



COLLECTIVE SECURITY AND THE AFRICAN REGIONAL INTEGRATION

Sunday Esono Nsed Ebaye¹ and Simon O. Okputu²

¹Department of Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution, University of Cross River State, Calabar, Nigeria.

Email: sundayebaye@unicross.edu.ng ; sundayebaye@yahoo.com

²Department of Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution, University of Cross River State, Calabar, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: *The end of the cold war and the marginalization of Africa, coupled with the vicious cycle of poverty, underdevelopment, disease and internecine conflicts are reasons for the aggressive support for African regional integration and security mechanism. Meanwhile, commitments to African regional integration have been constrained by a highly ambivalent critique of the colonial heritage of sovereignty, and unwilling to transfer any of such freedom to supra-national bodies. Yet this has the potential of enhancing their ability to coordinate the implementation of collective security. The objective of this research therefore is to place the relationship between the African regional integration and the efficacy of collective security within the region. The study adopted the Survey research design. The main instrument for data collection was structured questionnaires. The Spearman rank order correlation coefficient was used in testing the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that, there is a significant relationship between African regional integration and collective security/ effective deterrent to aggression, and also that, there is a significant relationship between the failure of African regional integration and the security dilemma confronting the region. The researcher therefore recommends that for the purpose of conflict management, the partnership between the UN and the AU, with its corresponding sub-regional organizations, should be akin to a pyramid. Regional security integration should rest on concepts of good governance, sound civil-military relations and commitments to democracy and human rights, and that regional security arrangements need to focus on modest measures for the prevention and containment of conflicts, rather than utopian ideas and complex institutional mechanisms.*

KEYWORDS: Security, Collective, Integration, Regional.



INTRODUCTION

Regional integration is an association of countries occupying a particular geographical area for the safeguarding or promotion of members, and operates on terms that are fixed by treaties, or other rules and regulations. There have been many attempts at regional integration (Ndidigwe & Ebye, 2014). The most probably known instance is the European Union (EU), which in some issues has grown beyond an intergovernmental approach to decision making at a supra-state level, and in the recent time New Partnership for African development (NEPAD) in the African context.

African states all belong to the most ambitious and successful collective security arrangement ever conceived- the UN. They also belong to the African Union (AU) formerly OAU which since the Cairo Declaration of 1993 may be regarded as a regional collective security arrangement under Chapter viii of the UN Charter. A number of geographically proximate African states have also entered into collective defense agreements - such as the treaty of Non Aggression, Assistance and Mutual Defence; known by its French acronym – ANAD. In Europe, although often misperceived as a regional organization, NATO is a multinational alliance for collective self defense, as was the War-Saw Pact (Ebye, Enor & Chime, 2011). A defensive alliance, according to art. 51 of the UN charter, may use force in self defense without waiting for the Security Council (SC) to take action, (only in response to an armed attack). Contrary, Art 53 (1) allows a regional organization to take enforcement action even if there was no prior armed attack, but with the SC authorization. Art 54 on the other hand entails that the SC “shall at all times be kept knowledgeable of activities undertaken or in observation under regional arrangements or by regional interventions for the maintenance of international peace and security” (Article 54, UNSC).

Following from the 37th Ordinary Session in Lusaka, in July 2001, the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government adopted the New African Initiative; later coined the New Partnership for Africa’s Development, (NEPAD). This seeks to reconfigure the continent’s political and economic institutions in order to manage the forces of globalization and stop the continent from sinking further into anarchy. The African Union seeks to promote democratic principles, peace, security and stability, greater unity and solidarity between African countries and African peoples, and the acceleration of political and socio-economic integration. NEPAD visualized a novel kind of conglomerate with the North and several multilateral and multinational institutions.

“It appears that the AU has hitherto acknowledged five main sub-regions in Africa, and prioritized one corresponding organization for each area; the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in the east, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in the West, the Arab Maghreb Union (known by its French acronym - UMA) in the North, the South Africa Development Community (SADC) in the South, and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) in the Central Africa sub-region. ECOWAS appears to be the most known of these organizations, having gained a good measure of international recognition through its massive peacekeeping efforts in Liberia and Sierra Leone. SADC is also fast gaining a reputation for involvement in robust conflict management activities and IGAD has also asserted a role for itself in the resolution of sub-regional conflict” (Ebye, 2010A: 280).



To proponents of integration, an essential prerequisite would be for states to surrender a certain degree of national sovereignty to elected supra-national bodies. Sovereignty is likely to be one of the persistent areas of discontent. As noted, African states have, hitherto retained total sovereign control of their territories and all aspects of decision-making, and have demonstrated a remarkable zeal not to cede any part of this authority for the common good of the continent. The Abuja Treaty calls on member-states to relinquish some of their powers to the Union. This implies a willingness to sacrifice some control over national economic policy management that directly affects the populations of member nations. Indeed, this is the rudimentary litmus test for genuine political will and obligation to any regional integration effort.

In many integration attempts in Africa, political leaderships have jealously guarded their sovereignty and were not willing to surrender any of it to supranational powers. As a result, national political agents tended to determine the nature of their participation in the integration project. The transfer of some powers will not only provide sub-regional secretariats with the necessary legitimacy but, most importantly, will vest in these institutions the necessary authority to make tough policy decisions and to enforce coordinated action in critical areas of national policy management. These shifts in decision-making do not necessarily imply erosion of existing state power and authority. Rather, what will have changed is the way in which states use their power and authority; decision-making will be made in coordination with other member-states.

Moreover, the transfer of authority to elected supra-national bodies will enhance their ability to plan, coordinate, oversee and evaluate the implementation of collective projects and programs. Thus, sovereignty need no longer be thought of as a zero-sum game. Pooling it does not reduce sovereignty. Rather, the trade-offs of pooling sovereignty include security and stability, reduced anxiety and conflict, reduced military spending, and enhanced economic and technological cooperation (Rugumamu, 1999). In short, the imperative of political will would constitute another important test of commitment to an integration project. This means that strong institutions at the national level would be indispensable for implementing this increasingly diverse policy and project initiatives for integration arrangements.

In fact, for a long time, the former OAU failed to articulate credible plans for conflict management in Angola, Sudan and the DRC. The reasons for this incapacitation were lack of resources, political will and resolute leadership (Ebaye, 2010B). Other factors responsible for the failure of most previous integration schemes in Africa lie in both the scarcity of resources to finance projects and integration programs and over-dependence on financial support from the donor nation. At the same time, member-states were not always in a position to honor their obligations, given their fragile financial positions and to some extent, their political will. However, the proponent of regional integration holds that this would not only create economic benefits for member countries, but would also serve as a credible instrument for enhancing peace and security in the region by increasing points of interaction among people and groups with related interests (Rugumamu, 1997).

The projections for sub-regional collective security or even defense regimes emerging successfully in Africa are not measured to be good, because states remain the elementary building blocks and decisional loci of multi national security regimes. The process of state formation and state building in Africa, on the whole, has not produced a very strong base for larger security constructs. Many African states attain independence through low intensity conflict waged by liberation movements against colonial powers. Having achieved freedom in



this manner, the new states were left highly exposed and vulnerable to challenges from within, bent on using these very same methods against them (Toit, 1998). However, African states that have scarcely emerged from devastating civil wars are also now being expected to play an active role in conflict management through regional integration. Most African sub-regional organizations have been born of a need for economic cooperation, and have only recently been expected to play a role in security cooperation and conflict management. This has resulted in a poor fit between roles and structures, as could be seen from the SADC inability to operationalise its organs for politics, defense and security. While this example may indicate that there is some sense in separating economic issues from security concerns, the case of ANAD warns against too narrow a conceptualization of security, and of focusing almost exclusively on defense, rather than on several security issues.

Generally speaking, regional integration involves a process by which nations enter into a regional organization with a view to increasing regional collective security systems, cooperation and reducing regional tensions. Past attempts at this have focused on increasing the free movement of people, goods and services across national frontiers, removing barriers to free trade, and the possibility of regional armed conflict.

The objective of this research therefore is to place the relationship between the African regional integration and the efficacy of collective security within the region.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Since the demise of the cold war, African states have become ever more vulnerable to armed insurgencies, and the success of such movements indicates the decline of these states as units of security. This clearly specifies that we are busy trying to construct hollow structures for conflict resolution in Africa- equally at the A.U and at the sub-regional organizations.

The end of the cold war and the marginalization of Africa, joined with the malicious cycle of poverty, underdevelopment, disease and internecine conflicts have commonly been cited as the fundamental reasons for the aggressive effort for such architects of regional integration and the establishment of an African collective security system: The African peace and security mechanism (Aboagye, 2007).

Commitments to African regional integration have been challenged by a highly ambivalent critique of the colonial heritage of sovereignty, and grudging to transfer any of such liberty to supra-national bodies (Zartman, 1995). Yet this has the potential of enhancing their ability to plan, coordinate and evaluate the implementation of collective projects, programs, and security.



THEORETICAL ANALYSIS

Scholars have seen regional integration as a universal phenomenon of territorial systems that increase the connections between their components and build new forms of organization, co-existing with traditional forms of state led organization at the national level. They argue that the initiatives should fulfill; the strengthening of trade integration in the region, the creation of an appropriate enabling environment for private sector development, the development of infrastructural programmes in support of economic growth, the development of strong public sector institutions and good governance, the reduction of social exclusion and the development of an inclusive civil society, contribution to peace and security in the region, the building of environment programmes at the regional level, and the strengthening of the region's interaction with other regions of the world (Philippe & Langenhove, 2007). Others have viewed regional integration as the process by which states within a particular region increase their level of interaction with regard to economic, security, political, social and cultural issues. They postulated that regional integration is the joining of individual states within a region into a larger whole. The degree of integration depends upon the willingness and commitment of independent sovereign states to share their sovereignty (Hans & Langenhove, 2003).

The theory that best explicates this discourse is the theory of hegemonic stability with scholars such as Keohane (1980) and Kindleberger (1981). Hegemony is a condition of dominance without necessarily resorting to coercion, due to the dependence of the subordinate actors in the sub-system on the fortunes of the hegemon (Ebaye, 2020). A hegemon is functionally essential to institute and deliver 'international collective goods' that make the international system work better (Ebaye, 2019). The Dutch were hegemonic in the European world economy of the 17th century. The British rose to hegemony in the 19th century, and the United States and the former Soviet Union emerged as the economic and military powers of the 20th century in the Western and Eastern blocs. In practical terms, equity among sovereign powers has always been a convenient international relations fiction.

The theory posits that the hegemonic power facilitates international cooperation and prevents defection from the rules of the regime through the use of sanctions, but can seldom, if ever, coerce reluctant states to obey the rules and convention of the regime. The existence of a regional hegemon serves as a positive force for developing, nurturing, as well as for building a regional peace and security system.

In terms of regional security, Nigeria has played an unparalleled role in finding solutions to internal conflicts in countries such as Liberia and Sierra Leone. However, with the collapse of the Cold War, Nigeria has played a more decisive hegemonic role in its region, just as South Africa is doing. Egypt and Kenya display similar superiority in their respective sub-regions. However, in the absence of substantive sub-regional hegemons or a strong collective leadership at the center, sub-regional organizations, and even individual African states, have not hesitated to by-pass the rigorous and often indecisive AU's Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution in order to restore peace in neighboring states.

It is common in integration schemes to tax the rich member-states in order to aid the less developed. The hegemonic leader's economic strength and political stability would bolster the region's economic and political stability. It also facilitates cooperation and integration by pulling the less willing and the less able countries along, as it is impossible for all countries to move at the same pace (Keohane, 1980). Thus, the role of the United States in The North



American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the evolving role of Germany in the European Union, the Nigerian strategic role in the actions of Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in West Africa, and that of the Republic of South Africa in the Southern African Customs Union are good cases of hegemonic stability. Thus the world works better when there is a hegemonic power – one that finds it in its own interest to see that various international collective goods are provided (Olson, 1985; Ebaye & Amimi, 2020A; Ebaye & Amimi, 2020B).

STATEMENT OF HYPOTHESES

The hypotheses upon which this research is premised are cast in the null forms:

Hypothesis 1:

Ho: There is no significant relationship between African regional integration and collective security/effective deterrent to aggression.

Hi: There is a significant relationship between African regional integration and collective security/effective deterrent to aggression.

Hypothesis 2:

Ho: There is no significant relationship between the failure of African regional integration and the security dilemma confronting the region.

Hi: There is a significant relationship between the failure of African regional integration and the security dilemma confronting the region.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted the survey research design. The survey design allows information to be gathered from a sample of people or organizations by the use of questionnaires. The main source of data for this study was primary data. The main instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. The Spearman rank order correlation coefficient was used in testing the hypotheses formulated for the study at a 0.05 level of significance. Spearman rank order correlation coefficient was used to test the hypotheses. This is because it is more effective in ascertaining if the two non-parametric data samples with ties are correlated.



DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Hypothesis 1

HO₁: There is no significant relationship between African regional integration and collective security/ effective deterrent to aggression

Table 1: Correlation Analysis showing the relationship between African regional integration and collective security/ effective deterrent to aggression

		Correlations			
Spearman's Rho	African regional integration		African regional integration	collective security/ effective deterrent to aggression	
		Correlation coefficient	1.000	.770**	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	
		N	352	352	
	collective security/ effective deterrent to aggression		Pearson correlation	.770**	1.000
		Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	.	
		N	352	352	

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Based on the result on table 1, the correlation coefficient ($r = 0.770$) between African regional integration and collective security/ effective deterrent to aggression is strong and positive. The significant value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$) reveals a significant relationship. Based on that, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between African regional integration and collective security/ effective deterrent to aggression

Hypothesis 2

HO₂: There is no significant relationship between the failure of African regional integration and the security dilemma confronting the region.

Table 2: Correlation analysis showing the relationship between the failure of the African regional integration and the security dilemma confronting the region.

		Correlations		
Spearman's Rho	Failure of the African regional integration		Failure of the African regional integration	Dilemma confronting the region
		Correlation coefficient	1.000	.855**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	352	352
	Dilemma confronting the region.		Pearson correlation	.855**



		Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	352	352

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Based on the result on table 2, the correlation coefficient ($r = 0.855$) between the failure of African regional integration and the security dilemma confronting the region is strong and positive. The significant value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$) reveals a significant relationship. Based on that, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between the failure of African regional integration and the security dilemma confronting the region.

The crucial condition for state viability lies in the ability of the state to provide security to all its citizens on an equitable basis. In functional political systems, the coercive monopoly of the state is used to provide protection to all citizens as a basic right. Security and physical protection is provided for each citizen against every other, against the arbitrary actions of the state, and against threats from beyond state borders (Ebaye, 2005). The failure of the state to provide such protection gives rise to a security dilemma. This condition becomes apparent when intermingled or adjacent groups of people start to sense that they have to take care of their own security. The dilemma emerges, when what one does to enhance one's security causes reactions that, in the end, can make one less secure when groups perceive the state to be incapable or willing to provide security, they will take their own measure for protection. In the process, security becomes privatized or communalized (Posen, 1993; Toit, 1998). Such security, however, further undermines the viability of the state by causing a spiral of destabilizing counter measures. This creates the incentive to seek security through preemptive actions, and can lead to state collapse or disintegration once a crucial threshold of escalation has been breached. The crises of the post-war order led to the emergence of a new global political structure. This novel global political structure outdated the classical Westphalia concept of a system of sovereign states to conceptualize world politics.

The concept of sovereignty becomes weakened and the old legal definitions of an ultimate and fully autonomous power of a nation-state are no longer meaningful. Sovereignty, which gains meaning as an affirmation of cultural identity, has lost meaning just as power over the economy.

The type of conflicts caused by the political breakdown in African countries can rarely be remedied by short term military interventions. Rather, a system of phase and prioritized facilitating processes is needed for their management. During the cold war, there was a fair understanding of a simple division of labor whereby the UN mounted military peace operations and observer missions while regional organizations concentrated on preventive political and diplomatic measures. This changed in the 1990s as a proliferation of devastating internal conflicts saw several actors becoming involved in attempts to resolve the same conflicts. Under the auspices of the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, the AU is indeed authorized to work closely with the UN and with African sub-regional organizations, and to co-operate where appropriate with neighboring states. Thus, there is a perception that the future of conflict management rests on a pyramidal collective security framework.

While this approach to conflict management in Africa may appear logical as neighbors are more familiar with each other's problems than outsiders, considering that neighbors usually share a fairly common culture, social identity, history, and experience. The major problem here is that close proximity often generates tension and reduces the spirit of impartiality to the extent



that they sometimes become part of the problem, rather than part of the solution. However, the role of regional institutions in conflict management has become tremendously convoluted. Conflict management has become more robust than ever before and new operations are increasingly launched. Drawing from the ECOMOG involvement and perhaps, confused by NATO's distinctive resources as a defensive alliance without peer, these peace missions have been proxy to regional organizations and arrangements (Anan, 1997).

This assertion reinforces the type of thinking that will perpetuate the trend towards using (sub) regional organizations as peace enforcers. One of the most vexing aspects of regional security integration is the issue of states enjoying or being burdened by overlapping membership of a member of intergovernmental bodies that aspire to a role in conflict management. This problem is not limited to Africa alone. Europe also has a highly complex regional security architecture that include the UN, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), NATO, Partnership for Peace (PfP), the West European Union (WEU), and the European Union (EU) and its various institutions (Malan, 1998). The difference of course, is that the smallest and poorest of these groups (PfP) can draw on the support of the industrialized states that are members of NATO and the EU. This adds to the viability of such arrangements. If all regional organizations in Africa are comparatively poor, they are still a political aspect of membership to be considered. The West African nations instance, where ECOWAS and ANAD overlap, suggest that membership of any regional security organization should err on the side of inclusiveness, rather than exclusivity, and that the membership should be wider than that of any overlapping regional economic grouping, otherwise the economic grouping will tend to take the lead in conflict management initiatives. Despite their diversity, it is safe to say that the sub regional organizations in Africa including the big ones- ECOWAS and SADC lack institutionalized crises prevention and management mechanisms. Consequently, regional military participation in conflict management has been ad hoc and not in harmony with a specific operating procedure. A case study of the Liberian conflict reveals that the ECOWAS heads of state and government created a community standing mediation committee, which in turn established the ECOMOG. Contrary, in the Sierra Leone conflict, the committee of Heads of state and government did not formally approve of the ECOMOG force until about three months after its intervention. In a similar situation, the ministerial committee approved the ECOMOG mandate in Guinea Bissau, at a time when the Heads of state and government committee had not yet addressed the problem. To crown it all, the stated objective of ECOWAS to create a permanent peacekeeping force did not address the critical problem of who will determine when and how it will be deployed (<http://www.iss.co.za/index.php?link>).

In the SADC case, the great deficiency relates to the absence of conflict management structures, and of integrated systems, processes and methods with issues of human rights and the advancement of democracy and good governance. The latter is clearly a contentious issue, and one about which many of the fourteen SADC member nations are understandably very sensitive. While Swaziland is perceived to be undemocratic, Angola and the DRC are always in a war over who should rule. Zambia and Zimbabwe have been accused of being undemocratic in election related practices, South Africa seem to be drifting towards a one - party state and in Lesotho, military intervention in politics remains a real threat. The general trend towards a transformation of the determined regional integration schemes into more modest functional cooperation programmes is a direct result of the member states unwillingness to undertake transfers of sovereignty. The countries' lack of political and financial internationalization of regional integration commitments has been often denounced



but should not be considered really surprising in a context where a good number of states are confronted domestically with severe national integration problems.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Regional integration arrangements are mainly the outcome of necessity felt by nation-states to integrate their economies in order to achieve rapid economic development, decrease conflict, and build mutual trust among members. But the nation-state system which has been the predominant pattern of international relations since the peace of Westphalia in 1648 is evolving towards a system in which regional groupings of states are becoming more vital than the sovereignty of state. Global peace and security is not divisible into geo-political regions, neither are the tools for ensuring and maintaining global peace and security.

In graphic terms, and for the purpose of conflict management, the corporation between the UN and the AU, together with its conforming sub-regional organizations, should be akin to a pyramid. At the top of that pyramid should be the UN as a world body, and as the supreme organ for ensuring peace and security worldwide. At the bottom of that pyramid should be the sub-regional organizations. And, between the apex and the base, the AU should provide the critical linkage (Nhara, 1998). While regionalism may lead to the creation of new political organizations over time, regionalism and state strength are not supposed to stand in opposition to one another, as states remain the essential building blocks from which such arrangements are constructed.

What is even more worrying is the fact that the intractable political and economic difficulties that were encountered while creating sub-regional cooperation and integration arrangements in Africa in the last four decades have been simply assumed away. There are categorically no shortcuts to an African collective security system.

Although the process of integration in Africa would appear complex and intractable, the difficulties involved are not insurmountable. Nor should they discourage ongoing reforms and progress toward cooperation and Integration. The existence of many integration organizations can all contribute positively to the implementation efforts of the AU Treaty, if carefully thought-out harmonization and coordination policies are maintained. The AU and the African sub-regional organizations need to be clearer on the moral and political principles which should inform the relationship between and within states in the region. These organizations should uphold minimum standards, the violation of which should be sanctioned equally across the board, and not only when the culprit is a relatively less powerful member of the organization.

Regional security integration should rest on concepts of good governance, sound civil-military relations and commitments to democracy and human rights. As far as possible, potential security issues should be dealt with through political and social processes and institutions. They should be elevated to the security agenda only when real threats become visible and special measures are required.

With a sum of Africa states still trying to deal with the consequence of failed nationhood, and others consumed by civil and secessionist wars, regional security arrangements, as explained by Nhara (1998), there is a need to focus on modest measures for the prevention and containment of conflicts, rather than utopian ideas and complex institutional mechanisms. The



emphasis should be on simple but reliable structures for security cooperation, the ones that can stabilize relations, prevent the spill-over of conflicts, secure emerging common values and perhaps, lay the foundation for nascent security regimes.

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