

## **Nigeria And Ecowas: The Challenges Of Internal Unity And External Conspiracy**

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### **Abstract**

ECOWAS is a product of the post-colonial West African states. The primary aim of ECOWAS is economic integration of the independent states in the sub region. After over four decades of establishing the ECOWAS, the regional group is still challenged with achieving this primary aim. However, it has engaged in other secondary aims which include regional security and diplomatic and socio-cultural, as well as political integration. ECOWAS seems to have excelled more in the secondary aims at the expense of its primary aim. This study focuses on the nature of the states that constitute ECOWAS their official lingual diversity and their reflection in the regional body. At this point it is pertinent to note that the various states that constitute the regional body are at various stages of economic evolvement which also made the full economic and political integration to single currency very challenging. It also interrogates the external conspiracies that are inherent in the international capitalist system and how that has frustrated every effort geared at economic integration in the sub region. More particularly as this integration when fully actualized will pose huge threat to their former capitalist colonial lords whom many of the citizen of the individual west African States are currently residing and working there as citizens, helping to strengthen their economies.

**Keywords:** *Integration; Economy; Diplomacy; Military; Languages*

## **Introduction**

In May 1975 fifteen West African countries (later joined by Cape Verde) signed in Lagos, Nigeria, a treaty creating the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Nigeria played a key role in the intensive three-year diplomatic activities culminating in ECOWAS. Since its creation, ECOWAS has faced multiple political, economic and security challenges arising from member states' inability to address those problems themselves. This is not surprising since the fifteen countries that comprise ECOWAS are ranked among the poorest in the world and have weak state capacities. It becomes imperative to bring to the fore that ECOWAS was set up mainly to achieve the economic goals of "harmonization and coordination of national policies". However, the signatories to the treaty also affirmed to adhere to principles which include "solidarity and collective self-reliance; nonaggression between Member States; maintenance of regional peace; stability and security". That is not all, ECOWAS also entreats its members to seek the "recognition, promotion, and protection of human and people's rights in accordance with provisions of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights". ECOWAS including security and human rights have impelled it to seek goals the sub-region historically has struggled to achieve. Promoting and protecting human rights - prerequisites to good governance were in chronic short supply at the signing of the original ECOWAS treaty.

Governments that signed the treaty epitomized autocratic rule. Sekou Toure of Guinea, Mathieu Kerekou of Benin, Dawda Jawara of the Gambia, William Tolbert of Liberia, Houphouet-Boigny of Cote d'Ivoire, and Leopold Senghor of Senegal headed single-party or dominant party political systems and had effectively emasculated opposition groups from competing. The other governments that signed the treaty such as Ghana, Nigeria, Togo and Niger embodied military autocracies. Keeping ECOWAS member nations safe from domestic insurrections was going to be a difficult proposition as ethnic politics had already bedeviled countries such as Senegal and Mali but which in the case of Nigeria had culminated in a full-blown civil war.

## **Historical Background of ECOWAS**

With the emerging trend of regional and sub-regional organizations around the world, such as European Economic Community (EEC) which later became the European Union (EU), the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), Organization of American States (OAS), The Maghreb, among others. The West African sub region was not left out, hence the need to form a sub-regional alliance. The problem of starvation, massive unemployment, growing deficits and debts, disequilibria in different markets and sluggish economic growth was the lot of Africa (Onimode, 1988:1). Fadakinte (2014) argues that Nigeria state lacks the capacity to provide effective management of economy and resources, cannot conduct accurate census, free and fair election, provide for its citizen's welfare in terms of adequate infrastructure and security.

Bedevilled with these consequences of inherited colonial state with bad structures, Aworawo has this to say, 'the inability of leaders of West African sub region to deviate from the inherited colonial structures and policies, coupled with, internal disequilibrium, socio – political and economic instability, religious and ethnic polarization, set the stage for civil wars, insurrection and rebellious acts, which necessitated regional, continental, and international peacekeeping operations in the Continent' (Aworawo, 2016). This and other socio economic reasons led to fifteen countries in West Africa coming together under the leadership of Nigeria to form the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS) on 28 May, 1975 (Akinboye & Okeke, 2010, p.361). Hence, Ojo (1980) has this to say, 'Nigeria's role in the process of forming ECOWAS is of interest for two reasons. First, it is

probable that variables which explain the initiation of integration also explain its maintenance, in which case the role Nigeria played may give some insights into future behaviour and probable fate of the new institution. Secondly, Nigeria's role is interesting in itself and offers some insights....' Most of the Countries that make up the community are post-colonial States. Before the creation of ECOWAS, the collective territory known as West Africa, was made up of an aggregation of states that had emerged from different colonial experiences and administrations which largely defined the boundaries of the 15 states domiciled in the area (ECOWAS Newsletter, 2016).

The formation of ECOWAS was intended to ensure economic, social and political integration of the West African sub region. Also the integration is to promote economic activities vis-a-vis industry, transport, telecommunication, energy, agriculture, natural resources, commerce, monetary, financial, social and cultural integrations (Akinboye & Ottoh, 2005). ECOWAS is meant to foster interstate economic and political cooperation (ECOWAS Newsletter, 2016). This much anticipated integration of member nations will pave way for the establishment of an economic union in West Africa in order to raise the living standard of its peoples, and contribute to the progress and development of the African Continent. (Bassey, 2015, p.22)

The sub region is made up of three official international languages, namely English, French and Portuguese. Also it has over one thousand local languages; prominent among them is Yoruba, Ewe, Ful-Fulde, Igbo, Mandingo, Wolof, Hausa, Ga among many others (ECOWAS Newsletter, 2016). The current ECOWAS sub region is an aggregate of many prominent empires in West Africa and in Africa, such as Ghana, Mali, Songhai, Wolof, Oyo, Benin and Kanem Bornu.

The journey for the eventual integration of the entire West African sub region started in 1945, when the Franco phones Countries in West Africa came under a single currency called Franc. Later, in 1964, the then Liberian President, William Tubman proposed the economic integration for West Africa which will pave way for the agreement signed by the four Countries, namely; Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire. This agreement was signed in February 1965, but it came to nothing (International Democracy Watch, 2012). It was until 1972 that the proposal for the union was made. Yakubu Gowon of Nigeria and Gnassingbe Eyadema of Togo formed the sub region in support of the unification idea (ECOWAS Newsletter, 2016). There was a meeting in Lome on the same issue in December 1973 (between 10 – 15) the aim of the meeting was to study the draft treaty. This was also further studied in Accra by Jurists and experts in January 1974. It was later followed by a meeting of ministers in January 1975 at Monrovia (International Democracy Watch, 2012). All these preceded the treaty of Lagos on 28 May, 1975. This treaty gave birth to Economic Community of West African States (International Democracy Watch, 2012). The full list of membership are; Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo, Cape Verde, Guinea and Niger. ECOWAS has a population of about 300 million people and also has a geographical coverage of about 5.1 million square kilometres (ECOWAS Newsletter, 2016).

Cape Verde, one of the two Lusophone Countries joined ECOWAS in 1976, while in December 2000 Mauritania left the Community (ECOWAS Newsletter, 2016). Guinea was suspended in 2008 after a coup d'etat. Also Niger was suspended in 2009 after a coup d'etat (International Democracy Watch, 2012).

Francophone countries refer to the countries colonized by France, while Anglophone countries refer to the English speaking countries. Lusophone countries on the other hand refer to countries colonized by Portugal.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Analysing and understanding the complexities in regional processes have posed many problems. Sometimes the analysis is misguided by a too narrow focus on one dominant regional model, such as the European Union (EU). In other cases, the analysis gets side-tracked as it considers regional organisations to be the sole drivers for regional integration. Rather than focus on best-practice or normative models, a political economy analysis is open to the multiple actors and forms of regional processes, whether they are managed or driven by formal regional organizations, or by state and non-state actors operating from different countries. The political economy approach is dedicated to analysing how and why multiple actors and factors interact in a particular regional context, and the effects they have on change and development processes. In particular, the analysis focuses on how power and resources are distributed and contested in regional contexts. This includes an interest in the effects that global actors and factors have on the incentives of the regional and national level actors. Such an approach aims to get away from judging ECOWAS in terms of what it 'should' look like and 'should' be doing but rather focus on what it is doing and why. By examining the different actors and factors that affect the way ECOWAS works, this paper therefore provided an improved understanding of ECOWAS what is technically desirable and politically feasible, as well as help identify the types of partnerships or coalitions that support regional cooperation and regional integration in West Africa (Bossuyt 2016).

For Fadakinte (2014), Political economy is the study of the basis of the development of society (Nikitin, 1983), either as seen by Adam Smith who defines it as the science of managing a nation's resources so as to generate wealth or Marx, who believes that it is how the ownership of the means of production influences historical processes, (Weingast & Wittman, 2008). Political economy, being the science of the development of social production is really about relations between people, i.e. the form of ownership of means of production, the position of the various classes and the distribution of wealth (Nikitin, 1983). Thus, the social structure of a society which is part of the superstructure is determined by the relations of production. Also, the political structure which is related to the state has some bearing on the economy while the state itself is a principal agent of the economy (Sdobnikor, 1983). Therefore, the relationship between economics and politics is a reciprocal one, for politics largely determines the framework of economic activities and channels it to serve the interest of the dominant groups, making the exercise of power a major determinant of the economic system (Art & Jerris, 2007). Thus, in reality, wealth and power are ultimately joined and lack of wealth means no power and without power the struggle for wealth is arduous. Political economy is therefore an approach that is by consequence the interrelationship between economics and politics (Fadakinte, 2014).

Political Economy therefore, is the best approach to explain the internal challenges of ECOWAS, whose primary aim is economic integration among member states and the external conspiracies they face having been integrated into the world capitalist system.

### **ECOWAS and the Challenges of Internal Unity**

To understand the nature and challenges of regional bodies in Africa like ECOWAS, we have to first understand the nature of the typical African state. Considering the position and the role of Nigeria in ECOWAS, it is worthwhile to use the Nigerian state as a case study. Modern state is not autochthonous to Africa. Nigerian state, like most African states is a colonial creation and emerged through an inverted process. It did not emerge from the civil society which was the typical case of the European state. And even post flag independence, it is a state in crises. At (flag) independence Nigeria began to evolve a political class, a class that was made up of those who took over from the colonial state hierarchy. Members of the class were mere agents of western capital who came to power to execute policies that were

necessarily geared towards promoting the interest of metropolitan bourgeoisie like the way the colonial state did (Fadakinte 2013). A political class emerged in the post-colonial Nigerian state but a dominant class failed to evolve and the political class became factionalized and fractionalized. The lack of a united dominant class led to political and economic crises and chaos. The nature of the Nigerian state is such that “the economic and internal bases of the postcolonial state were weak and the state became very fragile. It continued to depend on metropolitan power for support in order for it to maintain domination over the people and also to help in its other tasks such as establishing the structures and institutions of capitalist state formation with its concomitant values and ideologies”(Fadakinte 2013). The Nigerian situation is not different from other West African states. If such is the typical African state, can it then give what it does not have? With the crises inherent in the Nigerian state and the consequent dependency on the metropolitan bourgeoisie for support and legitimacy, how then can it lead other states in the ECOWAS in economic independence? A state still struggling with national cohesion and integration internally cannot therefore, lead other states in economic and political integration. Therefore, it is most natural that the crises inherent in the states would manifest at the ECOWAS level which is a community of economically dependent states.

Since the attainment of independence of most West African countries from the late 1950s to the present time they have adopted and attempted various economic models and policies geared toward achieving growth in their economies and improving the standard of living of their people. However more than 40 years later, all these countries are faced with huge balance of payment deficits, massive foreign debt burdens, and social as well as political problems that together seem to make the prospects of development more elusive than ever. The numerous models that have been tried by the individual countries in an attempt to remove themselves from the 'horns of economic, political and social difficulties on which they seem to be impaled' have not yielded the desired results and the search for that elusive method for development continue. One such model, which has and is still being tried, is regional economic integration. The treaty establishing the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has as its objectives tied within this broad consensus position were the individual national objectives. Some of these objectives were more obvious than others. National goals ranged from the predominantly economic to a mix of motives, such as Nigeria's desire to stabilise her external environment after the Biafran war. Through regional economic integration, Nigeria did not only hope to create a market for her nascent industries, but also to neutralise her regional opponents, and reduce French influence in the region (Bach, 1983).

Apart from Nigeria's concern for her national security, there were no other very obvious political reasons for wanting to embark on a regional economic integration scheme except perhaps the desire of Heads of State to be seen to be attempting to restructure international economic order. Unlike the European Community which, among other things, sought to solve the Franco-German problem through regional economic integration, the West African Economic Community was established as a means of developing the industrial capacity of the countries within the region, and to promote self-sufficiency in their economies. An exploration of ECOWAS internal unity challenges and external conspiracy must, therefore, be done on the basis of the economic objectives that the member countries had for setting it up. Political objectives have always posed problems for regional integration. It was the political implications of the formation of ECOWAS that were largely responsible for its initial rejection by the French speaking countries within the region. They, among other things, feared Nigerian preponderance and hegemonic potential in the region and even went to the extent of pre-empting the formation of ECOWAS by their own linguistically based

regional economic group, the Commimante Economique de l'Afrique de Ouest (CEAO), to counteract Nigeria's potential influence in the proposed organisation.

It was also the political overtones of previously proposed integration schemes that had been responsible for their not being formed. Pan Africanism, for example, failed to take root because the newly independent 51-63 states wanted to retain their sovereign prerogatives. Political integration was not part of their agenda for development. Economic co-operation was what the countries were interested in. The fight between those who favoured political integration and economic co-operation was particularly intense in West Africa between Ghana's Nkrumah, on the one hand, and Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire, and Liberia, on the other. If a political reason should be sought for the formation of ECOWAS, it is that economic development is itself an overriding political theme and preoccupies the mind of leaders within the region. To that extent the economic reasons subsequently become pseudo-political. The point being made here is that an overtly political organization would not have gained support. The increasing nationalistic perspective on economic and political development in the region after independence meant that a region wide consensus on a politically oriented organization would have been difficult to form. This does not, however, preclude hidden political reasons for participation by some potential members. Insofar as the political reasons are not known we will be second guessing if we imputed them to the formation of ECOWAS. What we can say with a high degree of certainty is that ECOWAS was formed to help overcome some bottlenecks in economic development just as the EEC was formed to solve the main problem facing Europe at the time-maintaining peace.

Though economically motivated, subsequent years have seen new goals of a political nature, such as non-aggression and mutual military co-operation; added to the treaty of the community. The treaty, however, remains an economic formula for industrial development. Thus our analysis of the validity of the reasons for integration will be economic. Politics and society will be looked at, not as motives for integration, but rather for the opportunities and constraints they provide for the achievement of the goals contained in the treaty. Economic integration is seen as an imperative, a sine qua non, for industrial development. The poor performance and failure of earlier attempts at integration within the West African region and the collapse of the East African Community did not deter the formation of ECOWAS in 1975. Since the leaders were aware of the failure of earlier attempts at regional integration, not only in the region but in other parts of the developing world, they must have been confident of being able to overcome the difficulties that had plagued those earlier attempts. It cannot be suggested, as Davies does, that no lessons had been learnt from the East African Community's experience (Davies, 1993). The treaty establishing ECOWAS, signed in Lagos in 1975, stipulated that the implementation of the protocols would result in a customs union by the year 1990. Twenty seven years on, the region has not been able to form a free trade area let alone a customs union. Like earlier attempts it has failed to keep to its schedule or to realize the expectations its advocates had for it as a tool of industrial development and trade diversification. Despite this failure, governments, international organizations, and prominent individuals continue to assert that the countries within the region cannot develop without regional economic integration.

In essence, the ECOWAS treaty streamlined immigration and residency requirements for the citizens of member countries by removing formal barriers which countries had erected such as seeking visas for entry. Signing the treaty symbolically bridged the chasm which had existed between Anglophone, Francophone, and Lusophone countries, an invisible but palpable rift caused by the differing ideological and cultural perspectives the English, the French, and the Portuguese brought administering their colonies. These different administration perspectives have been the primary basis for trade and cultural exchanges

among the countries of West Africa, as well as between West African countries and their former metropolitan masters. Great Britain, Portugal and France to varying degrees have kept trade, diplomatic and cultural ties with their former colonies which have restricted those countries from committing themselves fully to ECOWAS. Britain was the most standoffish of the three major colonial powers as it only kept weaker trade ties with its former colonies. The Commonwealth of Nations has 51-63 rated this by promoting stronger cultural ties.

Apart from the biennial heads of state meeting and sports competition, the former British colonies in Africa have cherished associating with the Commonwealth which they consider a special bond. In no case did the former British colonies consider associating with Britain a minor incident in their history; it everywhere left a lasting mark on institutions and thought (Brady, 1962). France, unlike Great Britain, has kept strong economic and diplomatic ties with its former colonies. France saw its trusty allies in the heartland of the defunct French West African and French Equatorial African Federation. Cote d'Ivoire and Senegal stood out as the two countries whose leaders had political careers that were intimately influenced by French colonial policy. Staniland (1987) quotes a French scholar observing that ministers of French-speaking African states made some 2,000 visits to Paris in an average year. Between 1960 and 1978, French and African presidents held 280 meetings, and Presidents de Gaulle, Pompidou, and Giscard d'Estaing made 32 state visits to Africa. Cote d'Ivoire had over 50,000 French citizens and Senegal over 20,000. France kept military bases and had defense arrangements providing for French intervention in case of internal and external threat. Trade among the Franco phone nations were higher for instance, 55 percent of Burkina Faso's imports from West Africa came from Cote d'Ivoire. Also about 69 percent of Senegal's West African import originated from Cote d'Ivoire. (Base, 2015:24)

Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde joining ECOWAS in 1976 soon after independence signified the spirit which made West African countries to form the organization. Portugal had left its former colonies in disarray following several years of war that left those colonies lacking in qualified manpower and infrastructure.

The different cultural perspectives among member nations have affected ECOWAS internal unity towards achievement of its goal ECOWAS has so far failed in its primary aim – economic integration. This failure is made manifest in its failure to adopt a harmonized custom tariff and the adoption of a stronger single currency. This failure has increased inter border crimes like smuggling and consequently, economic sabotage. However, ECOWAS has made positive achievements in other areas like military and defence cooperation, socio-cultural integration and diplomatic integrations.

### **Military Role**

West Africa has been laden with political instability ranging from military coup d'état to full blown civil wars. The ECOWAS with Nigeria playing a leading role formed the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), this is the military arm of ECOWAS ably led by Nigeria. The first defence agreement in ECOWAS region was signed on 29<sup>th</sup> May, 1981 in Freetown, Sierra Leone. Nevertheless, the West African Anglophone of Nigeria, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea and Sierra Leone formed ECOMOG on 7<sup>th</sup> August, 1990, after the outbreak of civil war in Liberia (Aikhionbare, 2016).

We have instances from the following countries; Chad (1990), Cote d'Ivoire (1999), Gambia (1994), Guinea-Bissau (1999), Liberia (1990), Mali (1991), Mauritania (2005), Niger (1991) (Chidume, 2013). Although the ECOWAS succeeded in some of these states but political instability and crises continue to threaten the sub region. The most recent threat to the sub region is the rise of terrorism which there is a joint Task force of military operations to curb the insurgencies.

### **Socio - Cultural Integration**

Nigeria has been very active in the social integration of West Africa. It has played that role in various diverse ways, such as youth empowerment, organizing various sports competitions, such as West African Football Union (WAFU). The areas of arts and culture are not left out, as it has participated in various West African Festival of Arts and Culture which brought about the built 51-63 the game village in Lagos popularly called FESTAC in the 70s where the athletes were camped.

### **Diplomatic Integration**

Nigeria has done this through the corroborative efforts with her other West African member nations to unify their international passports. Hence we have member nations using one ECOWAS passport. To further deepen this relationship, movement from one ECOWAS nation to another does not encourage the need for visa before one can enter into a member nation.

### **External Conspiracies**

The death pursuing the mother hen would never spare the chicks. – African proverb. ECOWAS is supposedly composed of independent West African states. This is the idea of post-colonial states but in praxis, the concept of the post-colonial state has become problematic. Kwame Nkrumah conceived the idea of neo-colonialism and he saw it as “any oblique attempt of a foreign power to thwart, balk, corrupt, or otherwise pervert the true independence of a people. It is neo-colonialist because it seeks, notwithstanding the acknowledged sovereignty of a people, to subordinate their interests to those of a foreign power.” Furthermore, he exposed the nature of neo-colonialism thus, “It acts covertly, manoeuvring men and government free of the stigma attached to political rule. It creates client states, independent in name but in point of fact pawns of the very colonial power which is supposed to have given them independence” (1963).

The external conspiracies against ECOWAS can be found in the international capitalist conspiracy of neo-colonialism and its attendant manifestations. Through colonialism, Africa was forcefully integrated into the world capitalist economy and was given the peripheral satellite status. People of different ethnic nationalities were lumped together without any regard for their dissimilarities. They were regarded as a people with no history and the imperialist Europe ‘gave’ them history. The integration of Africa into the international capitalist system through an unequal exchange where Africa is limited to the role of producing primary goods and raw materials has further given the West African states the dependency status. The essence of neo-colonialism, according to Nkrumah, is that the state which is subject to it is, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. In reality, its economic system and thus its political policy is directed from outside. A state in the grip of neo-colonialism is not master of its own destiny. It is this factor which makes neo-colonialism such a serious threat to world peace (Nkrumah, 1963).

The second scramble for Africa which left post-colonial African states in the political and economic grip of their colonial overlords has further deepened the crises of regional bodies like ECOWAS. France, Britain and Portugal held on tenaciously to the political economy of their former colonies and encouraged the individual states to pursue their individual interests against the collective interests. After independence, France sought to defend its major foreign policy, military and economic interests in its “*pré-carré*” (or former colonial countries) by maintaining deep relations with the francophone elites involved (a highly unbalanced and opaque partnership, reflected in the so-called “*Francafrique*”). The role of France in setting up the WAEMU and ensuring the existence of a monetary union



around the CFA should also be stressed. The region was also tied to Europe through successive aid and cooperation frameworks signed with the European Community and later European Union (Yaoundé Agreement, Lomé Conventions and Cotonou Agreement). The impact of all this has also been huge at the regional level, with expanding levels of support to regional integration, through the European Development Fund, as well as the conclusion of an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) (Bossuyt, 2016). Behind this, many EU member states have also been provided substantial aid (including humanitarian and food aid) in response to rampant poverty and governance challenges faced by the region over time or in pursuit of economic interests. The security dimension has equally been a powerful driver of European involvement, as reflected in the many political crises that countries underwent. In recent years, Europe is confronted with the implosion of the Sahel region and a host of other major problems linked to the proximity of the region (migration, drug trafficking, etc.).

The international financial institutions (World Bank, International Monetary Fund) have shaped the economic policies of the poverty-stricken region, particularly through the structural adjustment policies of the 1980s. Multiple reports indicate that this has had an impact to reduce the 'policy space' of West African countries to define their own strategies. Over the last decade, the field of actors has been widening with the massively expanded role of China, following similar economic interests and recipes as in other parts of the world and to a lesser extent with the other BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa). A less well-known, yet increasingly important influence is the role played by Arab countries through generous funding to befriend Muslim countries, accompanied with strategies to strengthen the position of Islam in this part of the world (Bossuyt, 2016). While the late Libyan dictator, [Muammar el-Qaddafi](#), was accused of financing some terrorist groups in the West Africa, Morocco in June 2017 applied for membership into the ECOWAS. A move interpreted by many pundits as part of the external conspiracy against Nigeria's hegemonic role not only in ECOWAS, but to African Union and United Nations. In the same vein, Saad Eddine Lamzouwaq of the Morocco World News (MWN) reported that Senegalese Businesses oppose the bid by Morocco to join ECOWAS as it would undermine their local businesses and products which would be disadvantaged when competing with the Moroccan counterparts (Lamzouwaq, 2017). According to Aworawo (2016) both Egypt and Sudan were accused of supporting a faction in the Chadian conflict, which is headed by Hebre.

The continual integration of the post-colonial states into the world capitalist system took a different shape and manifestation. The neo-liberal ideology of globalization has perpetually given the imperialist Europe, USA and Japan the unfettered access to the resources of Africa. It was the 'unfettered access' that necessitated the 'scramble' for Africa and the same 'unfettered access' is making the second 'scramble' possible even when, as Oswaldo de Rivero (2000) further showed, the United States, Europe and Japan never indeed allowed such unfettered access in their development experience. During their development processes, these nations protected their young industries and copied each other's technology (Olutayo & Omobowale, 2007).

The National Association of Nigerian Traders (NANTS) has disclosed that the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) negotiated between the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the European Union is a conspiracy against Nigeria's economy and the rest of ECOWAS members' economy. The Economic Partnership Agreement is a scheme designed to create a free trade area (FTA) between the European Union and the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP). Addressing the press in Abuja, the President of the association, Ken Ukaoha, condemned some African states that have "secretly" signed the agreement. He revealed that Nigeria, in her wisdom, has not signed the agreement alongside Togo, Gambia, Sierra Leone and Mauritania. Example of such deleterious effect of external conspiracy on ECOWAS is felt most in Ghana's economy.

EPAs have nearly destroyed Ghana's poultry industry (and a great many more economic sectors) and severely damaged the country's family farming efforts. The EU dumps frozen chicken parts on Ghana and West Africa that are subsidized to sell below what it costs to produce them.

The EU's current economic crisis is partly due to the same unbridled liberalisation policies it is trying to impose on ECOWAS through the EPAs. Economic Justice Network of Ghana consequently opined that:

*... we locked ours 51-63 o agreements that predictably provided all the guarantees and benefits for our 'partners'. We are left with dwindling shares, missed opportunities, the destruction of livelihoods and of the very environment we live in! Our national and regional development plans and their integration must come first and determine the scope and content of any EPAs. The world is very different at the end of 2011 than it was at the beginning of 2002 when EPA negotiations began. The speed of change, including negative change is the key feature of economic fortunes. The entire ECOWAS leadership and the Government of Ghana must begin to lay down concrete alternatives to the EPA as they meet in Accra this week. ... Thirty or so years of trade liberalisation ... has brought collapse of industries, paralysis of agriculture and unprecedented mass unemployment and youth discontent in our societies (EJN, 2011).*

Another press release from Third World Network Africa (2011) points out:

*The other change (since 2002) is in the shifting centre of gravity of the global economy from regions like Europe to East Asia. Our contention is that the IEPA must be abandoned. It is a threat to the re-positioning of the national economy and to regional integration in ECOWAS.*

After decade-long negotiations, the ECOWAS, CET and EPA with the EU recently reached decisive milestones. These major reforms should have significant impacts and offer new opportunities to West Africa, but have so far failed to garner a broad consensus, notably in Nigeria. The lack of objective and easily accessible assessments of their likely effects appears to be partly responsible for this situation. Two recent World Bank studies use a simple methodology to assess the potential impact of these reforms on Nigeria. Overall, full implementation of the CET and EPA in Nigeria would result in limited fiscal losses, marginal welfare gains for consumers and higher profits for a majority of manufacturing firms accounting for the majority of jobs in this sector. Almost all firms experiencing negative effects exhibit higher-than-average profitability before the reforms and most would remain profitable after them. The predicted magnitude of both the CET and EPA is small compared to gains that could be achieved by tackling supply-side constraints faced by Nigerian firms. Combining trade policy reforms with an ambitious competitiveness agenda that addresses the most binding constraints and promotes regional trade appears as the best way to maximize the benefits and minimize the potential cost of these reforms (Coste & Von Uexkull, 2015).

The influence of French on her former and the continual imposition of the usage of CFA as the common currency among her colonies have frustrated the emergence of a single West African currency.

## **Summary and Conclusion**

Having interrogated the nature of the post-colonial African state, we have discovered that achieving economic integration among the ECOWAS member states is herculean if not impossible unless the post-colonial states achieve some level of economic autonomy themselves. The lack of auto-centric momentum of the member states is the major factor

responsible for the failure of ECOWAS in its primary aim of economic integration and thus, it turned to its secondary objectives which include political, socio-cultural, militarization and diplomatic integration. While some of the leading members of the ECOWAS states like Nigeria are very active in conflict resolution in other states, it has failed in its internal conflict resolution and state cum nation building.

Nigeria spending billions of dollars in prosecuting peace keeping and peace enforcement mission in the sub region, while her citizens are wallowing in poverty. In other words Nigeria cannot be spending huge budgetary expenditures on peace keeping and Technical Aid Corps (TAC) v 51-63 citizens are languishing in poverty, When it cannot pay her minimum wage adequately to the satisfaction of the citizenry, when its infrastructure is in comatose, when there are ethnic and religious crisis in different parts of Nigeria, such as Boko Haram insurgency in the North, Niger Delta and Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) crisis in the South and Fulani herdsman rampaging all over the nation. Hence, the need for Nigeria to look more inward and address its internal challenges, rebuild its dilapidated infrastructures, diversify its economies, attend to the demand of her workforce by addressing all labour related disputes. Also address the perennial power problem, which will lead to rapid industrialization in the Country and create jobs, which will lead to elimination of poverty and crime reduction.

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