance of economic integration schemes have been witnessed on the African continent and this has been concretized in initiatives that help to secure the continent on this path. On 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1991, in Abuja, Nigeria, a new chapter in African economic integration was achieved with the signing of the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community (AEC), also called the Abuja Treaty (Kouassi, 2007). Besides the unification and pan-Africanist elements the Abuja Treaty lent to the African integration process, the treaty was critical for the continent’s economic survival as Africa, at the time, faced a growing marginalization in world issues due to the global economic crisis. Additionally, it was Africa’s response to global regionalist trends, for instance, in the US-Canada-Mexico Free Trade Agreement, the Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area, the rise of

the economic blocs in Asia and the Far East, the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Agreement and the rise of the single European Market and Fortress Europe (1992) (Asante, 1997).

The signing of the Abuja Treaty and the role it played in the establishing of the AEC as an integral part of the OAU marked a pivotal shift in African political thinking on the subject of African Unity. Further, the Treaty established the AEC as “pivot around which the economic integration arrangements envisaged at the continental level revolve” (Thompson, 1993). In other words, the signing of the treaty constituted a turning point for the OAU’s agenda as it embraced all issues related to economic development (Seka, 2009). There was an addition in the aim and scope of the continent’s integration process as the treaty committed the continent to pursuing the path of economic integration and collective development and sought to strengthen the position of African states within the international economy (Jongur, 2014).

Signed by 49 out of 51 states (Kouassi, 2007), the Abuja Treaty marked the continent’s second major scheme, after the LPA, for economic integration and socioeconomic development (Vickers, 2017). It entered into force on 12 May 1994, after the required ratifications were acquired and focused on significant integrating sectors like transport, communication, industry, agriculture, energy, education, science & technology, trade, money and finance, human resources, social affairs and population. The Abuja Treaty has, therefore, an ‘all-embracing’ character and mandate that stretches its scope to cover all aspects of African economic and social life making it quite an innovative initiative. At this point, also, the OAU had begun to operate based on two legal instruments, the OAU Charter and the AEC Treaty, and thus the organization was referred to as the OAU/AEC.

#### **2.4.1 Principles of the Abuja Treaty**

Article 3 of the Abuja Treaty enumerates the guiding principles of the community's economic integration efforts as:

- Equality and inter-dependence of member states
- Solidarity and collective self-reliance
- Inter-state cooperation, harmonization of policies and integration of programmes
- Promotion of harmonious development of economic activities among member states
- Observance of the legal system of the community
- Peaceful settlement of disputes among member states, active cooperation between neighbouring countries and promotion of a peaceful environment as a pre-requisite for economic development
- Recognition, promotion, and protection of human and peoples' rights in accordance with the provisions of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights
- Accountability, economic justice and popular participation in development (Thompson, 1993)

In the Treaty, the Member States of the OAU identified five sources of inspiration for the establishment of the AEC. These are internal stimuli in the form of regional instruments, namely: the OAU Treaty, the Kinshasa Declaration (1977) concerning the establishment of the AEC; the Monrovia Declaration of Commitment on the Guidelines and Measures for National and Collective Self-Reliance in Economic and Social Development for the Establishment of a New International Order; the Lagos Plan of Action and the Final Act of Lagos and the OAU

Declaration reiterating the commitment to accelerate the establishment of an African Economic Community (Thompson, 1993).

#### **2.4.2 Objectives of the Treaty**

According to S.K.B. Asante, similar to the pre-1990 efforts and initiatives of the sub-regional economic groupings, the Abuja Treaty reflects the standard provisions of African economic cooperation and integration initiatives. However, one key difference the Abuja treaty exhibits is its ability to define, with more precision and specificity, the need for promoting “economic, social and cultural development and the integration of African economies in order to increase economic self-reliance and promote an endogenous and self-sustained development” (Asante, 1997). The aims of the treaty are preserved in Article 4 and these include the following:

- a) To promote economic, social and cultural development and the integration of African economies in order to increase economic self-sufficiency and promoting endogenous and self-supporting development.
- b) To construct a continental framework for self-sufficient development, mobilization and utilization of Africa’s human and natural resources.
- c) To promote cooperation and development in all spheres of human activity in order to raise the living standards of Africans, maintaining and promoting economic stability, establishing close and peaceful relations among member states and contributing to ensuring the continent’s progress, development and economic integration
- d) To harmonize policies among the existing and future RECs to help with the gradual establishment of the community (Kouassi, 2007).

In Article 4(2) stipulations are given, in sixteen paragraphs, on measures to be adopted by the member states to implement of the community's objectives (Thompson, 1993). This is to ensure the establishment of a "framework for the development, mobilization and utilization of the human and material resources of Africa" (Asante, 1997).

### **2.4.3 Institutional Structure of the Community**

Article 7 of the Treaty outlines the institutions necessary for the attainment of an AEC. These are the Assembly of Heads of State and Government; the Council of Ministers; the Pan-African Parliament; the Economic and Social Council; the Court of Justice; the General Secretariat and the Specialized Technical Committees (Thompson, 1993).

The Assembly of Heads of State and Government is the supreme organ of the community, its main responsibility is to implement the objectives of the community, and it meets annually in a regular session. Its roles are outlined in the Abuja Treaty as the body that defines the general policy and major guidelines of the Community, it supervises the operatives of the Community organs, and it prepares and adopts rules of procedure. Further, among other functions, the Assembly endorses the organizational structure of the Secretariat, it elects the Secretary-General and his deputies, appoints the Financial Controller, the Accountant and the External Auditors and on the recommendation of the Council, it takes decisions and gives directives concerning the RECs in order to ensure the realization of the objectives of the Community (Article 8, Abuja Treaty). The treaty stipulates that the Assembly shall act by decisions, that are made by consensus from a two-thirds majority of Member States, are binding on Member States, organs

of the community and RECs. These decisions are enforceable thirty days after the signature of the Chairman of the Assembly was appended (Art. 10, Abuja).

The Council of Ministers is the same institution as that of the Council of Ministers of the OAU and is responsible for the functioning and development of the AEC. The functions of the Council include, *inter alia*, making recommendations to the Assembly on any action aimed at attaining the objectives of the Community; guiding the activities of lesser organs; proposing to the Assembly the appointment of the Financial Controller, the Accountant and the External Auditors and submitting to the Assembly proposals concerning programmes of activity and budget of the Community and the annual contribution of each Member State (Art. 11, Abuja). The treaty stipulates that the Council shall meet twice a year in Ordinary Session preceding the regular session of the Assembly (Art. 12, Abuja) and shall act by regulations that are binding on Member States, subordinate organs of the Community and RECs after their approval by the Assembly (Art. 13, Abuja).

The Pan-African Parliament's (PAP) purpose is to ensure "that the peoples of Africa are fully involved in the economic development and integration of the Continent." In the Abuja Treaty the composition, functions, powers and organization of the PAP was to be defined in a subsequent Protocol (Art. 14, Abuja). The PAP was officially inaugurated on 18 March 2004 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and its seat is in Midrand, South Africa. Today, the PAP is one of the nine organs of the AU and is composed of 229 Members of Parliament representing 52 African countries ([panafricanparliament.org](http://panafricanparliament.org)).

The Economic and Social Commission of the AEC is identified as that of the OAU. The members are ministers responsible for the economic development, planning and integration in Member States who may be assisted by other Ministers when required. The representatives of RECs have a right of participation in meetings of the Commission and its subsidiary organs and the Commission shall meet annually in an Ordinary Session (Art. 15, Abuja). The modalities and conditions for such participation were to be set by a subsequent protocol. Article 16 lays out the functions of the Commission as:

- a) Prepare, in accordance with the Lagos Plan of Action and the Final Act of Lagos, programmes, policies and strategies for co-operation in the fields of economic and social development among African countries on the hand, and between Africa and the International community on the other, and make appropriate recommendations to the Assembly, through the Council;
- b) Coordinate, harmonize, supervise and follow-up the economic, social, cultural, scientific and technical activities of the Secretariat, of the Committees and any other subsidiary body;
- c) Examine the reports and recommendations to the Assembly, through the Council, and ensure their follow-up;
- d) Make recommendations to the Assembly, through the Council with a view of coordinating and harmonizing the activities of the different RECs;
- e) Supervise the preparation of international negotiations, assess the results thereof and report thereon to the Assembly through the Council; and
- f) Carry out all other functions assigned thereto by the Assembly or the Council (Art. 16, Abuja)

The Court of Justice has the responsibility of ensuring that Community Law is adhered to and its purpose is to adjudicate on any disputes relating to the interpretation and application of the

Treaty. It shall decide on actions brought by Member States or the Assembly relating to the violation of the Treaty, or of a decision on the grounds of lack of competence or abuse of powers by an organ, an authority or a Member State and it can also give advisory opinions at the request of the Assembly or Council. The decisions of the Court are binding on Member States and organs of the Community (Art. 19, Abuja).

According to article 21 of the Abuja Treaty, the General Secretariat is the same as that of the OAU, is headed by the Secretary-General who is assisted by the necessary staff for the smooth functioning of the Community (Art. 21, Abuja). The Secretary-General has the dual role of directing the activities of the Secretariat and being its legal representative. The Secretary-General specifically ensures the implementation of the decisions of the Assembly and the application of the Council's regulations; it supports development projects of the Community; prepares proposals concerning the programme of activity and budget of the Community. Also, it submits reports on the activities of the Community to all meetings of the Assembly; prepares and service meetings of the Assembly, the Council, the Commission and the Committees and it carries out further research aimed at helping the Community achieve its goals (Art. 22, Abuja).

The Specialized Technical Committees established by the Community are the Committee on Rural Economy and Agricultural Matters; the Committee on Monetary and Financial Affairs; the Committee on Trade Customs and Immigration Matters; the Committee on Industry, Science and Technology, Energy, Natural Resources and Environment. Also, the Committee on Transport, Communication and Tourism, the Committee on Health, Labour and Social Affairs and the Committee on Education, Culture and Human Resources were established by the Treaty (Art. 25,

Abuja). The Assembly reserves the right to restructure the committees when appropriate and each committee shall comprise a representative of each Member State. The committees are mandated, *inter alia*, to prepare projects and programmes of the Community and submit them to the Commission, ensure the supervision, follow up and the evaluation of the implementation of decisions taken by the organs of the Community and ensure the coordination and harmonization of projects and programmes of the community (Art. 26, Abuja).

#### **2.4.4 Modalities for Establishing the Community**

An important aspect of the Abuja Treaty is the approach adopted towards the realization of the African Economic Community. The Abuja Treaty adopts a traditional linear pattern of regional economic integration, which provides a roadmap for the establishing of the AEC, by the year 2028, through six stages, over a period of 34 years (Vickers, 2017). The modalities for the establishing of the community are to be carried out via coordination, harmonization and gradual integration of the activities of the RECs.

The first stage of the roadmap has a duration of five years and involves the strengthening of existing regional economic communities and the creation of new communities (Art. 6(1), Abuja). The Treaty's economic integration approach highly depends on the RECs as building blocks of the economic integration process. The success of the economic integration process in Africa largely depends on the exceptional performance of the RECs. In article 88(1) of the treaty postulates that the AEC can only be created through the synchronization, harmonization and progressive integration of the efforts and initiatives of the RECs (Art. 88(1), Abuja).

The Treaty recognizes the existence of five regions on the continent. These are North Africa, West Africa, East Africa, Central Africa and Southern Africa (Art. 1(d), Abuja). When the Treaty was enforced in 1994, only five sub-regional RECs had been established. These were the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Economic Community for Central African States (ECCAS), and the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC). The community subsequently recognized three more RECs including the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD), the Economic Community for Sahel Saharan States (CEN-SAD) and the East Africa Community (EAC). With eight AEC-recognized RECs in 2006, the AU banned further sanctioning of new RECs. Yet, there exist six other integration blocs on the continent - although not officially recognized by the community - which contribute to the advancement of the African integration agenda and the establishment of the AEC (Mlenga, 2012). This highlights a loophole in the treaty to be evaluated in the subsequent chapter of the study.

For a stipulated duration of eight years, the second stage, of the gradual approach towards the ultimate creation of the AEC, calls for the stabilization of tariffs, customs duty and other barriers to intra-community trade; strengthening of sectoral integration, coordination and harmonization of customs duty for third countries. This stage entails a deeper political integration within RECs in terms of tariffs, taxes and trade and synchronization of these areas between the RECs. The third stage has a duration of ten years and necessitates the establishment of a trade area within each REC through the removal of trade barriers, the establishment of customs union and the adoption of a common external tariff. For a period of two years, the fourth stage demands the

establishment of an African Customs Union, with a single external tariff through harmonization of regional tariff and non-tariff systems (Ibid).

The fifth stage deals with the establishment of an African Common Market through the consolidation of the structure of the common market; the establishment of an African Monetary Union and an African Central Bank, the creation of a Single African Currency as well as the establishment of a Pan-African Parliament elected by universal suffrage. The stipulated duration according to the treaty is four years (Ibid).

The final stage, for a period of five years, calls for the consolidation of the African Common Market through the free movement of people, goods, capital and services. Also, the integration of the economic, political, social and cultural sectors; the establishment of a single internal market as a Pan-African economic and monetary union; the establishment of an African Central Bank; the creation of an African Currency (the “afro) and completion of the Pan-African Parliament with the election of its members by universal suffrage at the continental level. For the afro to be implemented and integrated into African economies, a centralized monetary union is necessary to manage inflation, exchange rates and other economic criteria. The African Monetary Union as envisioned by the Abuja Treaty comprises of five regional monetary unions under the five major RECs. The will include the West African Economic and Monetary Union, the Economic and Monetary Community for Central Africa, the Arab Monetary Union, Southern African Monetary Union and East African Monetary Union (Ricks, 2016).

Accordingly, in order for African states to establish successfully an African Economic Community, there is the need to follow the four stages traditionally associated with the process of economic integration. These are free trade area - that is spread over the first, second and third stages of the Abuja Treaty, customs union (fourth stage of the treaty), common market (fifth stage) and economic union (sixth stage).

#### **2.4.5 Areas of Cooperation**

The Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community further deals with other areas of economic cooperation that are both regional and continental. The first area of cooperation is the creation of Customs Union and liberalization of trade, which are specified in article 29 and articles 30-34 respectively. The second is the free movement of persons and rights of residence and establishment that are specified in article 43. Other areas of cooperation, assigned by the Abuja Treaty deal with the areas of monetary, financial & payment policies and movement of capital, agricultural development and food production, industrial development, science & technology, energy, natural resources and environment; transport , communications and tourism; education, training and culture as well as human resources, social affairs, health and population (Thompson, 1993).

#### **2.5 Conclusion**

The 1990s are very symbolic in the annals of regional integration of the African continent because it marked an important era for the movement towards an economically integrated continent with the establishment of the Lagos Plan of Action and more importantly the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community (AEC). Despite the immense achievement of

establishing a roadmap towards an African Economic Community and the relating prescriptions that aid in achieving the goal, realistically, the execution and operationalization of these prescriptions constitutes the real problem for the continent, hence the need to evaluate the Treaty in the next chapter of this study.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **A COMPARATIVE ASSESSMENT OF REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN ECOWAS AND ECCAS UNDER THE TREATY ESTABLISHING THE AFRICAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents an analysis and assessment of the paths taken by both the ECOWAS and the ECCAS in achieving the stipulations of the Abuja Treaty that seeks to physically connect and socio-economically integrate Africa as well as ultimately create an African Economic Community. The analysis is principally based on primary data and secondary sources relevant to the area of study. The chapter first presents a brief assessment on Africa's progress on the implementation of the Abuja Treaty, then looks at the efforts made by both the ECOWAS and the ECCAS and finally carries out a comparative analysis of the two RECs.

#### **3.1 Progress Made on the Implementation of the Abuja Treaty**

According to Mr. Harold Agyeman, The Director of Africa and Regional Integration Bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration (MFARI), "*the state of regional integration in Africa is positive*" in the sense that, some Regional Economic Communities (RECs) like ECOWAS, SADC and to some extent the EAC have had positive effects on the regional integration process. The signing of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) in Kigali in March 2018 and the subsequent ratification by 22 African states in May 2019 is another positive. The Continental Free Trade Area, like the Abuja Treaty and Lagos Plan of Action, is an initiative that seeks to achieve the objective of a continental market integration and,

therefore, represents a step in the right direction (Agyeman, 2019). However, the continent continues to trade more with the rest of the world than among African countries. The European Union possesses the largest share of exports from the continent as it exceeds a figure of 30% of total exports for the 2000 to 2017 timeframe.

In line with free movement of its people and the creation of seamless borders, African countries are becoming more open towards one another. This is seen in the launch of the Single African Air Transport Market, established in 2018, that seeks to regulate air connectivity, make it faster, easier and cheaper for Africans to move around the continent. Today, “Africans do not require a visa to travel to at least 25% of other African countries, can get visas on arrival in 24% of other African countries; and need visas to travel to 51% of other African countries [this was 54% in 2017]” (tralac.org, 2018). Also, as part of the AU’s strategic framework, Agenda 2063, which intends to speed up “socio-economic growth through the sustainable expansion of domestic industries, transportation and communication infrastructures and democratic governance”, an African passport was proposed. The logistical details on the issuance of the AU passport was revealed at the 32<sup>nd</sup> Summit of the African Union, in February 2019 with intentions for large-scale release in the year 2020. The AU passport will give citizens of all member states the opportunity to travel visa free (Terrell, 2019).

### **3.2 The Regional Economic Communities and Their Approach to Implementing the Abuja Treaty**

The objectives of Regional Economic Communities (RECs) on the African continent - acting as building blocks of the African Union as envisioned under the 1991 Abuja Treaty - have progressed unevenly concerning their integration paths. Whilst some RECs have achieved real and solid results, others have found it difficult to meet even the fundamental intentions relayed in their individual treaties and the targets of the Abuja Treaty. In spite of this diversity among Africa's regional groupings, the assessment of progress on regional integration is important for both these RECs and the African Union as a whole (ECOSOC, 2019). For this reason and many others, this study seeks to assess the efforts of ECOWAS and ECCAS.

### **3.3 Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)**

#### ***3.3.1 Phase 1- Strengthening existing RECs and creation of new RECs***

The first stage of the Abuja Treaty was stipulated to roll out for the period between 1994 and 1999, the initial stages of implementation of the Treaty. At this phase, the Treaty required a strengthening of existing Regional Economic Communities (RECs) on the continent and to create new regions where they did not exist. This means that the aim of the Abuja Treaty was to use existing RECs as the building blocks of the African Economic Community (AEC), to account for progress within the REC as progress for the Treaty and through this, draw closer to the establishment of the AEC (Frimpong Oppong, 2010). ECOWAS is classified under the former because the REC had been established as far back as 28<sup>th</sup> May, 1975 by the signing of the Treaty of Lagos by 16 Member States. At the time the Abuja Treaty was signed, "ECOWAS was

functional to a greater extent and thus in this respect it had fulfilled the initial stage of the treaty” (Agyeman, 2019). New developments, however, on the African continent brought about new obligations for the community and for this reason a modified Treaty had to be signed. The Heads of State and Government of the present fifteen member states signed this revised Treaty in Cotonou, Benin Republic, on 24 July 1993 (Treaty| ECOWAS, n.d).

The objectives it sought to achieve were the need to promote and accelerate the economic co-operation and integration through a collaborative policy of self-sufficiency as well as the need to step up the economic and social development of the West African people. Besides these objectives, the member states of the ECOWAS took into great consideration or were “mindful” of other African initiatives. For instance, the Lagos Plan of Action and the Final Act of Lagos of April 1980 and most importantly to this study, the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community, commonly known as the Abuja Treaty that was signed on 3 June 1991 (Ibid.).

### ***3.3.2 Phase 2- Co-ordination and Harmonization of activities***

#### **Free Movement of Persons**

The Community has embarked on a number of schemes and programmes to foster cooperation, development and integration and one of them is the Free Movement Protocol. This Protocol is very relevant and sits at the heart of the community’s objective because without the free movement of citizens of the community or the agents of integration, genuine integration cannot be achieved (Opanike, Aduloju & Adenipekun, 2015). The freedom of movement and residence was established first in the ECOWAS Treaty of 1975, in Chapter IV – Article 27 where it conferred the status of community citizens on nationals of member states. The Treaty charges

member states to work gradually towards the abolition of hindrances to free movement of persons, services and capital and further makes provision for 90 days of visa-free stay, an ECOWAS passport and the removal of strict border formalities (Awumbila, Teye & Nikoi, 2018). The idea of free movement is further reiterated in the May 1979 Protocol relating to Free Movement of Persons, Residence and Establishment signed in Dakar, Senegal, which allows citizens of the Community “to enter, reside and establish economic activities in the territory of other member states” (Uneca, n.d). In July 2014, the Conference of Heads of State met in Accra where they enhanced existing protocols on the phenomenon by deciding to adopt the biometric identity card as travel document, withdrawal of the resident card and decided on free access to employment in Member States (Uneca – West Africa, 2015).

## **SECTORAL INTEGRATION**

### **Agriculture**

The sectoral policies started with the development of the ECOWAS’s agricultural policy in 2005, which aimed “to contribute sustainably to meet the food needs of the population, economic and social development, and poverty reduction in the member states” (Dalberg & OSIWA). The motivation for the creation of this sectoral policy was primarily the role given to ECOWAS by the AU to coordinate the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) (Ibid.).

The Agricultural policy of West Africa, known as the ECOWAS Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP), was approved in 2005. This mechanism focuses on providing food security for the Community, securing food sovereignty whilst reducing food dependence, incorporating producers in markets, creating employment with guaranteed incomes to ensure better living

standards in rural areas, ensuring sustainable production systems and decreasing the vulnerability of West African economies (UNECA, 2015). As part of this regional agricultural policy, the ECOWAS Commission instituted the Regional Agricultural Investment Plan (RAIP) in 2010 (Dalberg & OSIWA). The RAIP, with a budget of \$900 million, focuses on definite objectives, which are “the promotion of strategic products for food sovereignty, the promotion of an economic environment favorable to regional agricultural development and the reduction of food vulnerability” (Dalberg & OSIWA, p.19).

Some of the achievements of the RAIP include the establishment of an ECOWAS Regional Agricultural Information System (ECOAGRIS) that is operational in seven member states – Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Senegal and Niger – and sought to enable the interconnection of national agricultural information systems for the 2012 to 2014 period. There is also the networking of laboratories for fertilizer quality control as well as a project that focuses on curbing fruit fly-sourced contamination. Also, a Regional Animal Health Centre has been set up in Mali to synchronize the monitoring and evaluation schemes that are employed to combat developing Transboundary Animal diseases (UNECA, 2015).

### **Industry**

Besides the implementation of sectoral policies for agriculture, the Community also implemented policies for other fields including industrialization. In fact, for the first thirty years of the ECOWAS’s existence, the economic actions of the organization focused on the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS) established in 1979 for agricultural products and later extended to industrial products in 1990 (Dalberg & OSIWA). The West African Common Industrial Policy (WACIP), which aims to accelerate the industrialization process for the sub-region via “the

promotion of endogenous industrial transformation of local raw materials, development and diversification of industrial productive capacity, and strengthen regional integration and the export of manufactured goods” (UNECA-West Africa, 2015, p.70).

### **Macroeconomic policy**

ECOWAS has two sub-regional blocs: these are the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) and the West African Monetary Zone (WAMZ). UEMOA or the West African Economic Monetary Union is a customs union and currency union among ECOWAS members and is made up of eight francophone countries- that use the CFA Franc pegged to the Euro. On the other side are seven other ECOWAS countries that possess their own currencies, they make up the WAMZ. Although, a ten-year delay was witnessed with ECOWAS’s efforts to secure an Economic and Monetary Union that will possess a single currency and a single Central Bank. There have been efforts to “fast-track measures to support the creation and use of a single currency by 2020” (UNECA, 2019, p.3). In June 2019, the community formally adopted “Eco” as the name of the single currency. This initiative is seen as a great risk but simultaneously it could stand as a strong political symbol for the region.

### **Infrastructure**

In terms of Infrastructure, ECOWAS classifies this into three broad groups, which are Transport, Telecommunications and Energy (Infrastructure| Ecowas, n.d). Infrastructure is important because the lack of adequate infrastructure on the African continent is a structural constraint that hinders the economic development of the continent. According to Kalilou Traoré, the ECOWAS Commissioner for Industry and Private Sector Promotion, the right kind of infrastructure will

promote “growth, competitiveness, job creation and fight against poverty” (*ictsd.org*, 2017). An objective of ECOWAS’s Vision 2020 is to improve the interconnectedness of West African countries through economic and social infrastructure via master plans that focus on road, sea and air transport, telecommunication systems and energy (Ibid). These projects fall in line with the AU’s continental infrastructure development plan known as the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) for which the ECOWAS plays the role of coordinator for the West African region (Kamara, n.d).

### **Transport**

For Transport, the sub- categories are road, rail and air transport and the intention is to implement a diverse transport infrastructure coupled with policies that stimulate physical cohesion within the Community, facilitate the free mobility of persons, goods and services across states and increases access to islands and land-locked countries (Infrastructure| Ecowas, n.d). One of the priority integration roads is the ongoing Trans-West African coastal highway that connects Lagos and Nouakchott via Dakar (4,560 km) of which 83% or 3,777 km is complete (Madamombe, 2006). Other projects are the Dakar- N’Djamena trans-Sahelian highway (4,460 km) and the six-lane dual carriageway known as the Lagos-Abidjan toll highway (1,028 km). The latter corridor, which links Lagos, Cotonou, Accra, Lomé and Abidjan and connects landlocked countries (Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso) to maritime ports, is home to more than 30 million inhabitants and serves as transit to 75% of trade in the sub-region (UNECA- West Africa, 2015). On February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2019, the ECOWAS Commission launched a Project Implementation Unit (PIU) for the Lagos-Abidjan corridor to play the role of daily management of the project

and to carry out a feasibility study, road safety audit among other things to ensure the viability of the project (Mayaki, 2019).

For rail transport, the aim of the community is to resuscitate and revolutionize the railway networks of the sub-region. Thus, in 2008, a Master Plan to this end was adopted as the organization saw the need to create links between the rail networks that exist in 11 of the 15 member countries. The pre-existing rail systems, in the sub-region, are fragmented and operate on three different rail gauges. For instance, for Francophone countries, the width is 1000 mm, Ghanaian and Nigerian rails are 1,067mm wide and for Guinea and Liberia, this is 1,435 mm (Kuwonu, 2015). The Master Plan was further updated in 2013 to secure among other things, a redefinition of priorities for the rehabilitation of existing lines and/or construction of new lines, focus on linking Guinea Bissau, Gambia and Sierra Leone to existing or new railway networks. A success to ECOWAS's railway subsector is the Cotonou-Niamey-Ouagadougou-Abidjan Railway (West African railway loop) which saw the initiation of a modernization project (first announced in mid-2015) to upgrade and reconstruct damaged parts of the railway (AU, 2016).

### **Telecommunications and Information Technology**

The Community seeks to develop a sustainable West African telecommunications market and to create a synchronized and standardized ICT infrastructure across the region to ensure the expansion of investments and promotion services within the community. There have been many achievements in this fields but the most remarkable -debatably- besides the creation of a regional Telecommunications Market, is the joining of West Africa's major cities by automatic telephone, telex and telefax links (ICT| Ecowas, n.d). What this essentially means is that there is direct

telephone communication among member states of the community, a groundbreaking initiative, given that a few years ago, telephone connections were routed via Europe before rerouting to the West African country on the receiving end (Morton, 2017). Also, as part of its INTELCOMM II programme, the ECOWAS Commission has constructed 32 telecommunications interstate links to work as a regional broadband infrastructure or backbone linked to the global network via submarine cables, which will in turn stimulate online trading within ECOWAS's business community (Uneca- West Africa, 2015; ICT| Ecowas, n.d ).

### **Energy**

There is no doubt that a regional energy policy is a key prop-up for regional integration, and for this reason, the Community has initiated a Common Energy Programme with the intention of providing sustainable and affordable energy throughout the region. To do this effectively, member states have developed coherent projects for all components of the energy value chain and these include the West African Gas Pipeline (WAGP), the West African Power Pool (WAPP) and the ECOWAS Regional Policy on Access to Energy.

The WAGP entails a gas transmission system, 678-km long, which extends from the existing Escravos-to-Lagos Pipeline System (EPLS), owned and operated by the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), to the landfalls of Benin, Togo and Ghana. The Objective of the project is to transport Nigerian produced natural gas to commercially markets in these countries. The project started from 1982, when member states proposed the initiative as a key in regional economic goal. In 1995, a World Bank study would later confirm the project as feasible given the sufficient reserves of Nigerian Natural Gas against regional energy needs. In 2005, the construction of the offshore West African Gas Pipeline begins and in 2006 onshore construction

began in Nigeria and Ghana (Barandao, 2012). The Gas line, despite some challenges, has been in operation since March 2011 and is said to be operating at only 30 % of its full capacity of approximately 400 million cubic feet (UNECA- West Africa, 2015). Further, a viability study to assess the extension of the network beyond Ghana to improve sub-regional integration is highly achievable (Ibid).

### ***3.3.3 Phase 3- Establishment of a Free Trade Area and Customs Union***

#### ***Free Trade Area***

The Abuja Treaty in phase 3 requires that RECs on the African continent realize a Free Trade Area (FTA). To establish the FTA, the community implemented the comprehensive ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme, which is the main operational tool used to promote West Africa as an FTA. The FTA is a great requirement because it promotes the development of entrepreneurs, boosts intra-regional trade, proliferates West African competitiveness globally and increases the GDP of member states, and by extension, provides better living standards for people (*etls.ecowas.int*). The ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme, according to the ECOWAS Treaty, “aims to promote intra-community trade by removing tariff and non-tariff barriers on imports and exports of products originating in Member States” (Uneca- West Africa, 2015, p.53). The idea behind the removal of tariff and non-tariff barriers is that it “reduces import costs, strengthens market power and improves social well-being” (ibid. p.52).

Although it was framed in 1979, the ELTS began operating in 1990 and serves the function of promoting the free movement of goods within the region, generating new markets for goods and services outside the participating countries, to increase investment avenues for third party countries and firms. Other goals are to eliminate all customs duties to make trade cheaper, to

expedite the transportation of goods – and therefore trade - through customs and to homogenize technical and sanitary standards (Obeng-Asante, 2018).

The execution of the ETLS is in stages. Firstly, the full liberalization of trade in goods that are unprocessed, agricultural, and artisanal and design products that originate from member states. These products are expected to move freely with no custom duty or non-tariff barriers (Fajana, 2018). Secondly, the steady liberalization of trade in industrial products that occurred in 1990. After this, it became necessary to define ‘originating product’, which is laid down in the ECOWAS Protocol AP1/1/03 (2003) to entail (but not limited to) “ local content that is equal to greater than 60% and a value addition that is equal or greater than 30%. Lastly, is the measured implementation of a Common External Tariff that creates the customs union (Obeng-Asante, 2018; Fajana, 2018).

### ***Customs Union***

The difference between the FTA and the Customs Union is that with the FTA, its members maintain autonomy over its external trade arrangements whilst for the Customs Union, the members have a Common External Tariff (CET) (Obeng-Asante, 2018). For trade liberalization, before its Customs Union was successfully implemented in 2015, ECOWAS observed a ten-year delay at the regional level. The initial target date was in 2006 but it was only executed in January 2015 when the Community effectively agreed upon the Common External Tariff (UNECA-West Africa, 2015). The CET groups tariffs into bands (0% essential social commodities, 5%-essential commodities, raw materials and capital goods, 10% intermediate products, 20% consumer goods and 35% specific goods for economic development). The idea behind the CET is to protect domestic producers, stimulate production and exports whilst reducing imports in some areas.

Further endorsing the ECOWAS's role as a Customs Union is the Economic Partnership Agreement with the European Union as West African countries (including UEMOA zone countries) have secured the ability and position to negotiate with one voice on trade issues. The main aim of the West Africa- EU EPA "is the establishment of a free trade area between Europe and ECOWAS (+Mauritania)...through the gradual removal of trade restrictions...the EPA is intended to foster the smooth and gradual integration of ACP states into the world economy, with due regard for their political choices and development priorities" (EPA| [www.ecowas.int](http://www.ecowas.int)).

#### **3.4 Challenges the ECOWAS Faces in Pursuit of the Abuja Treaty**

Despite the numerous initiatives the ECOWAS has taken, it still lags behind in terms of its pursuit of the objectives of the Abuja Treaty. The challenges originate from both internal and external sourced. Below are a few of them:

*In terms of the ETLS the issues that hinder its effective implementation is the fact that national interest often overrides regional commitments made. Some countries unilaterally make decisions based on national interest. For instance, Nigeria has a prohibition list for certain products. Some members of UEMOA, put a statistical levy to fund UEMOA even though the common external tariff of ECOWAS has been agreed. Often non-tariff barriers are placed arbitrarily in the way of products that have been registered under the scheme (Agyeman, 2019).*

The scheme has the agreement to ensure duty-free access for agricultural products, artisanal handicraft products and registered industrial products that comply with rules of origin. Therefore, national interest sometimes becomes a hindrance because it blurs judgment in terms of the regional benefits.

Pertaining to free movement, also lack of respect of the rules of migration creates security and economic challenges. Thus, sometimes, there are arbitrary decisions by member states to close borders to deny entry (Agyeman, 2019). For example, in the 1980s and 1990s, economic crises in some member states like Nigeria initiated large expulsions and also “there is still a lack of national implementation of free movement legislation and uptake by the population. Border checks are commonplace and there is very little standardization of official forms” (Ibid).

Further, although the ECOWAS started pursuing an economic integration in 1975, with the establishment of the ECOWAS Treaty there, was a realization that the Organization needed to evolve to address the problems of peace and security, and by extension, governance that the sub-region faced in places like Liberia and Sierra Leone. Thus, Ambassador William Awinador-Kanyirige explains that,

*The economic integration agenda in ECOWAS suddenly slowed down in order to focus on dousing the fires of conflict. As a result, ECOWAS developed a very long arm in managing conflict but a shorter arm in economic integration because of the compelling focus on the former. The reasons why the Community has been slow to realize the objectives of Abuja Treaty is not peculiar to the ECOWAS region alone. All the other RECs had their fair share of delays with*

*the exception of SADC, which has a relatively peaceful environment and that kind of thing (Awinador- Kanyirige, 2019).*

Concerning the establishment of the ‘Eco’ or ECOWAS single currency, despite deficits from the Community itself, external factors exist such as the stronghold France possesses over the Francophone countries that currently use the CFA. According to Harold Agyeman (2019),

*the CFA is anchored to the French Treasury, nearly 65% of foreign currencies of these nations are kept in the French Treasury as part of the arrangements that exist between these zones (for ECCAS - the Central Africa Zone as well). It means largely that these states do not have sovereignty over their monetary policy. The fact that the French government has a role to play here weakens the capacity of CFA zone countries to support fully the objectives of ECOWAS relating to economic development and the creation of a regional zone of prosperity (Agyeman, 2019).*

### **3.5 Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)**

#### **3.5.1 Phase 1- Strengthening existing RECs and creation of new RECs**

ECCAS was formed in 1983 under the framework of the AEC with the long-term goal of creating a common market for the states in the sub-region (UNDP, 2017). The Treaty establishing ECCAS highlights, in Article 4.1, the foremost aims of the REC as to

*promote and strengthen harmonious cooperation and balanced and self-sustained development in all fields of economic and social activity, particularly in the fields of industry, transport and*

*communications, energy agriculture, natural resources, trade, customs, monetary and financial matters, human resources, tourism, education, further training, culture, science and technology and the movement of persons, in order to achieve collective self-reliance, raise the standard of living of its peoples, increase and maintain economic stability, foster close and peaceful relations between Member States and contribute to the progress and development of the African continent (Article 4.1, Treaty Establishing ECCAS).*

The “special undertakings” section in Article 4.2 includes some goals that are in tandem with those of the Treaty Establishing the AEC. These include:

*the elimination between member states of customs duties and any other charges having an equivalent effect levied on imports and exports; the abolition between member states of quantitative restrictions and other trade barriers; the establishment and maintenance of an external common customs tariffs and the establishment of a trade policy vis-à-vis third states. [Additionally] the progressive abolition between member states of obstacles to the free movement of persons, goods, services, and capital and to the right of establishment and the harmonization of national policies in order to promote community activities particularly in industry, transport (Article 4.1, Treaty Establishing ECCAS).*

Its membership comprises 11 countries but some of these countries are also members of other sub-regional bodies like the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC), COMESA, the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries (CEPGL), the East African Community (EAC) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). A majority of ECCAS's members' experienced violent political upheaval in its early stages of formation brought it to a standstill between 1992 and 1997. In 1998, the body was relaunched and re-framed to focus on an all-encompassing mandate that includes "development and human integration, development of physical, economic and monetary integration, development of capacity to maintain peace, security and stability; development of capacity for analysis, intervention and entrepreneurship initiatives and communication and collective negotiation" (Byiers, 2014).

### ***3.5.2 Phase 2- Co-ordination and Harmonization of activities and gradual elimination of tariff and non-tariff barriers***

ECCAS "aims at promoting and strengthening a harmonious cooperation in order to realize a balanced and self-sustained economic development, particularly in the fields of industry, transport and communications, energy, agriculture natural resources, trade, customs, monetary and financial matters...with a view to achieving self-reliance, raising the standards of living, maintaining economic stability and fostering peaceful relations between the member states and contributing to development of the African continent" (ECCAS| Uneca.org).

In April 2003, the Central African Power Pool (CAPP) was established to implement and coordinate regional energy policy, expand community infrastructure and manage the exchange activities of electric power in all ECCAS member countries. Its focus was the development of the

Inga Dam in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), rehabilitating Inga I and II to restore their capacity of 1,775 megawatts and developing the Inga III or the Grand Inga with a predicated capacity of 40, 000 megawatts. Despite its economic mandate, ECCAS has had a constrained role on regional industrialization for numerous reasons that stand as obstacles to regional development (Byiers, 2014). For instance, the conflict that plagues the region, financial constraints and the overlapping membership of states in other sub-regional communities.

Generally, between 1995 and 2005, the improvements in infrastructure, especially the introduction and expansion of mobile telephony as well as development of roads, fostered growth in the sub-region (1% per capita annually). In contrast, power generation was inadequate and deterred growth immensely whilst paved road density, for instance, lingers at 4km per 100sq whilst for West Africa, Southern and Eastern are 38, 92, and 29 km per 100sq respectively (Ranganathan & Foster, 2011). The required ICT pillar for development is still in its initial stages, the access rates are low and prices of critical services are the highest on the African continent. Yet still, some countries are connected to the under-sea fiber optic cable that has reduced the cost of ICT services and attracted a few international operators (Ibid).

In 2007, to meet the integration challenges and draw on their enormous potential, the ECCAS adopted a strategic integration plan called the *Vision 2025* that “seeks to transform the region into a haven of peace, solidarity, balanced development, free movement of persons, goods and services.” This strategy is in harmony with CEMAC’s Regional Economic Programme (REP) (2009-2015), which aims at building “a competitive regional environment to attract substantial private investment to growth sectors” (African Development Bank, 2011).

The main achievements of ECCAS are in the Regional Security sector. ECCAS has broadened its mandate to include the promotion of security within its region. This is because of the numerous conflicts and crises that have plagued the sub-region since the 1990s. The region has focused on developing capacities for maintaining peace, security and stability in the region as a necessary tool for promoting the economic integration and development of the sub-region. One is the establishment of the Peace and Security Council of Central Africa (COPAX), which is the backbone of the region's peace and security architecture. Second is the Capacity development of the Multinational force of Central Africa (FOMAC), which acts as standby force with between 4800 to 5000 military personnel pledged by member states to accomplish peace, security and humanitarian relief missions. Third is the Establishment of the Central Africa Warning System (MARAC) that is responsible for conflict and crisis observation, monitoring and prevention

***Gradual elimination of tariff and non-tariff barriers***

According to Article 6 of the Treaty establishing the ECCAS, the liberalization of trade can be achieved by elimination of charges and levies in trade within the region and the removal of quantitative restrictions. Next would be the creation of a common external tariff (CET) among member states, a harmonization of trade policies, the removal of all constraints to movements between member states and the harmonization of national policies to improve cooperation between member states (Byiers, 2014). To achieve this, certain measures were adopted within the sub-region. These include, Decisions No. 03 and 04/CEEAC/CCEG/XI that relate to the ECCAS Preferential Tariff (TP/ECCAS) and the modalities of the establishment of the ECCAS Compensation Fund. In addition, alterations were made to "Chapter VI of the Treaty and

Protocols on rules of origin and non-tariff have been adopted to make them more consistent with the establishment of the FTA” (Djemmo Fotso, 2014). The aforementioned decisions have been added to some provisions (articles 27 and 33) of the ECCAS Treaty on intra-trade liberalization. These articles require “member states to reduce soften and eventually remove the quota system and other non-tariff barriers to trade among states members” (Ibid).

Tariff reduction was arranged on the idea of “shared territoriality” in the sense that the CEMAC Generalized Preferential Tariff (TPG/CEMAC) is applied to trade among ECCAS states members that belong to the CEMAC (CFA) zone whilst the TP/ECCAS is applied to trade among ECCAS member state that do not belong to the CEMAC zone. This was to protect interests of the CEMAC zone as well as prevent conflicts among institutions in the region, since ECCAS had failed to meet the timeframe of its Treaty (Ibid). The efforts taken to “harmonize trade classifications, tariffs and legislation are still on-going as part of steps to align customs procedures between the two” (Byiers, 2014 p.5).

### ***3.5.3 Phase 3- Establishment of a Free Trade Area and Customs Union***

The 1998 revised agenda of the Community stated that an ECCAS FTA would be established by 2004 and a customs union by 2008, this was later postponed to 2012. The goal of the FTA was to intensify trade among member states and reduce dependence on imports from the rest of the world but this is yet to materialize as no state has yet executed the Decisions in the Treaty relating to the FTA. The idea was that between the July 1<sup>st</sup> 2004 and January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007 (the transitional period to the establishment of the customs union) the ECCAS tariff regime would be at the same level as the CEMAC one. According to the timeframe adapted by the institution:

- 100% of tariffs for local products, traditional handicrafts and other minerals would be reduced by 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2004
- For minerals and manufactured products from the community: 50% reduction from July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2004; 70% reduction from January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2005; 80% reduction from January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2006 and 100% reduction from January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007

It has been 15 years since the launching of the ECCAS FTA and, so far, it has not been fully executed and intra-regional trade remains low. Since the new regime began in 2000, intra-ECCAS trade and world trade have decreased a little bit (1.1% in 2001 to 0.9% in 2011 in the region, and 2.41% in 2001 to 2.39% in 2011 in world trade). This is an indication of failure in their attempt to create a free trade area in the region (Djemmo Fotso, 2014).

During its early years, the ECCAS planned to implement its Customs Union in 1997 after the establishment of an FTA in 1993 but the financial constraints, due to the failure of member states to pay membership fees and the many conflicts that plagued the area, made the goals not to be realized. Another sub-regional body has taken over this role. The Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC), that was instituted in 1994 as another prominent sub-regional body with the aim of “facilitating the harmonious development of the member states through the establishment of two unions: one economic and one monetary” (UNDP, 2017). The CEMAC superseded the Customs and Economic Union of Central Africa (UDEAC). It comprises of six ECCAS members – Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon (Ibid).

### **3.6 Challenges the ECCAS Faces in Pursuit of the Abuja Treaty**

A great challenge to regional integration in Central Africa is the overlapping goals of competing institutions (ECCAS and CEMAC) in the sub-region. With inconsistent membership, they aim at eliminating the issue of national and small-sized markets and creating an economically and regionally integrated sub-region thereby creating a lot of policy confusion. The region is “a hive of competing authorities...born of specific historical relationships and dynamics” (Byiers, 2014, p.3). For example, “both ECCAS and CEMAC have an institutional mandate over agriculture and industry, transport and communications, natural resources and energy, trade and customs as well as monetary and financial issues. Both have subsequently expanded to addressing peace and security issues” (UNDP, 2017, p.32). This duplication has set back the advancement of regional integration in the sub-region. Also, although multiple membership can quicken integration and promote growth in the region, in the Central African case, it constrains the regional integration efforts as countries find it difficult to honour their financial obligations.

*According to Ambassador Awinador-Kanyirige, another challenge is accessibility as the entire region is relatively inaccessible. He states that a country like DR Congo is quite inaccessible; cross border movements are difficult due to infrastructure deficit it faces. Infrastructure is an important area of work in the regional integration process and by virtue of that major deficit, other sectors of cooperation are delayed (Awinador-Kanyirige, 2019).*

Kingsly (2016) iterates that infrastructure in comparison with other regions is inadequate and weak; especially the poor interconnection of public transport networks between ECCAS countries, which hinders economic and physical integration as well as development in the region.

Also, the lack of constant water and electricity supply obstruct the creation of “a dynamic and competitive private sector” (p.2).

Additionally, there is the issue of weak domestication of agreed procedures by member states such that regional integration does not run smoothly in Central Africa (Byiers, 2014). Many factors account for this but Agyeman (2019) relates this to the fact that *major countries in the region are disengaged due to their individual political challenges* especially, violent conflicts that arise because of political instability in the region such as the Kivu in the DRC, Boko Haram in Chad, and violent activity in north-eastern Central African Republic.

*In turn, this leaves the regional body without the needed economic capacity. For example, the DRC is one of the wealthiest countries in the world but it is essentially unavailable in the sense of providing economic capacity. In the regional integration process, there are higher adjustment costs at the initial stages that need to be borne by well-resourced states. When this capacity is non-existent, it becomes very difficult for the commission or the secretariat that runs the day-to-day administration process to function effectively (Agyeman, 2019).*

Poor diversification in exports is a great challenge to the region’s macroeconomic growth and leaves it vulnerable to external shocks. For example, in 2009, immediately after the global economic crisis, the sub-region’s economic situation deteriorated immensely. Real GDP decreased to 1.3% (this was 1.7% in oil-producing economies and 3% in other economies of the region). This showed that it was the worst performing region because of happenings in the

international system. The vulnerability is mainly from its extreme reliance on oil-producing nations and single commodity exporters in the region. Furthermore, the region possesses a combination of low intra-regional and world trade this is because there are limited products ready to export in the first place (Kingsly, 2016).

Awinador Kanyirige (2019) refers to the global geopolitics of Central Africa as a factor retarding regional integration. He refers to ECCAS as a football field of international players (both recognized and unseen) combining with formal entities and informal entities, organised and criminal groups. This complicates the picture, as some of these international powers do not want to see concrete regional integration here, as their interests will be curtailed. Byiers (2014) states “the role and influence of France in Central Africa cannot be ignored in influencing domestic and regional politics. This goes beyond its historic link underpinning the CFA Franc to include business and political networks...the deep impact of all this is an orientation and mobility of elites in all CEMAC and most ECCAS countries towards France that further strengthens the economic and political ties between each country and the metropole rather than the region” (p.15- 16).

Comment [u1]: Correction effected

### 3.7 Comparing ECOWAS and ECCAS Efforts

Whereas some RECs have attained tangible results, others have had relatively disappointing results with the progress towards securing the AEC being very slow. There have been snags in harmonizing, monitoring, and assessing projects and programmes designed to boost integration. It is true that some regions have progressed in their paths towards setting up FTAs such as COMESA, EAC and SADC whilst others have lagged in varying degrees (e.g. ECOWAS) in this

regard. Meanwhile, the removal of tariff and non-tariff barriers has been quite difficult” (Melo, Nouar & Solleder, 2017). Evidently, although both regional bodies are slow concerning the execution of regional and economic integration efforts, both RECs have improved in certain areas.

Ambassador Awinador-Kanyirige iterates that, ECOWAS is doing reasonably well. It tends to be a reference point and a catalyst, notwithstanding its challenges. Many of the initiatives at the continental level - especially political and security - in response to the Abuja Treaty are based on the experiences in ECOWAS. For example, the ECOWAS model is the catalytic push for the free movement of goods and persons. This is because despite the challenges, ECOWAS possesses a pivotal country with about half the capacity of the region that plays this central role willingly. In every integration process, there must be ‘driver’ countries. ECOWAS has Nigeria as a major pivotal country as well as Ghana sometimes. When countries like Cote D’Ivoire and Senegal join the effort, then the catalytic push is even stronger. This is an uncommon configuration in other regions. For example, in ECCAS there is no clear pivot and the opportunity for Gabon and Cameroon to form that fulcrum is not being utilized (Awinador-Kanyirige, 2019).

In recent times, however, both the ECOWAS and the ECCAS Member States have collaborated, as a matter of necessity, to support progress and growth in their regional bodies. Other RECs have done similar and even done better in terms of speed for example, COMESA-East African Community, COMESA-SADC-East African Community collaboration. At that time ECOWAS had moved faster than ECCAS, thus ECCAS sought to learn from ECOWAS the political,

security and governance aspects of its progress in regional integration. During the period between 2003 and 2008, ECCAS was a much-destabilized region. One of the critical conflict hotspots in Africa at the time was the DR Congo- down to Rwanda-Uganda border. Despite the challenges of ECCAS, its scores on integration by the 2019 Africa Regional Integration Index on the five dimensions of Regional Integration as espoused by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa indicates an improvement in their integration process with more room for improvement.

It is essential to note that the first three stages of the Abuja Treaty are solely dependent on each REC to attain. Whilst the last three stages are initiatives that must be taken on the continental level by coordinating and connecting all the RECs. So far ECOWAS, in terms of the attainment of the three initial stages, seems to be performing much better than the ECCAS in certain aspects for example, in trade integration and free movement of persons and this is evident in the 2019 Africa Regional Integration Index which scores 0.438 percent and 0.357 percent for ECOWAS and ECCAS respectively for trade and scores 0.733 percent and 0.469 percent for ECOWAS and ECCAS respectively for Free movement of persons as well as the steps it has taken to go as far as creating a Customs Union as recent initiative to create a single currency by the year 2020. According to the Neo-functionalists, this is possible because a spill over effect is triggered once countries agree and make an effort to cooperate. The benefits derived from cooperation in one sector, for instance, free movement of persons, goods and capital within the ECOWAS Community, triggered developments in terms of trade and infrastructure. However, this is not to say that the regional integration efforts have not been plagued by challenges. For ECCAS, although the challenges are diverse, what really retards regional integration is the existence of

parallel bodies (e.g. CEMAC) with overlapping membership and agendas for integration; this in turn affects the legitimacy of ECCAS.

### **3.8 Challenges to Regional Integration in Africa**

There are quite a number of threats to regional integration. One is nationalism, as leaders do not want to reduce their powers. Even though sometimes the benefits of surrendering some amount of sovereignty outweighs the national interest. Additionally, external interests that do not want to see Africa united and together are another factor. These external interests would always want to individualize their approaches towards their relations with African countries and in some cases, these approaches militate against the integration of the African continent. An example is the issue of the French monetary zone and the accompanying French influence.

A major drawback to the regional integration process is that Africa lacks a people's ownership of the regional integration process. The true, real and average African is given little to no role in the process. In the same vein, a part-time approach to regional integration on the continent is one of the major setbacks to the advancement of the cause of integration. Ambassador avers that this is evident even in the organization of learning content in various educational institutions and schools across the continent. There is no proper synergy or synthesis when it comes to this aspect which should not be the case if integration is to be achieved wholesomely overall. This lack of a synthesized educational front extends to our conceptualization of development on the African continent; *"It is highly colonial and elitist, the [existing] education system drives it as a top-down approach to development"* (Awindor-Kanyirige, 2019).

Thus, at the national level, Ghana, for example, has a beautiful policy of decentralisation and it is to bring governance to the grassroots. Yet, simultaneously, the elite at the helm of affairs undermine this policy as execution often fails to occur. At the sub-regional level, the member states of ECOWAS often fail to comply by the principle of subsidiarity in integration and we tend to find that member states fail to do what is expected of them or the regional community usurps (deliberately or not) the functions that individual member states should be undertaking within their states. At the continental level, the RECs are found to be in competition with the continental body itself (Awinador-Kanyirige, 2019).

Another issue is the existence of a *faux probleme* or an artificial problem of linguistics. This idea is sourced from the fact that Africa allows the differences in language to create a wedge amongst its own people. This wedge acts as a hindrance to integration efforts because it is driven as an elitist problem solely. Ambassador believes that the “average African living in border towns like Aflao, Elubo and Paga is not concerned about what is Francophone or Anglophone.” He cites an example of the border town of Aflao where Ewe is spoken across-the-board. The elites, as leaders, (mis-)use this artificial problem of linguistics to ‘stoke fires’ at ECOWAS or AU meetings (Ambassador, 2019). Another challenge is the fact that many of the countries in Africa are artificial in nature, as their boundaries were artificially drawn at the Berlin conference of 1884, thus resources are spread across in a manner that does not ensure national independence. Therefore, a regionalized development initiative is useful (Agyeman, 2019).

In addition to the aforementioned challenges, there is the issue of membership of countries to different regional groupings, leading to overlapping functions and bureaucratic structures, as well as an inefficient use of resources. This gives rise to what is known as the “spaghetti bowl”, a

term coined by Jagdish Bhagwati in 1995 with regard to the US trade policy and more recently, to the East Asian Free Trade Agreements (Bhagwati, 1995). Overlapping of regional initiatives has the tendency to stall the progress of integration as a country may face conflicting commitments to different regional processes.

### **3.9 Conclusion**

A peculiar aspect about the Abuja Treaty is that although it is similar to other initiatives (Continental Free Trade Area, Lagos Plan of Action) in the aim of establishing a single integrated continental market, it acknowledges the relevance of effective market integration at the level of the RECs first. This is evident in the first three stages of the Abuja Treaty roadmap, where the onus lies on the RECs to strengthen market integration at the sub-regional stage (Fajana, 2018).

Many of the RECs on the continent, especially those used in this study, to some extent, have failed to make great progress on the initiative. This argument shows the difference in progression of both ECCAS and ECOWAS even though the study has shown that latter has made somewhat progress compared to the former. On the whole, the Abuja Treaty has not been totally implemented, yet there is some effort, looking at the analyses made in this study, to show that the RECs are at least working towards achieving the objectives and stages of the Treaty in spite of the failure to meet time stipulations the Treaty provided.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

The chapter seeks to outline the findings of the study, to draw conclusions from this study and present recommendations for possible implementation by appropriate institutions and states regarding the realization of regional integration on the African continent.

#### **4.1 Summary of Findings**

Ever since the independence of many sub-Sahara African states in the 1960's, regionalism has played a prominent part in Africa's agenda for advancement and development. Initially, this is to secure the political unity and cooperation among African states with the Organization of African Unity and its substitute, the African Union, as the frontrunner. During the post-independence years, the focus of regionalism was to promote political cooperation in efforts to remove the vestiges of colonialism but since the 1980s, after the independence of African nations had been secured the focus of regionalism moved from political to economic integration to boost the economies of African states. Also, regionalism on the continent seeks to reduce poverty, improve living standards of the African people, and secure development and economic growth for all members of the union.

Regional integration constitutes a response of Africa to the forces of globalization. The experience of Colonialism in Africa dismembered the continent into small units of non-viable and viable states. Thus, for Africa to compete effectively and survive in our world today, it needs

restructuring and the creation of economies of scale. Regional integration is therefore the needed lifeline Africa must use. The interest is in how we make ourselves survive and become viable in that larger space of Africa, which advantageously has a common heritage.

The study recognizes that the continent has come a long way in its attempts to realize economic and regional integration and it is positive despite this being at a snail's pace. One of these positive initiatives, most recently, is the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) that seeks to unite the entire continent of Africa into a single integrated market with limitless trade potential. Another way the African continent has thought of harnessing the advantages that accrue by engaging in regional integration is through the establishment of the Abuja Treaty in 1991, which ushered in a new chapter towards Africa's economic integration.

The study emphasizes the importance of the Abuja Treaty as a blueprint, a pivot, a good reference point and a guide upon which the economic arrangements envisioned for the continental level of economic integration is centred on. The study also notes that the practicality of the Treaty is often questioned, especially, concerning timelines set and how realistic the goals are. Nevertheless, although the goals are quite ambitious, they still are attainable even on a continent that serves as the epitome of diversity. The Treaty seeks to create an economically unified Africa through the realization of an African Economic Community after the regional economic communities or various sub-regional bodies have carried out their mandates of securing the necessary foundational elements. Accordingly, the study sought to assess the Abuja Treaty and its implementation particularly within the frameworks of two regional bodies, the

Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS).

In terms of ECOWAS, even though it was created before the Abuja Treaty, its objectives fit right into those of the Treaty and thus it had fulfilled the initial stages of the Treaty. ECOWAS's achievements in the process of harmonization of activities are diverse, and notable among them are the free movement of persons, goods and capital, peace and infrastructure. For the last indicator mentioned, there have been tremendous developments in the area of transport, telecommunications and ICT as well as energy, which has particularly resulted in the development of the West African Gas Pipeline (WAGP) and West African Power Pool (WAPP). To implement successfully its Customs Union the Community first adopted the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme in 1979 (it began working in 1990) to eliminate tariff and non-tariff barriers on exports and imports from member states. The Customs Union was finally set up, after a ten-year delay, in 2015 after agreeing upon a Common External Tariff and further acquiring the Economic Partnership Agreement with the European Union.

The study found that the challenges peculiar to ECOWAS's path to economic integration is the fact that it had to evolve to address conflicts and the Community's peace and security, thus slowing the climb towards economic integration. Nevertheless, even more peculiar is the issue of the viability of the single currency, precisely because eight of the Community's member states are tied to the CFA which was created in 1945 by the French government's ratification of the Bretton Woods Agreement guaranteeing the currency under a fixed exchange rate dependent on the deposit of 50% of CFA franc reserves into the French central bank.

Despite these challenges, the progress made in ECOWAS is explained by the Neo-functionalists and the spill over effect, which provides that given a conducive environment, integration in one sector will cause a spill- over or overflow into other sectors naturally has happened.

Comparatively, ECCAS has had more of a shorter stint in terms of its pursuit of economic integration in certain aspects for example, in trade integration and free movement of persons as indicated early on. In terms of harmonization of activities, this has yielded some positive results. There have been few improvements in infrastructure but these have proven inadequate. For example development of roads are insufficient as paved road density lingers at 4km per 100sq, the ICT sector combines conditions of low access rates plus high prices of critical services and power generation remains inadequate despite the enormous potential the region possesses. In terms of the elimination of barriers to intra-regional trade, the REC and its regional counterpart, CEMAC, are still in the process of agreeing on classifications and the creation of a FTA in 2004 has still not realized fruitful results after 15 years. One area of success is the focus on developing capacities to maintain peace and security through the establishment of institutions similar to those established in ECOWAS to safeguard regional security.

The slow implementation of the ECCAS's vision is primarily due to the insufficient institutional capacity of ECCAS and CEMAC to synchronize and ensure the smooth implementation of regional economic, sectoral and trade policies. This situation contributes to delaying the effective economic integration of ECCAS's FTA and CEMAC's CU. Thus, the economic and monetary integration in the sub-region is quite advanced but this is a historical establishment, CEMAC, which revolves around the CFA and former colonizer France. Additionally, there are issues of the failure of ECCAS to take advantage of the strategic position the region occupies and to

harness profits from its numerous resources. Even more, there is the fact that the region lacks a pivot nation(s) to drive the regional and economic integration agenda.

The study also highlights challenges to Africa's advancement in regional integration to include the rife nationalism shown by several African states, a lack of ownership of the regional integration process by the true African people, the artificial problem of linguistics, a half-hearted approach towards regional integration, membership of countries to different regional groupings and the failure of member states to carry out agreed decisions within their states.

#### **4.2 Conclusions**

The study concludes that, within the ambits of the first three stages of the Abuja Treaty, ECOWAS has made more advancements than the ECCAS towards the realization of the objectives and stages of the Abuja Treaty which seeks to secure the African Economic Community. Yet still, both regional economic communities have been side-tracked in different ways and through region-specific challenges, which have led to delays, on a whole, in the actualization of the Treaty's goals. Despite the delays in the implementation of the different phases of the Abuja Treaty by both RECs, continental progress made concerning the implementation of the Abuja Treaty or the status of regional integration in Africa is steady, with more room for improvement. This assessment is made based on the signing of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) in Kigali and its ratification in May 2019 to form a continental market. This is a huge achievement for the continent because if it is implemented successfully and vigorously without external and internal obstructions it wields the potential to accelerate growth on the continent like never before. Currently, the continent trades more with its

foreign partners than among African states. According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Economic Development in Africa Report of 2019, intra-African exports were 16.6 per cent of total exports in 2017, compared with 68.1 per cent in Europe, 59.4 per cent in Asia, 55.0 per cent in America and 7.0 per cent in Oceania. The successful implementation of the AfCFTA would aid in solving this issue.

### 4.3 Recommendations

**Given the above summary of findings and conclusions, the study makes the following recommendations:**

- ✚ Capacity building is required for the two major and overlapping institutions in Central Africa, CEMAC and ECCAS. This is to ensure the smooth implementation of regional integration policies. There needs to be a consensus and an official division of labour agreement between the two major RECs in Central Africa as well.
- ✚ Furthermore, within ECCAS and by extension within Central Africa, a pivot nation must rise up to direct the path of regional integration. Central Africa and ECCAS for that matter needs to take advantage of its strategic position and the advantage of hydroelectric power reserves. DR Congo could play this given its vast wealth, expanse and energy generating potential. It however needs to address its peace and security challenges in order to take this mantle. The state also needs to be made more accessible to ensure proper movement of foreigners and businesspersons that will move in to contribute to the state's development. Investments in infrastructure within the DRC can help to develop the place faster and stabilize the place as well.

- ✚ For ECOWAS member states' willingness to coordinate and partake in initiatives taken by the regional bloc is key. For instance, Nigeria and the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS). There is also the need for member states to domesticate properly the ETLS to improve trade and integration on a whole.
- ✚ On the issue of a common currency, ECOWAS should engage France on the use of the CFA by its colonies and the introduction of the Eco in West Africa, since the Western European state has many interests in the current dispensation (former colonies). Engagement with France should have the goal of eliminating the use of the CFA by the francophone countries to enable them focus on meeting requirements for the use of the Eco which would become the currency of ECOWAS. The engagements would also provide ECOWAS the opportunity to negotiate a favourable deal that would ensure a win-win situation for both sides.
- ✚ In addition, another important thing is to educate the people on what regional integration is through engagement on radio, television, educational systems etc. Regional integration and other related issues must be defined in context and most often, the use of local languages on these initiatives will ensure that the average African understands the pursuit of certain objectives in their various countries.

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