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AFRICA'S REGIONAL APPROACH TO CONFLICT PREVENTION, SECURITY MANAGEMENT: „ECOWAS VISION 2020 – PEACE”, HUMAN RIGHT AND SECURITY

REGIONALNE PODEJŚCIE AFRYKI DO ZAPOBIEGANIA KONFLIKTOWI, ZARZĄDZANIE BEZPIECZEŃSTWEM: „ECOWAS VISION 2020 – POKÓJ”, PRAWA CZŁOWIEKA I BEZPIECZEŃSTWO

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Abstract

This paper reviews the role of ECOWAS in promoting peace, human right and security in West Africa through the established vision 2020. The function of ECOWAS has always been creating a peaceful and enabling environment for cooperation and regional integration as a tool to enhanced development of the West African economy. Regional integration remains the most viable and appropriate tool for achieving and accelerating peace, human right and security among West African countries. With regard to the above function, the group in June 2007 adopted the transformational vision 2020 focused on the free movement of the population, greater access to efficient education and health, engaging in economic activities, raising the standard of living. This paper examines ECOWAS quest for peace, human right and stability on the continent within the conventional vision 2020. It highlights areas that require review to make peace and security more effective.


Keywords: Regional Integration, Conflict Management, Security, Peace, Regional cooperation, Mediation, Collective Security, Peacekeeping, Human right

Streszczenie

W niniejszym artykule dokonano przeglądu roli ECOWAS vision 2020, w promowaniu pokoju, praw człowieka i bezpieczeństwa w Afryce Zachodniej. Funkcją ECOWAS zawsze było tworzenie pokojowego i sprzyjającego środowiska dla współpracy i integracji regionalnej - narzędzia do polepszania rozwoju gospodarki Afryki Zachodniej. Integracja regionalna pozostaje

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staje najbardziej opłacalnym i odpowiednim narzędziem do osiągnięcia pokoju, praw człowieka i bezpieczeństwa w krajach Afryki Zachodniej. W związku z czym w czerwcu 2007 r. przyjęto transformacyjną wizję 2020 (vision 2020), skupiającą się na swobodnym przepływie ludności, większym dostępie do efektywnej edukacji i zdrowia, angażowaniu się w działalność gospodarczą i podniesieniu jej poziomu. Niniejszy dokument analizuje dążenie ECOWAS do pokoju, praw człowieka i stabilności na Kontynencie Afrykańskim w ramach wizji 2020. Wskazano również obszary wymagające poprawy, w celu ustanowienia pokoju i bezpieczeństwa.

Słowa kluczowe: integracja regionalna, zarządzanie konfliktami, bezpieczeństwo, pokój, współpraca regionalna, mediacja, bezpieczeństwo zbiorowe, utrzymywanie pokoju, prawa człowieka

Statement of the problem in general outlook and its connection with important scientific and practical tasks.


The African continent since the end of the Cold war and the breakdown of the Soviet Union had experienced rampant conflict ranging from ethnic, civil, border conflicts and genocides in Somalia and among others. Conflicts in Africa are traceable to the trans- Atlantic slave trade and colonialism. During this period kingdoms and powerful families embark wars of expansion and trade in slaves (Benton and Dionne, 2015) and when the Europeans on the other hand scramble for territories with scant regard for ethnic boundaries (Richard, 2006 cited in Osagie et al. 2017). Similarly, military infiltration into governance, ethnic denial, poor governance, and ecological and environmental issues had and still contributes to rampant violence in Africa.

The inevitable violence coupled with the indisposed attitudes of the international community towards conflict prevention, management and resolution in Africa compelled Heads of states with the RECs to push for regional interventions. This has given credence to the role and functions of regional blocs like the United Nations (UN), African Union (AU) and the recognized eight Regional Economic Cooperation (RECs) such as East African Community (EAC) Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and Southern African Development Community (SADC) to skew their responsibility towards peace-building and conflict management. These listed organizations have particular mechanisms responsible for the implementation of peace and security measures

The Constitutive Act of the AU with emphasis on the provisions in Article 3 permits the organization “to promote peace, security, and stability on the continent”. Also,

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article 2(f) of the ECOWAS Revised Treaty set out the need to establish regional peace and security observations systems and peacekeeping forces within the sub-region. However, the African regional blocs look up to the United Nations (UN) as the parent body whereby commitment and response to security issues must seek approval by the UN.

Analysis of latest research where the solution of the problem was initiated.

The ECOWAS Commission was established in May 1975 with the primary goal of enhancing economic cooperation and development as well as harmonizing to achieve regional sectorial policies. It now has 16 member countries with historic cultural and political differences. They include Ghana, Togo, Nigeria, Benin, Cote D'Ivoire, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Cape Verde, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Guinea Bissau, Gambia, Mali, Niger, Senegal, and Mauritania who re-joined in 2006. The ECOWAS operates through the Commission, the Community Parliament, the Court of Justice and the ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development. The others include the Conference of Heads of State and Government, the Council of Ministers and the Specialized Technical Institutions and Committees (Ohemeng, 2014). During the 1980s the West Africa sub-region was not an exception to corruption, poverty, political instability, electoral violence, arms proliferation, drug-trafficking, ethnic and religious disputes to mention but a few (Bossuyt, 2016).

It was to this effect that ECOWAS envisioned to prioritize its ability to maintain solid collective security capability, peace and human right in the West African region. Since then ECOWAS has made a considerable intervention to mediate a number of conflict cases within the sub-region. Notably, ECOWAS was successful in building peace and ensuring security stability in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau, and Mali. To further augment sustainable development in the region that ECOWAS envision by 2020 to secure West African devoid of conflicts. It is imperative therefore to look into the build-up of capability within the ECOWAS vision 2020 to conduct peace and security support operations in West Africa.


Aims of paper. Methods.

Theoretical Framework.

The study is guided by the Neo-liberal theory of institutionalism and globalization. This postulates that institutions when created within the global environment lower the cost of selecting, consolidating, negotiation and entering into the agreement. The

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theory of globalization entails that there is increasing interdependence and interconnectedness among states, and this process of internalization has accelerated the integration of states into the global village. They focus on the role institutions and integration of regional blocs ranging from economic, political, social, cultural and financial. These assumptions underline the basic foundation of neo-liberal institutional and global theory.

Neoliberal institutionalists share many of Realism's assumptions about the international system that it is anarchic, that States are self-interested, rational actors seeking to survive while increasing their material conditions, and that uncertainty pervades relations between countries. However, Institutionalism relies on microeconomic theory and game theory to reach a conclusion that co-operation between nations is possible (Slaughter, 2011).


Among the proponents of neoliberal institutionalism were Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye who highlight the importance of international institutions in promoting and maintaining world peace. Keohane and Nye argue that complex interdependence necessitates the creation of institutions to manage interdependence among states. The concept emerged as the study of international organizations, regional integration and international regimes became widely spread. Neo-liberal institutionalists primarily concerned with global governance to manage globalization. They expounded that institutions create the capability for states to cooperate for mutual benefits, reduce transaction costs as well as making and enforcing agreements.

The proponents of the neoliberal theory of globalization also seek to establish that states are no longer actors in global politics, however, non-state actors, economic and other non-state centric issues become important. They argue that globalization is synonymous to new regionalism where regions have replaced states as actors or arenas of interaction driven by the need of countries within the region.

The idea of economic globalization has been deepening and speeding up the worldwide interconnectedness. The first stage of globalization covered the period from 1870-1914. Now in the second stage, economic globalization has become the dominant tendency in the world economy. Roberts and Hite (2000) contend economic globalization to mean "Integration where firms are inter-dependent, production is linked on a global scale, there is a dramatic increase in visible and invisible trade and national economies are linked." For most of the post-war period, world trade has grown much faster than world output, especially since the early 1990s. Trade now involves a larger number of countries and sectors conducted regionally.

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Therefore the study of West African states integration for peace and security become relevant with the adoption of the neoliberal theory of institutionalism and globalization because it gives understanding why West African states have to come together to seek collective security. These theorists examine institutions as rules that regulate world politics and organizations that implement such rules to facilitate cooperation, reduce and prevent conflict. The idea of ECOWAS formation dwelt on interdependence by member states to achieve such purpose.

Exposition of main material of research with complete substantiation of obtained scientific results. Discussion.


Regional Approach to Collective Security, Peace and Human Right Elevation in Africa.

Generally, the concept of security and peace studies before the Cold War evolved around the state, its resources and sovereignty. The survival of states, therefore, depends on its ability to protect itself from external hostilities militarily. After the Cold War, the paradigm shift of security agenda focused on non-military threats, dangers, and meaning due to the high incidence of intra-states conflict. African conflicts were a struggle for economic and political supremacy. Statistics indicate that twenty-five percent of African elections were complemented by conflicts (Institute of Security Studies report). This case primarily navigates around the political party divisions backed by identity affiliation being it ethnic, religion or race. Typical examples are the post-electoral conflict in Kenya and Cote D'Ivoire in 2007 and 2011 respectively that claimed many lives (Yabi, 2016, p. 4).

Besides electoral violence, the fight for freedom from colonial residents in Zimbabwe (1980) and Namibia (1990) states as well as apartheid in South Africa (1994) and poverty or injustice induced conflicts like the Boko Haram uprising are contributing factors to African conflicts in the post-Cold War period (Obasanjo, 2014). The territorial tensions between Ethiopia and Eritrea (1998–2000), Sudan and South Sudan (1983–2011), the Congo-Brazzaville conflict (2007), Rwandan Genocide (1994) and British Southern Cameroons in 1961 have been categorized as boundary and territorial, secessionist ambitions, resource-based, identity-based and annexationist conflicts occurred in Africa respectively. Basically, countries such as Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo, Ethiopia- Eritrea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan,

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Sudan, Uganda, Mali, Central African Republic, and Nigeria have witnessed conflict on the continent.


Nevertheless, Africa has experienced significant waning in the number of these major armed conflicts in subsequent years (Mateos and Grasa 2010, p. 9). Further additions to these are growing and menacing terrorist activities and insurgencies taking place in Somalia, Mali, Kenya, and North Eastern Nigeria (Obasanjo, 2014). Security and peace have been in the current agenda on the African continent, having experienced a various form of oppressive regimes, ethnic conflicts, religious conflicts and non-states threats from terrorist groups like Boko haram and Al Shabaab. For instance, in 2014, Boko Haram was reported to be the most violent terrorist group in the world. Considerably, leaders on the continent have worked hard to provide long-term resolutions to these rampant intrastate conflicts through ad hoc committees, mediation by African heads of states, mediation commissions and chieftaincy institutions (Abu, 2013). These traditional conflict management mechanism by African leader have not yielded the necessary result needed.

African reliance on the international community to manage and prevent conflicts on the continent diminished in the post-Cold war era increasing the plight of African insecurity. This led to the paradigm shift of African leaders to revive their measures and mechanism for peace and security architecture in Africa. At the continental level, the formation of the African Union (AU) raised expectations that African governments and civil society organizations would be able to deal with insecurity problems more efficiently. The AU has since then taken bold and promising initiatives towards the formulation of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) aimed at providing peace and security by preventing and managing conflicts (Abu, 2013). Since then the AU has embarked numerous peacekeeping missions in Burundi, Comoros, Somalia, Darfur, and the Central African Republic with significant results (Obasanjo, 2014, p. 12). In addition to AU, the Abuja Treaty on African Regional cooperation established eight regional RECs mandated to promote economic and political integration in Africa. Subsequently, most of these RECs have inscribed in their protocols security mechanism for conflict prevention, management and peace-Building which had become building blocks for African Peace and Security Architecture (Aning, and Danso et al. 2010, p. 20).

At the regional level, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has, in agreement with the Constitutive Act of the AU, consistently facilitated mediation processes in conflicts states. ECOWAS has been instrumental in the security

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discourse with its spectacular role Liberia (1990) and Sierra Leone (1997) conflicts. The adoption of the Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peace-Keeping, and Security December 10, 1999, was a step further towards an institutionalized approach to achieve collective security (Hartmann 2013, p. 17). The commission has deployed peacekeepers and human rights observers to conflict-affected countries within the sub-region. The Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) has successfully intervened in both interstate and intra-state conflicts as in the cases of Ethiopia and Eritrea (1998) and South Sudan and Somalia (Obasanjo, 2014; Aning, and Danso et al. 2010, p. 22). In southern Sudan for instance, IGAD together with some actors of civil society were decisive factors in the historic peace agreement signed in January 2005 which put an end to nearly three decades of armed conflict, having to claim over million lives (Mateos and Grasa 2010, p. 13).

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) in its 1992 Treaty succinctly birth out the organization's regional collective security objectives. These include negotiations, conciliation, mediation, conflicts prevention and management based on the mandate of the Organ on Politics Defense and Security Cooperation (OPDS), the Strategic Indicative Plan for the Organ (SIPO) and SADC Protocol on Politics, Defense and Security Cooperation. SADC's role in political mediation in the Comoros, Madagascar, Zimbabwe, Lesotho and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has been remarkable. The organization has established the Mediation Unit to heighten its capacity for mediation, conflict prevention, and management within the SADC region (Lavergne, 1994, p. 206).

The East African Community (EAC) contribution to peace-building and security though minimal has given due consideration to matters of regional security and peace. For instance, three EAC member states comprising Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda together with the United States undertook their first joint peacekeeping exercise in June 1998. The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) with the support and supervision from other higher regional blocs like the AU and the European Union (EU), is recording remarkable political and security cooperation in the sub-region (Lavergne, 1994, p. 208). The drive to peace and security in North Africa with significant efforts of UMA have been plausible. Notably, Tunisia underwent successful election and transition of government democratically and legitimately. The other existing RECs are undergoing a myriad transformation for sustainable peace and security development for the citizens within the region.

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Notwithstanding, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) as a sub-regional bloc has demonstrated the will and ability to respond in an effective manner to threats to peace, human rights and security on the continent. Through the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), successful mechanisms for conflict management have recorded in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea- Bissau in West Africa, (Lavergne, 1994, p. 209).

Peace Building and Conflict Management Strategies.


The pursuit of peace and conflict management by the use of deterrence by the military or peacekeeping started with the commission's 1978 Protocol on Non-Aggression and the 1981 Protocol on Mutual Defense Assistance which became operationalized in 1986 (Lavergne, 1994 p. 40). These protocols were to settle disputes among member states and pursue sub-regional actions against external aggressions (Bolarinwa in Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung regional security policy project 2010, p. 36). He further contends that these two protocols were found to be narrow and never implemented due to lack of political will of the member states.

The revised treaty of 1993.

The ECOWAS in 1993 under the revised treaty developed an imposing recognized plan to accelerate regional peacekeeping, peace support, and conflict management mediations. Prior to the revised treaty of 1993 was the success of ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) that resulted out of the war in Liberia in 1991 and subsequently extended its mandate in peacekeeping and military operations in Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau, and Cote d'Ivoire. Articles 56 and 58 of the 1993 Treaty urged members of the community to cooperate in realizing objectives set in agreed instruments like African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and to establish and strengthen appropriate mechanisms for the timely prevention and resolution of intra-State and inter-State conflicts respectively (Yaya, 2014). According to Diakite Karamoko, section 68 of the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework Document (ECFD) outline some of the initiatives in the fight against cross border crimes (Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung regional security policy project 2010, p. 74). One boastful achievement is the establishment of the Committee of Heads of police and Chief of Staff (WAPCO) responsible to ensure keen cooperation among security services of nation-states.

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The 1999 protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, management, Resolution, Peace-keeping, and Security.


Advancing the capacity of previous measures and instruments on peacebuilding and conflict management was the endorsed concept of Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, and Security in 1997 ECOWAS summit held in Togo. The subsequent build-up is the adoption of the 1999 protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, management, Resolution, Peace-keeping, and Security. This protocol was agreed based on escalating apprehensions of proliferation conflicts within the region threatening peace and security. It was therefore meant to institutionalize structures and processes that would ensure consultations and collective management of regional security issues. According to Bolarinwa O. Joshua, the reason for its establishment was to help manage, prevent, and resolve both intrastate and interstate conflicts, strengthen cooperation to mention but a few. He noted that article 2(f) of the Revised Treaty set out the need to establish regional peace and security observations systems and peacekeeping forces. He continues that these were meant to enhance timely and effective responses to regional violence (Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung regional security policy project 2010, p. 35). For instance, Article 10 of the Protocol authorizes all forms of intervention. The hierarchical institutional structures include the Authority of Head of States and Government as the highest decision-making body, the Executive Secretary responsible for training and preparation of composite standby units through regional peace-keeping training centers and the Mediation and Security Council (MSC). These three structured institutions are to be supported by the Defense and Security Commission, the Council of Elders, Early Warning and Observation and monitoring Centre and ECOMOG (ECOWAS Cease-Fire Monitoring Group) as organs to execute or implement decisions of the institutions.

The 2001 protocol on Democracy and Good Governance.

The mechanism of peacebuilding and conflict management is further strengthened by the 2001 protocol on Democracy and Good Governance. The Protocol reflects the conviction of the ECOWAS Community that good governance, the rule of law and sustainable development are essential preconditions for peace and conflict prevention (ECOWAS, 1999 p. 4-5 cited in Yaha, 2014). As a supplementary to the 1999 protocol, it was tasked to take into account political causes of instability, conflicts, and insecurity within the region which largely were ignored (Lar, 2009 cited in Osagie et al. 2017). In the same line, the protocol calls for a guarantee of parliamentary independence and immunity, constitutional ascension to power and the armed forces

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being apolitical as well as operate under the command of legally constituted political authority (Osagie et al. 2017). Provisions were made for ECOWAS to intervene in election monitoring and assistance and build enabling milieu for democratic governance.

This Protocol mandated the Commission to intervene in electoral processes and provide assistance where necessary. Moreover, the protocol laid out democratic principles for ECOWAS member states like division of powers, free elections and participation, civil control of armed forces, freedom of press and assembly, protection against discrimination and zero tolerance for power through unconstitutional means. The possibility of intervening in the case of coups against a democratically elected government is underlined in Article 45, which already provides for a spectrum of incentives and sanctions to be applied (Bossuyt, 2016).

ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF).


In 2008, the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF) was enacted to guide the organization's preventive diplomacy ratified in 2010. It aims to provide a strong conceptual understanding of conflict prevention, strengthen ECOWAS' conflict prevention capacity and integrate existing initiatives of ECOWAS institutions and mechanisms responsible for conflict prevention and peace-building (Kabia, 2011). As security architecture, the ECPF ascertains the operational and structural approaches to conflict prevention. The former operates on issuing an early warning, mediation, conciliation, preventive diplomacy and to extent deployment of ECOWAS Standby Force. The latter works on upholding political and institutional governance and promote socio-economic development as the drive to peace-building. Significant of such developments are the Office of the Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS) responsible for peace and security issues and also oversees the Directorate for Early Warning and Monitoring Centre (ECOWARN); the operational arm which also consists of the ECOWAS Standby Force (ESF), a building block of the African Standby Force (ASF) under the Africa Peace and Security Architecture (Stiftung, 2011). The introduction of the ECPF emphasizes that the ECOWAS vision is to transform the region from an 'ECOWAS of States' to an 'ECOWAS of the Peoples' and that civil society is to play an increasingly critical role in the promotion and maintenance of peace and security.

Embedded Build-Up Capabilities in the ECOWAS Vision 2020.

The new peace and security strategy highlights the paradigm shift from ECOWAS of States to an ECOWAS of peoples. The people rather than institutional mechanisms

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become the key instruments in matters of peacebuilding and human security within the region.

Strengthening and consolidating human security and respect for human rights.

Poverty and security are interdependent, postulating that most conflicts and civil unrest emanate from the people living in abject poverty and the government inability to manage national wealth as well as public goods and services. Thus contemporarily, the discourse of security goes beyond state-centric to embrace individuals' access to food, water, shelter, education, and health to mention but a few.


Notwithstanding, the Commission's effort in its Article 41 (a) of Conflict Prevention Framework which entrenches specific moral obligations and legitimacy on the Member States to protect human security and any violence that put the citizens at risk. In addition, Article 25 of the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance concedes poverty mitigation as an instrument for peace-building and security. This particular writing is relevant in the appreciation of regional effort by ECOWAS in the transition from 'ECOWAS of the states to ECOWAS of the peoples' envisioned by the year 2020.

In prioritizing peacebuilding and security under the vision 2020, ECOWAS implemented the Conflict Prevention Framework in 2008 as a development tool to strengthen and consolidate the human security architecture in the region. This covers the establishment of institutional structures to securitize threats to individual rights, democratic rights and the promotion of human development to ensure freedom from fear and freedom from want. The ECPF purposely encourage consented interventions by the field ECOWAS resources (the Council of the Wise, field agencies and the Zonal Bureaux for Conflict Prevention) and local civil society peace constituencies in conflict prevention and peace-building around concrete initiatives such as security governance, human right, and peace education (Ekiyor, 2008). ECOWAS growing recognition of non-state actors like the media and community groups as important stakeholders and providers of human security had provided the opportunity for security and peace-building.

The commission's mandate on the desecration of human rights is enshrined in the protocol establishing the ECOWAS Community of Justice. Article 9 and Article 10 of the amended supplementary Court Protocol empowers the court to consider cases of human rights violation and permits individual citizens to present cases of their infringed rights before the court respectively (Ebobrah, 2010, p. 2). In accordance with the revised treaty of 1993 under the auspices of the African Union Constitutive

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Act (CA), ECOWAS has committed to creating conditions for the protection and respect for human rights. Provisions are made to allow free movement of people, residence and establishment as well as mandated member states to deal with threats to human rights. ECOWAS in partnership with International Labor Organization (ILO) continues to facilitate and implement basic principles for equality, decent income, and protections of individual citizens of member states. A key of such initiative was adoption of the ECOWAS Strategic Framework for Strengthening National Child Protection Systems in 2017 and the Support to Pandemic Prevention in the ECOWAS Region (RPPP or R3P) (ECOWAS Annual Report, 2018, p. 94) meant to provide easy access to health center and reduction of disaster risk to the citizenry. Significantly, the ECOWAS Humanitarian Affairs ensure that the Member States and Citizens kowtow to International Humanitarian Law as a means of mitigating conflict-related impacts on the civilian populace. Subsequent development was the ECOWAS Humanitarian Code of Conduct (EHCOC) for civilian humanitarian actors to assist vulnerable citizens and the Code of Conduct for Armed Forces and Security Services in West Africa. The ECOWAS humanitarian office played a major role in protecting the rights of citizens during the 2011 Cote d'Ivoire political crisis and the 2012 Tuareg insurgency in Mali. In accordance to the Revised Treaty, provisions were made to meningitis epidemic and measles affected countries like Niger, Nigeria and Burkina Faso in 2009 as well as flood-affected countries such as Sierra Leone, Senegal, and Benin (ECOWAS Humanitarian Policy Report, 2012).

Prioritized Gender in Promoting Peace and Security.

The ECOWAS Security Sector Reforms (SSR) has prioritized gender in promoting peace and security in West Africa. The significance of gender in the ECOWAS Security Sector Reforms (SSR) purporting its contribution to a sector that satisfies the needs of men, women, and children (Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung regional security project 2010, p.57). The organization's establishment of gender directorate within the commission and the ECOWAS Centre for Gender Development (ECGD) in Dakar placed emphasis on the concern of gender equality, for implementing a policy which increasingly involves women as development actors. Women's role in peace-building and security is further strengthened in the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework Document. Women are synonymous to peace. Hence it must be recognized that without women's involvement in the struggle for peace and security there can be neither sustainable peace nor reliable security.

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The proliferation of SALW has resulted to the disintegrating nature of ECOWAS states and possess a serious threat to peace and security. Indirectly has contributed to thousands of deaths in West Africa sub-region of which women and children were the majority. ECOWAS convention on the fight against SALW came into force in November 2009. The West African region call for greater gender sensitivity in the definition of peace and security strategies especially women who become victimized (Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung regional security project 2010, p. 92).


Formalized Relations with Peace and Security Research and Training Institutions.

ECOWAS in November 2005 cemented its relationship with peace-building and security research and training institutions within the West Africa region. To this effect, three-member state institutions were approved as training centers of excellence (TCEs) for peace operations namely the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC) in Ghana for operational training, the National Defense College of Nigeria (NDCN) for strategic training and L'École de Maintien de la Paix (EMP) in Mali for tactical training (Franke 2010, p. 192-93 cited in Ismail, 2015). ECOWAS development towards its vision in areas of peace and security successively had formalized its relations with these institutions by signing memorandum of understanding (MOU) that gives them power to offer training in the military, police and civilian components of peace support operations to member states delegations, the bloc's staff and civil groups in the region. Provisions in terms of technical support for ECOWAS mission planning, training exercises and development of operational procedures are made.

In addition, memorandum of understanding was signed with the Conflict, Security and Development Group (CSDG), Kings College London and Humanitarian Dialogue. The CSDG has been regularly since 2008 released young West African professionals in peace and security to ECOWAS to augment its processes. In 2013, Humanitarian Dialogue supported ECOWAS's creation of a Mediation Facilitation Division in the Political Affairs directorate by deploying consultants to undertake background research and develop operational mandates, procedures, and staff profiles (Ismail, 2015, p. 17). Significantly, a number of experts from academia and research institutions, civil society groups just to mention few in areas of peace-building and security had been incorporated into the ECOWAS workforce. This is to ensure effectively and improve communication and familiarity between ECOWAS

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and experts and plug members of West Africa's peace and security policy community into ECOWAS processes (Ismail, p. 21)

Biao (2009) considers ECOWAS vision 2020 to be actualized through quality and efficient higher education within the West African sub-region, not relying solely on citizens' enlightenment but to the extent of at least forty percent (40%) population attaining university training.

Good Governance to Strengthen Peace, Democracy, and Stability in the Region.

In accordance with the organization's vision, ECOWAS aims at good governance to strengthen peace, democracy, and stability in the region. Under the provisions of the Protocol, ECOWAS has the authority and mandate to suspend any member in which an elected government is removed by military force. The protocol also established the ECOWAS election monitoring and observatory process which has been playing an increasing role in organizing and supervising the conduct of the election and other governance issues in the member countries. More so, ECOWAS strategy for democratic governance and peace-building had been its meeting with civil society groups and political parties. For instance, 2010 July in Cote d'Ivoire, the commission met to discuss the state of political parties and their ability to articulate visions and agenda to transform governance in West Africa (Yaha, 2014 p. 96).


Collective Effort to Eliminate Social Discrimination or Exclusion in the Region.

The organization believes that peace and security could be attained by conscious and sustained collective effort to eliminate social discrimination or exclusion in the region. As a region with diverse cultures and peoples, the socio-cultural dimension of development remains a necessary building block for establishing peace and security in the region. ECOWAS has demonstrated a strong drive to inculcate acceptance of the socio-cultural diversities of the region as a positive factor that enriches life in the region in addition to a strategy to fight terrorism and an integrated maritime strategy. Institutionalized meetings of army chiefs of staff, chiefs of police and the security services have commenced frameworks for exchange and indispensable cooperation in West Africa. Earlier established West African Civil Society Forum to stage interaction between civil society and ECOWAS policymakers such as West African Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) and the West African Network on Small Arms (WANSAs) are in support to promote peace and security (Kabia, 2011) and to develop strategy towards the controlling of small arms proliferation respectively.

The Commission's successes in post-conflict reconstruction within the sub-region are evident in its member states, in that, the ECPF has reinforced human security dis-

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course within the region through the protection of basic human and democratic right for sustainable growth. An essential instrument to transform ECOWAS from state to the 'ECOWAS of the Peoples' envisioned to achieve by the year 2020.

Dealing with Emerging Threats.

The West Africa sub-region is still suffering from the devastating effect of conflicts ensuing from insecure borders, unemployment, systematic ethnic discrimination, abuse of human rights, coupled with other emerging threats like terrorism have burdened national governments in managing the situation. Civil society organization (groups) and ECOWAS partnership have continuously engaged authorities at the national level and the ECOWAS commission on vital issues that affect the citizenry and to support the process of peace and security development against terrorism. Conceding that drug trafficking and money laundering are synonymous to terrorist, conscious effort to fight terrorism and money laundering through its Protocol of Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peace, and security, is ascending.

Conclusions.


This study seeks to examine the performance of ECOWAS in the quest for peace and stability in West Africa and looks into the build-up of capability within the ECOWAS vision 2020 to conduct peace support operations within the sub-region. The discussions in this study indicate that ECOWAS vision 2020 is a document in which member states, civil society groups, universities, and every institution or regional body appreciate existing problem within the sub-region, to come up with a strategy to deal with. It further revealed that the ECOWAS vision 2020 is a binding protocol within which individual member states can pick or choose an aspect of the protocol to implement. The ECOWAS Commission has been remarkable in the aspect engaging government of member states and visiting member countries to actualize its vision that in essence is progress. This study concludes that ECOWAS has recorded significant progress towards the actualization of its vision 2020 in areas of good governance, human capital development, environmental security and operational readiness of the ECOWAS Standby Force.

Recommendations.

First, the ECOWAS in its vision to attain a secure and socially unified conflicts free West Africa must at the national level have peace and security development

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policies with strong regional orientation. This calls for provision for institutional peace and security structures in each ECOWAS member state where such structure does not exist or national policies must be skewed towards strengthening these national institutions responsible for peace-building and security. These institutions should be mandated to assume the coordination of all forms of regional collective security and should ensure that national peace and development policies are placed at the regional level.


Secondly, ECOWAS to attain the level where leaders and citizens of member states prioritize peace and collective regional security should have the urgent need for renewed leadership. In this regard, member states should undertake the required constitutional and administrative measures to entrench leaders' commitment to a regional approach to security. There should be a call for strong and committed leaders of ECOWAS member states willing to sacrifice and carry the vision "ECOWAS of people" as well as accountable to their people. Such leadership qualities will help determine each member state's obligations and unique contributions it can make to the attainment of a secure and social environment devoid of conflicts.

Fourth, there should be vibrant civil society organizations in member states projecting the ECOWAS regional defense and security system against illegal arms and drugs within the region. Though the West African Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) and the West African Network on Small Arms (WANSA) role in peacebuilding, security and stability within the region has been phenomenal, there is the need to cement the implementation of policies on trafficking and illegal arms control, build solid intermediary bodies and coordinate their services for total inclusion and participation to ensure accountability and transparency. ECOWAS member states must call for re-orientation of the 2016-2020 Regional Action Plan on Drug Control at the national level as a shared vision of the region.

Fifth, ECOWAS as regional bloc could better eliminate existing and potential security threats by enhancing each member state's capabilities to engage in the management, prevention, and resolution of local and national conflicts. This is achievable through increasing periodic interaction with stakeholders in the member states to take actions for the operational and efficient deployment of the National Early Warning and Response Mechanism (NEWRM).

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Sixth, there is the need for ECOWAS to establish and strengthen regular mechanisms for Mediation and Facilitation to augment alleviating political tension and strengthen mediation capacity in West Africa. Provision for credible evidence of judicial, institutional and policy efforts that internalize regional mechanisms for training experts, identify and implement concrete projects and activities in support of ECOWAS Pre-electoral fact-finding Missions and Long Term Election Observation Missions.


Lastly, there must be collective and conscious efforts by ECOWAS member states to inculcate the multi-cultural diversities across the sub-region to ease political tensions. The commission continues to be haunted by the absence of deep integration, a problem of old colonial dependencies, manifesting itself in ECOWAS policy and decision making. The acceptance of the sub-regions' cultural differences will eliminate the greater willingness of Francophone member states taking leading roles in conflicts affected French-speaking country and vice-versa. This regional acceptance and unity will facilitate the operationalization of the peace-building and security structures in agreement with the ECOWAS Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peace-Keeping, and Security as a shared vision.

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