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REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN WEST AFRICA;
THE ATTITUDE OF ECOWAS LEADERS

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. REGIONALISM AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN WEST AFRICA

The region of West Africa is probably one of the more experienced regions of the world in terms of experiments with regional economic schemes. Between the 1950s and 1970s alone, more than 16 such organizations were proclaimed or established by West African governments. This proliferation, of course, was with reason. There are few developing countries in the world today that have economic, social and political problems of the magnitude found in African states. In West Africa, the condition is aggravated by the desire of these countries to leap-frog into the 21st century, despite the crushing lack of necessary skills and inadequate revenues. When one introduces into this gloomy picture high demographic growth, falling food production and the like, then a more accurate comprehension of the situation begins to unfold.

In 1973, the president of the World Bank acknowledged the need for the institution to substantially increase its level of lending to African countries in order to enhance national economic growth and general economic progress in these countries.¹ This action was long overdue because the political transition of West African states from colonial territories to that of independent sovereign states conveyed a host of economic and political problems. However, the most important of these has been the problem of economic development. In certain cases, the issue has reached crisis levels as in Liberia or even Ghana. World Bank studies indicate that since 1961, West African countries have not experienced any real growth in the rate of GNP. In "Africa South of the Sahara" for instance, total GNP peaked at 5.2 per cent between

1966 and 1974 but one should not forget that Nigeria and Gabon experienced large increases ('oil boom') in crude oil production during this period. These increases were also aided by OPEC pricing policies. In 1975, this total GNP level declined by 4.2 percent. It rose again in 1976 by slightly over 5 percent but then began falling in the following year and continued on that trend right into the 1980s.²

During the same period, agricultural production experienced a substantial decline. Population growth on the other hand has consistently been on the increase and this has turned countries like Nigeria into net-importers of food. Per capita income decreased sharply between 1976 and 1977 especially and so did gross investments. By 1980, the rate of per capita income growth was barely 0.5 percent.³ The 1979 annual report of the World Bank, for instance, concluded among other things that:

.....many countries have had difficulties in (establishing) the degree of external and internal balance necessary to permit (reasonable) growth. They have found it difficult to generate more resources to satisfy their basic needs..... which according to all indications, are met less well in West Africa than in most other regions in the developing world. Thus, in addition to the long-term structural problems of wide-spread poverty, and the obstacles to the growth of production, these countries are still struggling with high inflation, strained public sector financing, balance of payments deficits and mounting external debt of a nature and degree unknown heretofore.⁴

Due to all these factors, regional cooperation has looked attractive to newly independent West African states. Many of these countries feel that they can overcome their developmental problems more easily by pooling their resources. However, not all regional cooperation ventures are equally successful. Most of the regional organizations in West Africa formed since the 1950s have become dormant or ineffective. One of the few effective ones, and also the largest both in membership and in scope of activities, is the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), founded in 1975.

ECOWAS will be the main subject of this report.

Regional organizations have also taken different approaches to understanding the problems of development and to assessing the appropriate strategies for economic development. The most common approach, particularly in the Francophone region, has been to seek economic growth through collaboration with France and other European countries.

The second approach most evident in the formation and activity of ECOWAS views continued economic "domination" and "exploitation" by European powers as impediments to economic development. In order for us to understand ECOWAS and the rationale for its existence, it will be necessary to consider the argument behind this confrontational approach.

Many West African states postulate that there is a need for a 'new world order' and their primary argument here is that developed countries "raped" the region of much of its natural resources to acquire their own advanced status of economic development. Leaders see a new world order as the best solution in the process of making global adjustments for the past misdeeds of developed countries. They also see economic integration schemes as the appropriate forums for finding common grounds among themselves an agent that is absolutely necessary in the process of creating the infrastructure for a solid 'united front' in order to participate in the determination of world events.

Some of the problems that accompany underdevelopment and in fact aggravate it, it is argued, existed prior to the colonial era. While the argument can be made that the objective of colonialism was not necessarily to solve these problems, the manner in which colonial governments conducted the affairs of these territories vitiated the problem of development when these states were 'granted' independence. With the departure of the colonialists, therefore, the disadvantage of the economic structures they

established became more serious while at the same time, with independence the pressure for eliminating underdevelopment became much more acute.⁵ Thus, West African leaders have been confronted by a problem that has in some cases, even terminated the political careers of some of their regional peers. Stated simply, the problem of development deals with the issue of how to procure a strategy for development that initiates long-term growth. The strategy "lays emphasis on self-reliance"⁶ in the mobilization of domestic resources to transform the economic structures dislocated by colonialism in order to "bring about sustained improvement in the well being of"⁷ citizens; to increase "the production of goods and services within the framework of stated social good."⁸ This objective has been greatly hampered in the past by the fact that colonialism, either directly or indirectly, succeeded in destroying some of West Africa's most vital industries in the quest to provide market advantages to European firms. While West African industries stagnated, European manufacturers enjoyed free entrance in the West African market. As a matter of fact, there are cases where colonial powers initiated bilateral agreements that provided for "non-discriminatory trade policies (that) hinder(ed) reciprocity so that preference operated one way in their favor."⁹ All of these combined to create a condition whereby as late as the 1970s,

70 percent of the trade of West Africa still remained with Western Europe while intra-West African trade constitute(d) barely eight percent.¹⁰

When West African states attained independence, none was capable of economic self-reliance. They, therefore, had to depend on financial and technical aid from abroad, particularly from former colonial metropolises. This is the raison d'etre of the existing pattern of West African international trade relations and the deplorable status of economic development found in these countries. The fact is that while colonial metropolises have

significantly benefited economically from close ties with West African states, they have exhibited great reluctance in making "sacrifices in order to ingratiate the less developed countries."¹¹

These factors have acted in concert to precipitate a strong interest in economic regionalism in West Africa. Regional leaders "commonly (believe) that economic cooperation will facilitate economic development."¹² This conviction is reinforced by factors that include the advantages of pooling markets and the viability of the ensuing economic unit; all of which are necessary for the initiation of economic development.

The interplay of power, including a desire for greater international bargaining power, undoubtedly accounts for.....the wide-spread interest in integration between African States.....Integration is seen as a means of helping to overcome the disadvantages of small size and of making possible a greater state of economic growth and development.¹³

It is important to view ECOWAS in this perspective. It is also imperative to note that the economic predicament--i.e., underdevelopment--to which these states have been subjected by the existing world economic system, has strong linkage with West Africa's colonial past. Thus this report reviews the origin and development of ECOWAS. A continuing theme throughout this enquiry is the presence of anti-colonialism as a strong political element in ECOWAS. We shall, therefore, proceed with this study by looking at the following:

- a) In Chapter 2, the history of ECOWAS, its treaty, structure, objectives and activities between 1975 and 1981.
- b) In Chapter 3, EEC-West Africa relations and the reaction of West African leaders.
- c) In Chapter 4, Anti-Colonial ideology and the political rhetoric of West African leaders.
- d) In Chapter 5, a statement of the findings of this report and a brief projection on the future of West African regionalism.

B. BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

1. COLONIALISM AND ANTI-COLONIALISM

Colonialism is the extension of political, economic and social control by one state or group of states over another state or a group of states. It can be the stated policy of a state as opposed to pure adventurism. In its more advanced form, colonialism is a conspiracy between a number of states. Also referred to as imperialism, it is more popularly known as neo-colonialism in the post-independence era, in which case it signifies post-independence economic and cultural domination of former colonies (i.e., perpetuation of dependence) by former colonial powers or other developed countries. Imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism can be viewed as a historical cycle where in imperialism yields colonialism. In this study, however, these terms should be read as synonymous. They all connote:

the tendency of one society or state...to control
another by whatever means and for whatever purpose.¹⁴

The distinctive character of colonialism is imposition. Anti-colonialism is opposition to imposition. It is an attitude that originates from the evaluation of the political, social, economic and other miscellaneous problems of development in former colonial territories in the light of impacts associated with colonialism. In its ultimate form, anti-colonialism becomes an uncontrollable variable, affecting the international relations of former colonies in all areas, including cultural affairs. Its application, however, has become predominately consonant with the area of economic development. The pressing argument here, of course, is that colonial governments lavished their ingenuity and resources on designing economic structures that responded to colonial and initial post-independence fiscal policies

of the new states in a manner that harnessed self-propelled economic growth while maintaining the advantage of former colonial powers. Anti-colonialism "is marked by two antagonistic poles: The colonizer and the colonized. The prosperity and privileges of the former are directly based on the exploitation and pauperization of the other."¹⁵

The advent of colonialism remains the single most important event that has had persistent influence in the course of West African affairs in the last three decades. This unprecedented experience cast an indelible mark on the area. West Africa was colonized primarily by the British, the French, and the Portuguese. The mode of colonial rule these nations experienced left a peerless legacy that has caused serious repercussions in the area of economic development. "The present economic structure(s) upon which these states base their economic development and design integration arrangements is a product of colonial economy."¹⁶

This legacy has also excited regional scholars, politicians and citizens of the area for quite some time. Thus an intense debate concerning the accurate impacts of colonialism on West African states has emanated. Its most prominent aspect is that maintaining a middle course appears to elude participants. The debate is also unique because in the attempt to be impartial, accuracy suffers due to the gross omission of critical facts. Hodder, for instance, illustrates this when he notes that "it is beyond question that the problems facing African countries can be traced back to colonialism," but founders by belittling the highly organized politico-economic systems discovered by the colonialists when he says that "colonialism brought conscious attempts at social, economic and political development" in an area occupied by demobilized societies.¹⁷ Certainly 'indirect rule' could not have functioned so efficiently in 'demobilized' societies. By the same token, 'direct rule' or coercive institutionalization would not have been

necessary.

A wide variety of views exist concerning the impact of colonialism on the economic development of West African states. However, writers may be classified into two groups, based on their perception of the contributions of colonialism to West African economic, social and political development. This study defines these groups in the following way:

1. The Positive Impact School -- This school of thought insists that colonialism brought nothing but desirable benefits to West African development, regardless of the highly ocular vestiges of colonial demerits. Adherents of the positive school include authors like M. Perham, who wrote that "until the recent penetration of Europe, the greater part of Africa was without the wheel, was without the plough and transport animals. It was without writing and so without history. Mentally and physically, the African was helpless."¹⁸

If anything at all, the positive impact school has given impetus to the negative impact school, and also kindled the fires of anti-colonialism in the region.

2. The Negative Impact School -- This school asserts the view that colonialism destroyed West African contemporary development and effectively barred potential progress. The ideology of this school is diametrically opposed to that of the positive impact school. This school gained great influence in West African politics during the struggle for independence and has been instrumental in the establishment of ECOWAS. General Acheampong of Ghana once stated with regards to formation of ECOWAS that the main purpose of establishing the organization is to remove centuries of artificial barriers to economic growth inflicted on the region by external forces (meaning colonialists); to recreate a homogeneous society that existed before colonial invasion.

Acheampong's statement portrayed the underlying principles of the negative school of thought plus the instincts that have defined the attitude of West African leaders in the process of instituting ECOWAS. His statement also symbolizes the conscious attempt usually made by West African leaders to mobilize the favorable attitude of citizens toward regional projects in which their governments are participants.

C. REASONS FOR INTEREST IN REGIONAL ECONOMIC INTEGRATION IN WEST AFRICA

The role of regional integration as the comprehensive formula for solving the problem of economic underdevelopment has enjoyed greater attention in recent years, partly because of "the growing influence of political and economic nationalism which has accompanied the independence of African States."¹⁹ However, there are both internal and external factors responsible for the new focus. Internally, the most important factor has been the relatively small territorial and demographic size of many African states. When not strategically located and/or devoid of important mineral deposits, African nations are hardly viable entities in the world political arena. Kenya, for instance, is largely poor financially, possesses no known significant mineral deposits and can hardly feed itself. On the other hand, it is strategically located on the East African Coast, giving it proximity to the Horn of Africa, the Middle East and the Indian Ocean. It is therefore not economically important but greatly valued today by superpowers such as the United States due to its strategic location. One can compare this with the Western Sahara (Spanish Sahara) which is essentially desert land but laden with phosphate deposits, which has made it so economically important that Morocco initiated a war aimed at the acquisition of the territory since Spain relinquished its colonial control. In West Africa, Togo is neither strategically located nor has it any important 'mineral power.'

It is economically fragile. However, under a regional canopy such as ECOWAS, Togo assumes greater significance due to the combined importance of ECOWAS as a regional institution. Coupled with this problem is another internal factor, uneven endowment of natural resources, which the above examples also imply.

West African countries are also highlighted by three characteristics which continue to spur the interest in regional economic integration. These are: 1) low levels of industrial development; 2) dependence of the economies of regional actors on the extra-regional trade of primary products; and 3) the low level of intra-regional trade. Regional integration, it is thought, provides the basis for the attainment of reasonable economic growth. These factors are compounded by small national markets and distortions in the pattern of economic activity, that being a consequence of colonial inheritance. All of these seriously inhibit national development. It is the thought of West African leaders that regional cooperation might cause rapid economic development at the national level.

Political considerations have also encouraged keen interest in regional integration in Africa. The central theme in the set of political considerations, as indicated earlier, hinges on the desire to present a collective African front on issues affecting the continent. As a matter of fact, this was the propelling force in the creation of the OAU (Organization of African Unity). In West Africa, regional leaders believe that ECOWAS, like the OAU, embodies the desire to eliminate underdevelopment through indigenous efforts rather than relying completely on extra-regional initiatives. The fact that ECOWAS emphasizes West African cohesion also discloses an important potential benefit. In world bodies such as the UN, the Third World bloc in the General Assembly has become very powerful. In 1981, this bloc forced the United States to use its veto privilege in the Security

Council under very embarrassing circumstances over the issue of the invasion of Angola by South Africa. Generally, African nations expect developed nations to condemn South African policies openly, especially when they contravene the legal rights of human beings and that of neighboring states. By virtue of its status as a world power and a proponent of democratic government, the U.S. veto was very damaging to its image. The U.S. cannot afford too many embarrassing invocations of its veto privilege and this is one ground on which Third World cohesion in the UN is built. For instance, the veto of the resolution to condemn South Africa's aggression contradicted the position of some key NATO members. A German diplomat said of it, "the West's whole African policy is on the verge of collapse because of Washington's attitude."²⁰ A French diplomat concurred:

South Africa.....(conducted) an invasion, an act of aggression, and we feel the U.S. should have the courage to condemn it."²¹

Washington may have considered that its veto was applied to stave off Third World influence in world affairs. On the other hand, its action revealed a rift between the U.S. and its most important allies, a point at which Third World countries can exploit effectively. For instance, this event indicates that Western Europe values its relations with African countries much more than the U.S. may deem necessary. The imperative of the 'US-NATO connection' is such that African countries possess the requisite to conduct relations with West European nations in a fashion that elicits from them favorable attitudes on African issues and also enhances their ability as a group to 'tug' the U.S. along. It is a plausible scenario, especially when one considers the fact that key EEC members postulate that relations with Third World countries are crucial to the future of their organization. For these benefits to accrue to African nations, however,

cohesion must be forged and Africans view regional schemes as the instruments for developing such cohesion.

The most important external factor that has caused renewed focus on regional integration in West Africa (as a matter of fact, Africa as a whole) is the United Nations Organization (UNO). Over the years, the UNO has used its regional commissions as important devices for fostering industrial development in the Third World. Through the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and its subsidiary, the African Development Bank (ADB), the UNO has actively provided logistical support and the basic mechanisms on which the structure of many regional integration attempts in Africa are based. This is congruent with the ECA charter which states in part that the ECA should:

.....initiate and participate in measures for facilitating (collective) action to relieve that economic and technological problems of Africa; that it make or sponsor investigations into economic and technological problems and development; that it undertake or sponsor the collection, evaluation, and dissemination of economic, technological, and statistical information; that it perform such advisory services as countries of the region may desire, provided that these do not overlap with those provided by other bodies of the UN or by its specialized agencies;that it assist in the development of coordinated policies for promoting (regional) economic and technological development.²²

From a structural viewpoint, therefore, the ECA has been of great service to African regionalism.

The impact of the European Economic Community (EEC) on West African regionalism cannot be ignored. In terms of important external factors that have influenced economic cooperation in the area, the EEC is only exceeded by the UNO's ECA. The success of the EEC makes it difficult for any regional organization in the world today to avoid borrowing from its experience. Among the many things which other regional organizations can learn from the EEC is the fact that the EEC has demonstrated the desirability

of regional cooperation.

While it may be argued that the experience of the community has only marginal relevance for the developing nations in Africa, it could hardly be disputed that the European approach to cooperation, as well as the detailed institutional pattern that has been evolved over the years, will leave an imprint on attempts at integration elsewhere.....The whole philosophy of European union and the multiplicity of institutions have provided some obvious guidelines for cooperation in Africa. The European experience has also highlighted some problems which inevitably (arise) as the area of cooperation is sought to be widened, and move is made to lift cooperation to more complex levels and forms.²³

There is important significance in the fact that economic cooperation in West Africa does not have to start from scratch. The problem, though, is that this advantage often leads to undesirable impacts such as oversimplification of problems that can impede integration attempts and over-optimistic expectations in terms of what can be achieved. Francophone states, for instance, would insist, albeit naively, that the formula for integration was created during the colonial period and continuing the process is the only task left to execute. This insistence is the fact behind the high number of integration schemes found in Francophone Africa, despite their often frustrating results. These results, however, should not be read as an indication that African nations are not anxious to continue pre-independence arrangements. Neither is it that they oppose these pre-independence arrangements because they were geared to favor colonial powers. Rather, these results portray a natural and legitimate instinct, reflected by the desire to examine and assess these arrangements in the context of their new status as independent nations. West African leaders generally consider that it is through this method that an effective and realistic framework for cooperation can evolve..

D. FACTORS AFFECTING THE APPROACH TO REGIONAL COOPERATION IN WEST AFRICA

In view of the region's colonial experience (which also influences the approach to regional schemes), the most important factor here is national consciousness. Activities by advocates of anti-colonialism and the new status of these countries as independent states have fostered an inward-looking attitude in these polities. This has led to the discovery of their individual national powers and national self-identities as sovereign nations. The primary concern of these states since independence, therefore, has been to reassert their political, economic and even cultural preferences. Regional actors view this as the ultimate approach to building viable nations. This element is also necessary before more elaborate and complex politico-economic forms of regional integration can occur. The desire of these individual states to shape their destinies in the light of cultural attitudes, social systems and political preferences introduces the element of self interest in regional cooperation. Self interest may well be the most important motivation toward regional cooperation.

It has become necessary, therefore, that for an economic grouping to be successful it must be so conceived as to assure the member states that each and every one of them is gaining significantly from the grouping and that each is developing its economy at a faster rate with the grouping than without it.²⁴

Although self interest might conflict with cooperation, in the final analysis cooperation among nations can only occur when each of them perceives clear economic or political gains.

While the idea of regional cooperation is experiencing growing acceptance, cooperation schemes continue to suffer from one major setback: African countries usually design cooperation programs that are, in terms of implementation, too fast in tempo or that have too complex or large an

institutional apparatus to be effective. This has generated great concern among regional leaders which has consequently led to reappraisal of past as well as existing cooperation attempts aimed at delineating critical faults and injecting factors which can bring about more realism in the establishment and preservation of future schemes. Reappraisal was direly needed. The Francophone countries, for instance, insisted on having purely Francophone communities, even when such arrangements contradicted West African economic and political logic. A very good example is the CEA0 (Communauté Economique de l'Afrique de l'Ouest). Organizations often overlapped (note Table 1)²⁵ and thus can be argued to have contributed to the structural dislocation of West African economies. A substantial number of West African regional instruments relied heavily on extra-regional technical and administrative personnel. This was not at levels reminiscent of the colonial era but nevertheless significant. The major reason for this was that in some of these countries, there were few nationals with the necessary skills. In a relatively volatile region, this factor tied the fate of these schemes to the critical fluctuation in the supply of extra-regional labor capital. This factor also exposed these countries to sometimes sabotaging influences from abroad in a post-independence era when these states were more concerned with social, economic and political growth.

Some of these states (possessed no nationals) with skills of any note....(and thus provided) enormous influence opportunities for foreign interests.²⁶

The above prognosis indicates largely that West African leaders continue to believe that, despite past failures, regional economic integration is the best among the paradigms for economic development. The confidence shared by these leaders with regard to economic regionalism can be attributed to the following among other things: The high levels of economic

underdevelopment of regional polities plus the accompanying character of economic decay; the desire for greater bargaining power in the tumultuous arena of world politics; the profound belief that colonialism mangled an area once noted for economic integrity; the perception that more development is enhanced through regionalism than without it; the character of post-independence relations between these states and West European countries (including their relations with the EEC) and, above all, the colonial experience of these polities. These factors have combined to create an attitude of economic nationalism within the West African leadership which over the course of time has been transformed into an attitude of anti-colonialism that has been enormously instrumental in the establishment and growth of ECOWAS.

The role of West African leaders in the creation of ECOWAS cannot be over-emphasized. "Unity is a sacred word in African politics"²⁷ and a powerful symbol for mobilizing support for development via regional economic integration. H.L. Bretton notes of the causes of underdevelopment that:

the roots of the problem(are) obvious and well known. Colonialism militated against the development of skills and knowledge generally among the subject people to ensure domination and control.²⁸

The seeds of post-independence difficulties were sown in the colonial era. The unique qualities of the synergy of colonialism constrained the ability of West Africans to substantiate the prerequisites for future needs. "Europeans planned and directed education, (and drawing from these earlier advantages of control, which included influence in cultural and 'socio-psychological' aspects, have) continued to benefit from the habit of thought and custom that survived among Africans from colonial days. This residue enabled them to recapture or maintain vestiges of their former power, particularly in the area of economic development."²⁸ This feature rendered

past regional efforts in West Africa to the status of 'bivouacs' due to extra-regional interference. This report does not intend to propose that West Africa's problem with economic development does not antedate colonialism. However, the torpid economic and even political performance of the prevailing structures of many of the region's polities cannot be justifiably articulated as one of their own making.

The argument has been made that rather than an instrument for regional economic integration, ECOWAS is a power-play by Nigeria to create a sphere of influence for itself in Africa and an attempt to entice West African Francophone states away from France. These are sound arguments. On the other hand, these arguments appear to have been taken care of by ECOWAS leaders. There are three main reasons.

First of all, the idea of ECOWAS was developed by Nigeria and Togo, not by the former alone. These two countries presented the idea to other community members as equal partners. ECOWAS would not be existing today if the idea had been perceived by community members as an attempt by Nigeria to 'carve' an area for its influence. Secondly, the Nigerian government has clearly indicated its disinterest for such a role. The fact is that in ECOWAS without Nigeria is illogical because the country's industrial potential and large market is greatly valued by community members whose main source of income is the trade of primary products. Thirdly, the treaty of Lagos provides each ECOWAS member with veto power in the process of running the organization. This means that 100 percent consensus is necessary before any important or crucial action can be taken by ECOWAS. The organization, therefore, exists as an aggregation of community interest rather than the interest of one country or Nigeria alone.

E. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The specific purpose of this report, is to identify the general disposition of West African leaders towards regional integration schemes as

the instrument for eliminating economic underdevelopment, paying particular attention to their orientation within ECOWAS. Most regional schemes in West Africa share some similarity in terms of their objectives. However, the political orientation of their leaders is often completely different from one organization to another and in the long-run, sometimes spells the degree of success or failure encountered by these organizations.

The argument of this report is that the political orientation of ECOWAS is anti-colonial. It is suggested that anti-colonialism was a very important element in the creation of the organization. We would now attempt to support this view by examining the ECOWAS organization (its structure and activities between 1975 and 1981) and evaluation of the attitude of West African leaders to the problem of development along with a survey of their attitude towards ECOWAS.

CHAPTER II

THE HISTORY OF ECOWAS

A. THE SETTING OF ECOWAS

Over the centuries, many events have had great impact on West Africa including the coming of Islam and the Atlantic slave trade. However, it was the colonization of the region by West Europeans that had the greatest impact on modern West Africa, socially, politically and economically. European colonizers encountered some of their most difficult battles to overcome resistance to their domination in this region. Although they gradually won the battle and partitioned the region among themselves arbitrarily, the resistance never totally disappeared. The colonialists designed for each of their partitioned territories economic infrastructures aimed at exploiting the mineral resources of the territories plus other raw materials. The pattern of trade and political contact was engineered to link colonial territories in the region with their colonial metropolises. This situation led to the unique experience of ECOWAS members and a shared feature so inherent to underdevelopment: structural dislocation in production and consumption due to external trade.

Collectively, ECOWAS covers an area of about 1,000,000 square miles, approximately comparable to the EEC's 700,000 square miles. In terms of population, though, the EEC is larger: 170 million as compared to ECOWAS' 130 million people. Per capita income is \$270 for the ECOWAS region. In terms of magnitude, we can compare this to the world average, which is \$1,422. In the EEC, the figure is \$3,313, in Latin America it is \$953, and in Africa as a whole it is \$366.³⁰

The West African community must have one of the most fascinating origins of any regional economic grouping in the world today. Historian Robert W. July writes about a mercantile civilization that existed with beginnings that antedate the 11th century A.D. July states that a customs union existed at the time because the kings of the ancient empires of Ghana and Mali "appropriated all nuggets (gold was the main commodity of trade) passing through their domain (in order to) control the supply and maintain the market value of their precious exports."³¹ The governments of the empires were highly sophisticated, each governed through "indigenous customs and law which was not only virile and workable in its own right, but showed great resilience and flexibility."³² Uncovered through the persevering efforts of researchers, facts like these have greatly enhanced the socialization of ECOWAS citizens to anti-colonial thoughts. These facts have greatly encouraged an enthusiastic response to the idea of ECOWAS.

In West Africa, the concept of (ECOWAS) is preached with a fervor that is second to none elsewhere on the continent.³³

While this introduces an element of nostalgia in the picture, the point should be made that the purpose of ECOWAS is not necessarily to recreate the past. Neither should ECOWAS be viewed as a pioneering effort. It should, however be viewed as an attempt to establish an advanced form of a basic structure that has been historically present in West Africa. This is one of the many generators of the intensity in the attitude displayed by ECOWAS leaders.

B. ORIGIN OF ECOWAS

The exact date when the idea of ECOWAS was conceptualized is not clear. However, there is little doubt that the organization stemmed, partly, from

the influence of earlier West African regional schemes, the history of which dates as far back as 1895. In that year, the French took the first step towards coordinating the administration of their colonial territories in the region by establishing an overall government for the West African sector of 'France Overseas.' The overall government was actually an advanced form of direct rule and provided, among other things, the free exchange of administrative officers among the territories. The predominant effect of this new policy was that it subjected diverse West African states to the status of similar administrative divisions lacking individual character. It was a classic case of a colonially orchestrated fallacy that has led to the ubiquitous nature of regional schemes within the Franc Zone over the years, despite their acknowledged ineffectiveness.

Troubled by these failures, regional leaders have become attuned to the belief that the existing world economic system is responsible for West Africa's low level of economic growth. A Nigerian Head of State, Gen. Obasanjo, once remarked that the failure of developed countries to establish a new economic order was a clear confirmation to the peoples of West Africa that the great powers are mainly concerned with maintaining the status quo, which enhances their economic advantage over Third World countries.

West African states must learn to place less premium on, and whenever possible reject, the sympathy and charity of the rich, industrialized countries which founded their wealth on our natural resources.³⁴

The General articulated what has become the prevailing attitude among West African leaders to their problem of development. The key argument is that given the existing world order, true symmetry between aid-giving and aid-receiving countries, which is necessary for development to be triggered, is unattainable. This argument has perceptible linkage to Kwame Nkrumah's contention that only a 'United Africa' could prosper. These same ideas also provided the philosophical basis for ECOWAS.

From all indications at this point, however, it appears ECOWAS was formally proposed as the 'West African Economic Community' (WAEC) in 1971 by the President of Togo and the Nigerian Head of State.³⁵ The idea of such a community had, of course, been informally aired before this date. However, discussions of the issue took a desultory pattern and constructive efforts towards the establishment of such a community were deferred by regional events, the most notable of which was the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970). The habitual mistrust between Francophone and Anglophone states also delayed cooperation because this feature of West African intra-regional relations alone was capable of rendering the idea almost impractical. One is not at all sure that ECOWAS would have enjoyed the degree of enthusiasm lavished on it by regional leaders from the Francophone Zone if the idea had originated solely from the Anglophone 'camp' or vice versa. It was quite a relief therefore, that earlier desultory discussions gradually congealed into productive proposals by two regional actors: one Francophone (Togo) and the Anglophone (Nigeria). The efforts of these two states became largely responsible for the first significant conference held to discuss the idea of fifteen regional actors who were to become the nucleus of the new organization. To this effect, a meeting was held on December 15, 1975, where a twenty-page document entitled "Nigeria-Togolese WAEC Proposals" was distributed to delegates for scrutiny.³⁶ The text of the document dealt with the following subjects: Institutions of the New Organization; Liberalization of Trade; Customs and Immigration; Industrial Harmonization; Agriculture; Financial and Monetary Questions; Communication Infrastructures; and Transportation and Energy. The document also included proposals for the structure of the new organization, harmonization policies, and discussions of joint financing and ownership of projects.

C. SYNOPSIS OF THE TREATY OF LAGOS

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was formally established in 1975 by fourteen West African nations with the objective of promoting regional trade, cooperation and self reliance in consonance with the terms of the charter. Cape Verde joined in 1977, bringing current and total membership to fifteen. Other members are Benin, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo and Upper Volta.

The Treaty of Lagos aims at the elimination of customs and similar duties between members plus the abolition of other restrictions on trade; the establishment of common customs tariffs and commercial policy towards 'third' countries; the removal of obstacles to the free movement of people, services and capital; harmonization of agricultural projects. Joint development of transportation, communications, energy and other economic infrastructures are also envisaged.³⁷ The achievement of broad and ambitious objectives such as these is a 'Herculean task' for any institution charged with the responsibility. It is paramount that such an institution function efficiently. It is therefore to the credit of ECOWAS leaders that actors are charged with the obligation of working positively to produce conducive circumstances to enhance the functionality of the ECOWAS apparatus.³⁸

A transitional period of 15 years effective from the date of the charter's ratification is the designated time frame within which a Customs Union should be established.

D. THE STRUCTURE OF ECOWAS

These are four main levels of function in the ECOWAS system. These are as follows:

- 1) Authority of Heads of Government -- The heads of government have supreme authority with a rotating chairmanship. They meet once a year.

2) Council of Ministers -- The Council of Ministers consists of two representatives from each country and the chairmanship is also drawn from each country in turn. The Council of Ministers is responsible for making recommendations and rules for the organizations. In the July 1976 meeting held in Togo, for instance, the Council recommended the Protocols to the Authority. It also approved manpower requirements for the secretariat, budgetary recommendations, staff regulations, condition of service requirements and the recommendation plus approval of fiscal programs for the organization.

3) Tribunal -- This is a body specially set up to interpret the Treaty and settle disputes that are referred to it under Article 56 of the ECOWAS Treaty.

4) Specialized Commissions -- These are bodies set up to undertake key tasks that are crucial to the success of ECOWAS. Currently there are four Commissions:

- a) Trade, Customs, Immigration, Monetary and Payments;
- b) Industry, Agriculture and Natural Resources;
- c) Transport, Telecommunications and Energy; and
- d) Social and Cultural Affairs.

The financial backbone of ECOWAS is the Fund for Cooperation, Compensation and Development. The fund is administered by the Board of Directors. Its authorized fund is \$500 million. By May 1979, the paid-up capital was \$32 million, of which Nigeria was the main contributor. Contributions to the funds are made by each member nation in varying amounts based on per capita income. The formula itself shows the elements of interdependence: for instance, Cape Verde was exempted from contributions beginning in 1979 over the next two years due to adverse economic conditions in that polity. On the other hand, Nigeria promised in 1977 to provide 31.9

percent of the required capital needed for construction of the ECOWAS Secretariat in Lagos and of the general Fund for Cooperation, Compensation and Development.

E. THE OBJECTIVES OF ECOWAS

The organization aims at promoting cooperation and development in economic activity, particularly in the fields for which specialized commissions are appointed. The organization aims at raising the standard of living of the people of member nations; to increase and maintain economic stability; improve relations among member countries and contribute to the progress and development of Africa as a whole. A clause protects members adversely affected by execution of treaty objectives such as reduction of import duties through trade liberalization policies. The treaty also provides for amendments and members reserve the right to withdraw from the Community.

F. ECOWAS ACTIVITIES: 1975 - 1981.

In view of the logistics involved in the process of launching such a massive organization, this period is marked by several meetings with plenipotentiaries, ECOWAS officials and its various committees to discuss issues pertinent to the organization's continued existence. The most important of these meetings, however, have been the annual summit conferences where heads of state and plenipotentiaries make binding decisions.

1. FIRST SUMMIT CONFERENCE: Lagos, Nigeria -- May, 1975

It was at this conference that the Treaty of Lagos was signed. According to the closing communique of this conference,

Heads of state and plenipotentiaries expressed their wish for early ratification (of the Treaty) so that the aims and objectives (of ECOWAS) could be realized without delay. ³⁹

There was a perceptible air of grandeur at the Treaty signing ceremony but this was not sufficient to repel the discordant attitude displayed by some member nations. Particularly, Senegal's contention that there was need to counter-balance Nigeria's economic and political weight in the community by a member of equal potency was not viewed with favor. Liberia's President Tolbert was one of the first to openly criticize this attitude. Said he, "ECOWAS will take off without difficulty despite the lukewarm attitude of certain of its 15 members."⁴⁰ While it is not the intention of this study to accuse Senegal of working against ECOWAS, it should be noted that the country's attitude did not enhance the philosophy of ECOWAS, to which members had committed themselves in principle. Senegal did not have to join ECOWAS. Even if it became a member, the right to withdraw was also its prerogative. Senghor was not present at the Treaty signing ceremony. On the other hand, his Francophone counterpart, Houphet-Boigny of the Ivory Coast, whose reputation for absenteeism from such gatherings is well known, lessened the significance of Senghor's absence by attending. As a matter of fact, the Senegalese concept of 'counter-balancing Nigeria' had no substance. Even its suggestion that Zaire play that role suffered a death blow when Zaire's Commissioner for Foreign Affairs stated that Zaire was not going to seek ECOWAS membership because "the organization is more properly confined to the geographical area implied in its title" and it did not want "anyone to push her into putting herself forward as a candidate, nor to seek to force herself on other countries."⁴¹ This constituted nothing short of rebuke to Senghor's dream of a common market stretching from Mauritania to Namibia, to be known as the 'Atlantic African States.' Thus when realities made Senegal sign the Treaty of Lagos, his government was forced to explain the rationale to the Senegalese.

2. SECOND SUMMIT CONFERENCE: Lome, Togo -- November, 1976

The main purpose of this summit was to ratify the Treaty of Lagos. The high turnout of Heads of State, reminiscent of the first summit, demonstrated support for the new organization. The summit also adopted five protocols. These dealt with the following issues:⁴²

1. The formula for contributing to the organization's budget;
2. Fund for Cooperation, Development and Compensation;
3. Loss of revenues (which some actors might be exposed to, due to gradual revocation of customs and tariffs);
4. Re-exportation of goods within the community, goods which had been imported from 'third' countries; and
5. Definition of criteria to be applied to decide whether goods are products originating from member states.

These summits must not be viewed as 'rubber-stamp' sessions despite the fact that they are always preceded by a meeting of the Council of Ministers who work out the knotty details of these protocols. The revenue appropriation formula, for instance, was subjected to extensive debate. Togo proposed a protocol for non-aggression; but a decision on the issue could not be reached.

3. THIRD SUMMIT CONFERENCE: Lagos, Nigeria -- April, 1978

The most significant achievement of this summit was the commitment to non-aggression by regional leaders. The protocol of non-aggression, proposed in the second summit, was adopted.⁴³ The decision represented the first political decision made by ECOWAS. Some of the organization's initial decisions, such as the alignment of currencies or freedom of movement among countries, have had political overtones, too. However, they were mainly economic, unlike the non-aggression protocol. The act of war can only be a political decision. Thus ECOWAS has established a new era in West Africa whereby the sovereignty of individual nations is restricted. This is consistent with the Treaty of Lagos in that setting up a community

entails a surrender of sovereignty to a certain degree. As the Nigerian position on the issue at this conference indicates, ideological or political differences should not be allowed to thwart "the good and noble intentions" of ECOWAS.⁴⁴ The adoption of this protocol also represents, at least by implication, the first step towards structural transformation of the states within the region in both economic and political terms.

4. FOURTH SUMMIT CONFERENCE: Dakar, Senegal -- May, 1979

This meeting was marked by a recognition of the potential importance of ECOWAS. The fact that the U.S. President, Mr. Jimmy Carter, considered it good politics to send a message to the conferees has some significance. He expressed the hope that the ECOWAS would facilitate

a development of fruitful and mutually beneficial relations between (the U.S.) and the West African grouping.⁴⁵

This note amounted to the sanctioning of the regional body by a great power; an acquiescence to the status of ECOWAS as a legitimate representative of West African states. ECOWAS is an important development with crucial implication for superpowers such as the United States. Oil experts view the region as 'the Middle East alternative.' Solidarity is crucial in 'oil politics.' The imminence of ECOWAS as an agent for cementing regional unity is strong. If the organization succeeds, it will radiate its impacts throughout Africa and the World; possibly contributing significantly to a change in the world order as we know it today. This is also an ECOWAS objective.

In an attempt to accelerate the process of economic integration, the fourth summit made the following decisions:⁴⁶

- a) That member states consolidate customs duties as of May 28, 1979. This decision did not oblige member states to reduce tariff barriers, but forced them to freeze duty increases and

avoid the introduction of new ones.

- b) The removal of visa requirements for regional sojourns by ECOWAS nationals of no more than 90 days. This decision enhances business activity -- hence economic growth -- while at the same time, it does not compromise the Treaty of Lagos.
- c) The development and improvement of regional telecommunications. The necessity for effective communications in the integration process cannot be overemphasized. Intensive communications between national units in regional economic organizations yield closer association and a sense of community.

The issue of a unified regional defense apparatus was deliberated more seriously at this conference. Members thus established a commission comprising Ministers and armed forces Chiefs of Staff to scrutinize the issue and submit a draft defense agreement for debate at the Fifth Summit.

5. FIFTH SUMMIT CONFERENCE: Lome, Togo -- May, 1980

The conference commenced with a mini-drama. Liberia's Master Sergeant Doe arrived but was "informed privately that he would not be permitted to take Liberia's seat."⁴⁷ Doe's retaliation was swift. He recalled Liberia's ambassadors from Nigeria, Ivory Coast and Sierra Leone; he demanded, in addition, that Nigeria reduce its nine-man mission staff in Monrovia to two officials, the same level as that of Liberia's Lagos mission. These countries were excluded by Doe because they were considered to be the most vehement in the action to bar him from the conference. Master Sergeant Doe also gave ECOWAS its first jolt: Liberia's Foreign Minister declared in a press conference that, "because of the event, Liberia was suspending all its obligations to ECOWAS until its rights were restored."

It is worthwhile to review this event carefully. The critical question here is, why did the Fifth Summit bar Doe from participating?

It has been argued that the summit's action was hypocritical in that Doe was not the first to have acquired the reins of power through a coup d'etat. On the other hand, he did not originate from the elite arm of the military -- the officer corps. His presence among the region's premier leaders was thus perceived to be belittling to their status, the caliber of the fifth summit, and that of ECOWAS in general. However, the most evident symbolism of this event is the fact that it initiated a clear precedent: leaders who acquire power by force within West Africa, would henceforth be subjected to the jury opinion of the regional peer. It appears this lesson was missed by plotters of the 1981 coup d'etat in Gambia. That coup was crushed by Senegalese troops.

Doe's reaction to the event was a futile effort. Economically and otherwise, Liberia cannot presume to take on Nigeria, Sierra Leone and the Ivory Coast, let alone ECOWAS as a whole. The bluff was unnecessary. Liberia needs ECOWAS. The intention here is not to imply that some ECOWAS members are more equal than others. The fact is that ECOWAS has a tribunal specifically charged with handling regional disputes among members. His avoidance of the system and unilateral suspension of obligations to the organization was equivalent to desertion which contravened the Treaty of Lagos. Members can withdraw from the community, but only after a year's notice.

The 'Doe affair' wasted conference time. However, a few strides were made. Plans for eradication of trade barriers and the synchronization of communications network were actuated. Attention was given to the issue of a defense pact. Conferees agreed that it was an item that should be accorded priority. Others such as Senghor of Senegal considered the issue dispensable.

6. SIXTH SUMMIT CONFERENCE: Freetown, Sierra Leone -- May, 1981

This conference set May 28, 1981 as the date for the beginning of the

of tariffs on unprocessed goods and traditional handicraft traded among member states. A standard list for these handicrafts was also adopted. Community plans were reviewed with particular attention to implemented segments. This activity is of credit to the sixth summit because ECOWAS has a tight schedule and implementation of the charter has been brisk. Early reviews enhance the advantage of arresting problems in their formative stages and there are few better ways of guaranteeing success.

CHAPTER III

EEC-WEST AFRICA RELATIONS

A. FUNDAMENTALS OF EEC-WEST AFRICA RELATIONS

One of the most salient developments in the European arena since World War II has been the establishment of the European Economic Community (EEC). Its success so far precisely illustrates an example which cannot be ignored by other integration attempts around the world. ECOWAS is not a direct emulation of the EEC. However, the influence of the EEC in the course of the establishment of ECOWAS cannot be completely ignored.

In view of the colonial activities of some of the EEC's prominent members, it is possible to advance the argument that the organization is tantamount to a collective attempt at 'economic colonization,' in which case ECOWAS would be the collective attempt to thwart that objective in West Africa. This argument presents a legitimate implication because it should not be considered a coincidence that Part IV of the Treaty of Rome provides for the "associate" membership of former colonies in the EEC.⁴⁹

In the years following independence, the EEC provided valuable aid to its West African associate members: Mali, Ivory Coast, Senegal and the like. It is important to point out, however, that these states were essentially economic dependencies -- a vestige of colonial experience -- and thus were not in a position to denounce these economic handouts.⁵⁰ Associate states also valued the fact that their primary products were exposed to the EEC market on equal terms with those of pure EEC members. The size of these markets, supposedly, eventually compensated for the loss of revenue guaranteed under the higher price policies of preceding colonial structures. However, there was a formidable catch. First of all, the aims

and structure of "associate" membership were unfairly biased towards Europe. Anglophone states within the region plus Guinea Bissau were exempted. This bred discontent within the region and charges of discrimination by the EEC. The style of EEC relations with the region also had another impact: it increased the degree of anxiety in the relationship between EEC "associates" who happened to be primarily Francophone and non-associates who happened to be non-Francophone. This created an atmosphere conducive to the growth of mutual suspicion between the two camps. Secondly, the association was highly unequal. The EEC insisted on preferences for its manufactured products while those of associate members were subjected to EEC tariffs. Terms of trade consistently moved against West African "associates" and this included non-associate states who conducted much of their international trade with EEC. The experiment with EEC associate membership demonstrated that bilateral economic agreements by West African states, besides exacerbating their underdevelopment, did not have mutually exclusive economic impacts. The result of the experiment also concurs with the assertion that the superior economic power of Europe tends to catapult any economic charter with the obviously economically weaker West African states to its advantage. One cannot overlook the credits of the importance of EEC markets to West African economic development. However, the prevailing economic order prescribes precedents that continue to enhance the European advantage over West Africa in almost all forms of economic relations. Thus in the eyes of West African nations, what is needed is a collective structure that would enhance the development of EEC-West African economic relations in a pattern that over time would minimize the European advantage to the point where equivalence becomes a feature of the relationship.

B. EEC ATTITUDES TO WEST AFRICAN NATIONS

EEC relations with West African nations were marked by constant change. This stems from the fact that EEC attitude to the region is based on a broad-gauged view of geoeconomics. As a matter of fact, in the early days of the European Community, EEC members bickered for quite a while about what should be the community's posture in terms of its economic relations with the Third World. The accompanying debate polarized the organization with the 'globalists' on the one hand and non-globalists on the other. The globalists included members like the Netherlands and West Germany who postulated that all aspects of cooperation with the Third World should be intrinsic to the EEC. Such cooperation constitutes "an investment in a common future (without which) partnership (in) Europe would have no future at all."⁵¹ Non-globalists such as Belgium and France preferred a regional approach to the problem. Their priority was "to maintain the financial engagement (and other bilateral codicils) undertaken with the associated (and associate) countries."⁵²

The mitigating force was the European private sector. Aware of the immense economic potential of the Third World, with particular reference to Africa where they enjoyed extensive experience and freedom in the marketplace under the canopy of colonialism their attitude was to promote the exchange of information concerning "new investment (opportunities) in Africa and to facilitate the activities of European companies that wanted to work in African countries."⁵³ In effect, it was the influence of the European private sector that led to the exigency in the attempts by the EEC to redress its economic relations with Third World countries and more particularly, their African connections. The outcome has been a series of negotiations that have become widely known under the title, 'EEC-ACP Conventions.'⁵⁴ The first was held in 1972.

C. WEST AFRICAN REACTION TO EEC ATTITUDE

The results of arrangements declared under 'EEC-ACP' documents were dismal for two main reasons. First of all, as mentioned earlier, the superior economic power of the EEC overwhelmed West Africa's ineffective regional system. Secondly, EEC proposals were met by a diversity of attitudes from West African states. Guinea's Sekou Toure, for instance, countered with an unequivocal "No" to the concept of "l'EuroAfrique" which was favored by other Francophone states at the Yaunde (Cameroon) Convention in 1972.⁵⁵

Anglophone states, led by Nkrumah, labelled the concept "neo-colonial."⁵⁶ However, this confrontational and non-conformist attitude was nullified by a forceful reality: the seemingly, almost chronic economic dependence on EEC countries by most West African nations. Under these circumstances, political will easily succumbs. It is, therefore, not surprising that:

the effect of (these conventions) upon the Third World
(or West Africa) has been divisive and tension inducing.⁵⁷

As a matter of fact, the EEC policy of bloc approach to development was largely entertained in certain quarters as effective, so much so that the assertion that Third World countries could "never unite long enough to force basic changes in international economic relations" was officially articulated.⁵⁸ If OPEC is any cue to go by, this cliché has been rendered anachronistic. This is one of the reasons why the disappointing results of economic relations with the EEC have produced such a fervor for self reliance in West Africa. This is also why West African leaders now willingly relinquish short-term economic benefits in favor of long term growth. It is an attitude harnessed by a 'new' political will based on the fact that

The responsibility for (West) African development is essentially in the hands (of West Africans).....The development of the region (should) not therefore depend on foreign assistance and good will. (West)

African countries should act in concert in an appropriate framework and show of solidarity in their effort to adjust the inequality (actuated by the World's economic order).⁵⁹

ECOWAS embodies this framework and symbolizes the substance of the new attitude toward self-reliance in West Africa. The organization has thus far tenaciously adhered to the letter of its charter. As a result, ECOWAS has contradicted the claim by EEC leaders that the region's leaders lack the political will to mortgage short-term economic benefits in order to produce basic changes in the world order.

D. THE CONTENTION OF WEST AFRICAN LEADERS

The EEC-ACP conventions split a potential Third World coalition. However, this at best was a temporary and transitory stage in the path to greater unity, at least in the West African case. The unpopular course which negotiations had followed sketched neo-colonialism in the minds of West African leaders. To them, EEC-ACP negotiations crystalized, once more, the continued efforts by the developed world and particularly former colonial powers, to re-establish and/or sustain a more potent form of 'colonial relationship' with West African nations. The leadership considers this an indication of the insensitivity of the developed countries to West African economic underdevelopment. This has in turn stimulated an attitude of 'anti-colonialism' in tones very reminiscent of the pre-independent era. In conjunction with other Third World nations, this attitude has been scrupulously marshalled to the forefront of world affairs and on May 1, 1974, the Sixth Special Session of the U.N. General Assembly acknowledged the dire consequence of Third World underdevelopment by adopting a "20-Point Declaration and Program of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order."⁶⁰

Anti-colonialism has been the consistent theme of the ECOWAS movement.

It is also a theme advanced by leaders of opinion from the 'negative school of thought' whose rising influence has been a resourceful rallying point for ECOWAS citizens. Whether some regional leaders exploited the popularity of ECOWAS for political ends is unclear at this point. However, while the enthusiasm with which the issue was reiterated indicates that ECOWAS was essentially used as a tool for spreading the 'spirit of ECOWAS' among the community citizens, leaders also benefited politically because of their advocates. Political aggrandizement is crucial in the ECOWAS region. In Ghana and Liberia, for instance, economic conditions have been so devastating that leaders incessantly keep the attention of citizens diverted via schemes such as ECOWAS to avoid chaos. To the citizens of these two countries, the process for establishing the community, at least for a while, successfully diverted their attention due to the benefits they envisaged the new economic organization would provide. However, the economic condition in these two states continued to deteriorate even after the establishment of the organization. Within the first five years after the establishment of ECOWAS, therefore, both countries experienced some of the region's bloodiest coup d'etats in recent times. The unfortunate fate of President Tolbert, for instance, recalls emphatically, his useful contributions in the quest to establish ECOWAS. More importantly however, is the fact that his fate strongly suggests that economic underdevelopment is a political cyst that eventually explodes with very undesirable impacts if the condition is allowed to persist. It is of interest to regional leaders, therefore, to work against underdevelopment.

Regional leaders also believe that effective anti-colonialism is the only route to economic independence. Anti-colonialism, thus, actuates the mode of the new formula for West African development. The thrust of this new formula, of course, is the contention by community leaders that

colonialism is the culprit of underdevelopment. The presence of its elements enhances economic underdevelopment. For significant economic growth to occur, these impediments must be eliminated.

CHAPTER IV

ANTI-COLONIAL IDEOLOGY AND POLITICAL RHETORIC

The foregoing review of the development of ECOWAS, and of the organization's relations with the EEC, has demonstrated considerable confrontation between West Africa and the "north." Anti-colonialist ideology is also manifested in much of the public rhetoric of West African leaders. Although we do not subject such rhetoric to formal content analysis, this chapter uses some of their statements to illustrate the nature and extent of their anti-colonial attitude.

The political opinion of individual actors is an aspect of national commitment that would become increasingly manifested in ECOWAS. In West Africa, leaders are considered to be savants who embody the interest of society and also possess the intelligent opinion on the issues. The views of leaders on the issues are thus rapidly assimilated by the public, especially when expressed in nationalistic terms. This study finds indications that this asset is often misused. An example of this case is Senghor's 'disintegrative attitude' during the formative phase of ECOWAS. His concept of counter-balancing could have easily injected distrust within ECOWAS. His cabinet concurred and the idea was officially articulated in the media. The most noticeable fall-out of this event was that it introduced intra-regional competition at a time when pro-ECOWAS regional leaders were bent on creating an atmosphere of regional harmony. The intention here is not to condemn national opinion within ECOWAS, for while national opinions may not necessarily contribute to its success, the lack of it may not enhance the opportunities for success either. It is important, however, that these differences occur in the formative years of

regional schemes so that they are ironed out before treaties are drawn. This forestalls most of the potential problems that could confront regional schemes in the early years of their existence.

It is also crucial that ECOWAS actors recognize the fact that the exigency of the region's economic underdevelopment does not furnish them the luxury of falling into rigid ideological positions, for this can be readily exploited by extra-regional elements to jeopardize the community. The damaging consequence of the preceding example, for instance, was that Guinea's Francophone neighbors became the perpetrators of an 'ill-intended' French policy (or attitude) toward Guinea. It represented a classic example of neo-colonialism: the use of a carefully selected network of bilateral connections, encompassing critical areas such as economics or defense, by former colonial powers to maintain the dependence of former colonies and thus their manipulative leverage over them. It is absolutely important, therefore, that regional leaders review political opinions and beliefs in the context of ECOWAS because political opinions sometimes create fundamental problems that could unwisely lodge West African development in the hands of former colonial powers. Past regional efforts to alleviate the problem have had limited results. The ECOWAS approach, however, has caused a new awareness that brings new hope to the movement for development. ECOWAS also represents the first regional institution in West Africa that has evolved from the evaluation of the problem of underdevelopment in the light of the area's colonial experience. The prescription of solutions for the area's development problems is based on this diagnosis. ECOWAS is an expression of genuine concern by regional leaders with regard to their development woes. ECOWAS is based on the consensus that underdevelopment is caused by the interference of the impacts of colonialism with development efforts by community members and that these impacts must

be eliminated. The favored method for elimination of these impacts is to spread anti-colonialism in the community. West African leaders believe that the spread of 'anti-colonialitude' in the Community would enhance a concerted application of the material and labor capital of the region under the auspices of ECOWAS, to generate long-term economic development. Since the organization's formation, therefore, anti-colonialism has captured the attention of its leaders. We would attempt to substantiate this further through the assessment of the attitude displayed by ECOWAS leaders to the problem of underdevelopment, the relationship between West African countries and developed countries (i.e., EEC countries) and a review of ECOWAS rhetoric.

A. THE RATIONALE BEHIND THE CONTENTION OF WEST AFRICAN LEADERS

Confronted with the maze of an ever-changing world that has persistently obstructed the economic aspirations of developing countries, coupled with the inability of the world's developed nations to generate a new world economic order, West African leaders have come to grips with the fact that economic development is strictly their responsibility. They have thus collectively activated their right to complete economic development as sovereign states via the establishment of ECOWAS, in the same way the EEC did in the Treaty of Rome. It is a reaction to a world order in which economic imperialism has replaced political colonialism, for

Before the effective competition of imported manufactured goods, West Africa had numerous craftsmen who (produced) a wide variety of goods for everyday use. These have declined significantly.⁶¹

The argument has been made that the decline of indigenous industries was much more directly related to the universal industrial declivity following World War I and the great depression of the 1930s. The economic basis for this argument is academic because in real terms, post-World War I

recession and that of the 1930s predominantly affected colonial powers. West African industrial development at the time was structured so as to aid the European economy. Actually, the impact of the depression upon Europe was mollified by the colonies. By committing West African industrial development to secondary roles, colonialists, either intentionally or unintentionally, restricted industrial development in the colonies. This effectively predicated a condition that has manifested itself in what is described by S. Olofin⁶² as the prevalence of "ultra-import-biased taste" in the demand pattern of former colonies, even well after independence.

These allegations are based on the fact that "each European power sought to drain trade to its own (advantage)"⁶³ with transportation via land, water and air specifically integrated to augment the 'asymmetry.' Over the years, therefore, it became clear to West Africans that the existing formulae that have circumscribed their relations with former colonial powers thus far, have adversely influenced their economic development.

B. REVIEW OF ECOWAS RHETORIC

1. PRE-FORMATIVE YEARS: Before 1975

Confrontational rhetoric by regional leaders dominated the advocacy for ECOWAS during this stage of the organization's formation. While this may have increased the 'ambivalence factor' in the organization's set of objectives, it clearly indicates that the community's leaders were prepared to diversify the functions of the new institution to include areas other than economics, especially when judged to be aligned with the aspiration of West African citizens. At a 1974 meeting held by potential regional members to evaluate the institutional mechanism of the new community,

President Toure outlined some of the objectives of ECOWAS as "promoting an Africa of Tomorrow that would command more respect....and to take all the necessary measures to eradicate imperialism, colonialism, and neo-colonialism."⁶⁴

From the inception of ECOWAS, therefore, the elimination of colonial relics has been basic to the set of ECOWAS objectives. This anxiety of regional leaders about relations with 'third' countries (i.e., developed countries), of course, has basis. The fact remains that some ECOWAS members are still supported by financial arrangements with France and other European countries. The concern is that these arrangements might accord 'external forces' opportunities to sway West African regional efforts for economic development. The experience of West African states in terms of the conduct of their relations vis-a-vis the developed world seems to indicate that these relations often lead to situations tantamount to 'economic siege.' Under such circumstances, foreign influence is not necessarily desirable. Thus, from the beginning, regional leaders considered themselves as anti-colonialists. It is amidst this spirit that ECOWAS was born.

2. POST-FORMATIVE YEARS: Since 1975

Following the signing of the Treaty of Lagos, the Nigerian Head of State, General Gowon, stated that

the signing of the Treaty should be seen as an important milestone in the process of economic decolonization of the African continent, without which....political independence would remain circumvented and incomplete.⁶⁵

The General also warned delegates that external forces would be tempted to sabotage ECOWAS.

The General's statement was part of a larger effort to socialize ECOWAS citizens to the idea that the region's economic underdevelopment had a

common source and this source was external rather than internal. The idea was not necessarily to acquit regional leaders of the responsibility for underdevelopment, but rather to inspire discipline in citizens to a point where their reaction to the problem constituted a dedication towards conscious constructive efforts on a concerted basis, to heal the ailment. Evidence seems to indicate that, until this goal is attained, ECOWAS would continue to drum up anti-colonialism, for this has been the organization's major propelling force. In fact, press reviews concurred with the General's position. In its commentary, the Daily Times of Nigeria reiterated:

Above all, we would like to remind West African leaders that (signing of the Treaty) would only benefit their peoples if they showed determination and sincerity of purpose and understanding which has characterized their past efforts. They should continue to be united in spite of the machinations which detractors could employ to frustrate their effort.⁶⁶

Security also preoccupied ECOWAS leaders in these infant years. Warning of subversion by 'external forces' and 'divisive forces' became common.⁶⁷ By the time the fifth summit came around, the issue of a Defense Pact had become a premier item on the ECOWAS agenda. Even President Senghor, who on earlier occasions had exhibited hardly any enthusiasm on the issue, became converted. He ardently favored the issue, explaining that "there is no development without security."⁶⁸ He even believed that the pact was possible even without unanimous endorsement and/or participation. Senghor's switch of attitude raises the question as to why the issue of a defense pact captivated the community so early in its life.

There are many answers to the question. Many countries around West Africa have bilateral defense agreements with 'third' powers or external forces. Ghana and Liberia, for instance, have such an agreement with the United States. Some Francophone states even keep regiments of French

forces on their soil, all for the purpose of the defense of their sovereignty. To the Community at large, this means direct interference. The idea of the defense pact was, therefore, aimed at removing the pretext for the continuous existence of such agreements and hence removal of the potential for manipulation of the Community by external forces. Backed by the non-aggression protocol, the defense pact eliminates the need for regional actors to entrust their fate to external forces and constrains neo-colonial influences.

The switch in Senghor's attitude at the fifth summit represents a phenomenon of interest. This is because the defense pact is bound to decrease French influence in the region. As one of the foremost leaders of the Franc Zone and an acclaimed protector of French influence in the region, Senghor could have been better served by assuming a posture of neutrality.

There still lingers in France attachment to the country's "glorious role" in Francophone Africa; and there remains between the President of France and the Presidents of her former African colonies a relationship far closer than, and totally different from, that between the leaders of Commonwealth Africa and the leaders of the British Government.⁶⁹

On the other hand, this snug relationship is considered by other regional leaders as 20th Century colonialism. As a result, the Francophone zone presents an image to the rest of the Community that renders these states suspect and invokes the notion that Francophone states lack the mettle to fight colonialism. Their 'anti-colonialitude' is viewed as porous. Senghor's stance thus was aimed at repealing this appalling rating. It can be argued also that the new posture was an attempt to rectify his lukewarm attitude during the formative phase of ECOWAS.

The most fascinating feature of this whole issue, however, is that it clearly reveals the fact that ECOWAS has provided an effective canopy

under which Francophone states can 'defect' without summoning repercussions from France. This is a plus to anti-colonialism and ECOWAS.

This is not to suggest that Senghor is not a reliable anti-colonialist. It is, however, worth noting that his position was challenged by Mali, whose delegate insisted that the "formation of a joint defense force would be a step towards colonial reconquest of Africa and would encourage a split of the continent into blocs dominated by outside forces."⁷⁰

More than anything else, however, the statement of the Malian delegate indicates that while the defense pact was pressing to regional needs, the protocol for its adoption would have been hurdled by community leaders if its silhouette had been perceived as colonial.

The issue of the ECOWAS defense pact is also related to anti-colonialism in another way. The ultimate task of ECOWAS is to create an industrially advanced region, capable of world-wide economic competition with developed countries. As the region progresses towards this goal, ECOWAS actors would increase their consumption of primary products. The history of man on this planet indicates that he has not necessarily hesitated to employ war to maintain his supply of resources. Now, then, in the 20th Century, the consequences of war, even for the victors, are not necessarily desirable. While in view of the strength of this argument, it is inept to recant war as a character of geoeconomical contingency, West African leaders believe that avoidance is highly preferred. Thus sophisticated tactics have been consistently applied by former colonial powers to the economic detriment of West African states (and the Third World in general), to preclude its necessity. The effects of these tactics on West African states amount to subtle destabilization, specifically designed to maintain their economic dependence. There is, therefore, sound basis for the contention by regional leaders that the success factor of ECOWAS is vulnerable to extra-regional

forces and this is one of the premises that defines their determination to confront these 'external forces' squarely and relentlessly. Table 2, for instance, shows that of the six summit conferences held between 1975 and 1981, regional leaders have not retreated from their anti-colonialism. It is not meant here to imply that ECOWAS is obsessed with anti-colonialism because concomitant with their anti-colonialitude ECOWAS leaders have systematically activated aspects of the Treaty of Lagos that collectively constitute the fundamental thesis of the community. At the third summit, heads of government agreed to hold tariffs on goods from member states constant as of May 28, 1979 for two years. Their elimination has begun and would span the next eight years thereof. Quotas and other restrictions of equivalence are to be abolished in the first ten years, followed by a five-year period during which differences between customs and tariffs are to be abolished. This would, in effect, cover the 15-year program of transition by which time the Customs Union should come into force, establishing more uniform 'economic' policies in trade relations with 'third' parties.

Strides have also been made in the area of common intra-regional policies. Free movement of people, capital and services in the region has commenced already. Progress towards common agricultural policies, common research and marketing policies in agriculture and other areas, common monetary policies, and joint economic and industrial policies, has been initiated. In addition, the group has implemented the non-aggression protocol. This sixth summit passed the protocol for the community's defense pact. The hasty approval of the last two items illustrated the determination of regional members to depart from the practice of relegating national defense to the charity of extra-regional forces. These two agreements have helped regional leaders to suppress mutual suspicion and instead commit

their efforts towards the 'harmonization' process as outlined by the ECOWAS charter. National differences have been ignored in the interest of the community so much that every ECOWAS summit so far has been predominantly marked by significant progress in the implementation of specific articles of the Treaty of Lagos that inches the organization toward its ultimate objective.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

A. STATEMENT OF FINDINGS

This report has reviewed the origin and development of the leading West African economic community, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). A major concern has been the predominant political orientation of this economic community which we have characterized as anti-colonial. Our procedure has been to observe the origin and structure of ECOWAS, its activities between 1975 and 1981 and the public utterances of its leaders before and after ECOWAS was formed.

The exploration conducted by this study strongly suggests that West Africa's colonial experience set certain precedents that, in a very crucial sense, have not assisted the economic development of the region's polities. There are also lingering indications that advanced countries prefer to maintain economic autocracy over these nations and are thus not necessarily sensitive to the problem of economic underdevelopment confronting these states. These factors have all combined to breed intense anti-colonialism in the West African leadership.

The intense nature of the anti-colonialism of West African leaders is directly related to two contemporary factors of the politics of the region. First of all, with few exceptions, such as Nigeria and Upper Volta, many of West Africa's leaders are veterans of the struggle for independence. In all the years they have held the reins of power, their era has been punctuated by the inability to extirpate underdevelopment and by their pusillanimous approach to national and international politico-economic issues affiliated with the problem. Secondly, to elude the fate of some of their colleagues and, at the same time, divert the attention

of citizenry constantly demanding satisfaction from its leaders, it has become customary for many West African leaders to blame colonialism for economic underdevelopment.

The anti-colonialism of regional leaders also evolves from the fact that development is, and ought to be, the prerogative of individual West African states. Regional efforts such as ECOWAS are, of course, welcome, especially when they dynamically spur the economic growth of actors. It is beguiling to imagine that the world's major economic and military superpowers would work diligently to create a new order that could boost economic growth in developing nations. In no way has this been more symbolized in recent times than by the excruciating lack of progress in the North-South Dialogue. While the intention here is not to generate skepticism the fact remains that reason and discussion have not been sufficient to create policies and economic institutions mutually acceptable to the developed and the developing countries. While this report does not find sufficient basis to conclude that colonialism had economic impacts upon which regional leaders could have capitalized to initiate long-term economic development, there is hardly any significant evidence to substantiate the contention that the situation is not salvageable. There are, however, indications that the fervidness that accompanies the issue of development is so strong that in the zest to solicit political benefits from it, ECOWAS leaders have perhaps articulated its desirability too strongly. The result has been that citizens are conditioned to the view that colonialism is the cause of their economic plight but are found wanting on the technicalities of how to eliminate the problem. By presenting underdevelopment in anti-colonial terms, therefore, ECOWAS leaders have tended to create complexities that thwart the ability of citizens to digest the relevant properties of the problem. It is paramount

that regional leaders present the problem in the most succinct terms. According to Fajana, underdevelopment in African states is simply a colonial legacy.⁷¹

ECOWAS leaders consider that they are confronted by "a world where developed nations have maneuvered international trade to such a position that African countries have been mapped out for the economic role of perpetual suppliers of raw materials for the industries of developed countries... A world where the developed countries surrepticiously discourage active industrialization in developing countries."⁷² For these reasons, the tone of the Treaty of Lagos is protective.

The Treaty is also open-ended and provides "for its own amendments and revision."⁷³ This carte blanche confers powerful flexibility on the institution for augmentation of short-run objectives. At the same time, it enhances the responsiveness of the document in the long-run. The most important element, however, is that this mechanism presents ECOWAS leaders with an effective tool for instituting anti-colonialism.

Article 5 of the organization's charter vests the ultimate power of the organization in the Authority of the Heads of State and Government. This may appear *prima facie* to stress the priority of national sovereignty over the idea of West African inter-dependence. However, the point must be made that ECOWAS leaders consider that the prevailing world order, created by the policies of the governments of developed countries, is specifically designed to facilitate their political and economic influence. West African leaders wield a great amount of power and influence in their capacities as Heads of State. As the ultimate decision makers of ECOWAS, therefore, they are consistently in the limelight and thus effectively influence public opinion, especially when the theme is anti-colonial. Since the establishment of ECOWAS, public utterances by some of the region's most

moderate spokesmen on the issue of development have been marked by very significant increases in expressions of the new attitude of anti-colonialism. After all,

effective integration of the community may well start with the purposive interaction of the Heads of State and Government.⁷⁴

The review of the organization's activities between 1975 and 1980 indicates that ECOWAS leaders have resorted to a two-pronged approach to development. On the one hand, leaders are implementing the economic program of ECOWAS, while on the other, they are attempting to eliminate potential political factors, particularly external influence, that might impede development. For instance, in view of the fact that some regional members have relied excessively on external financial aid, the second summit dealt primarily with the Fund for Cooperation, Development and Compensation. The summit adopted protocols with respect to Article 25 of the ECOWAS Treaty which provide for compensation to actors whose economies have been detrimentally affected due to the activation of Articles 12, 13, and 14 of the ECOWAS Charter. Most ECOWAS members derive much of their fiscal revenues from indirect taxation. Thus, in 1977 Cape Verde was exempted from contributing to the ECOWAS fund for two years, based on the distressing economic conditions in that nation.⁷⁵

The determination to forestall external influences also inspired the early adoption of the non-aggression protocol and the Defense Pact Agreement. It must be emphasized that one of the most critical areas to which the majority of ECOWAS actors have been forced in the past to yield to extra-regional overtures has been on the question of security. These two protocols effectively eliminate the need for high security responsiveness and provide ECOWAS actors ample time -- hence opportunity -- to initiate realistic security development programs, aimed at self-reliance in this area.

This report finds that the rhetoric of ECOWAS leaders is heavily oriented towards anti-colonialism. The most important obstacle here is that defining every problem in anti-colonial terms blurs the meaning and purpose of anti-colonialism. On the other hand, it would be erroneous to contend that ECOWAS leaders have not anticipated this peril. Colonialism is still very fresh in the minds of West Africans. Guinea Bissau only became independent in 1974. Until then, it had been colonized by the Portuguese since the 15th century.⁷⁶ Persisting attempts by former colonial powers to maintain economic and political leverage in the region do not alleviate the situation either. The inability of EEC nations to structure 'equitable' economic relations with these states plus the disastrous trend of the EEC-ACP conventions have all aggregated to set the tone of ECOWAS anti-colonial rhetoric. Towards the mid-1970s, most ECOWAS leaders had essentially abandoned all overtures by developed countries to new arrangements. ECOWAS rhetoric attained its apogee at this point also. At the Treaty signing ceremony in Lagos on May 28, 1975, anti-colonialism was the highlight of the event.

Transferred from these formative years, anti-colonialism, as manifested by ECOWAS leaders, has remained the organization's consistent theme. Enactment or implementation of treaty articles is articulated and celebrated in anti-colonial rhetoric. In activating the community mechanism for free movement, the Executive Secretary of ECOWAS stated that this action was necessary because, among other things, the "movement of people in the West African sub-region had been hampered in the past by stringent regulations made by former colonial powers" and that "it was the duty of ECOWAS to remove such artificial barriers."⁷⁷

The advent of ECOWAS must be read as the beginning of 'practical anti-colonialism' in West Africa, for until the establishment of the organization,

the rhetoric of anti-colonialism in the area was essentially a harvest of words.

B. REFLECTIONS ON THE FUTURE OF WEST AFRICAN REGIONALISM

This report finds indications that the following issues would continue to provide the impetus for West African anti-colonialism:

1. The most visible colonial relic in West Africa is the political division of the area. While there are few regions around the world that do not owe the structures of their boundaries to lines drafted by obscure individuals, in most cases existing boundaries were executed with the participation of respective nationals. In West Africa, the opposite occurred. The direct consequence has been the myriad of border problems that, over the years, have perturbed intra-regional relations. Today, regional leaders continue to spend much time and energy aimed at erasing those aspects of this issue that have contributed to, among other problems, the illogical demarcation of West Africa into a Francophone zone on the one hand, and an Anglophonic one on the other. As long as national consciousness remains predominant, this issue would continue to increase the anti-colonialism of ECOWAS leaders because past experience seems to indicate that the situation can be effectively nourished by former colonial powers to the detriment of West African states. The tactic has been the sustenance of ties in the area of education, politics, economics, cultural media, etc. It is not that West African nations do not benefit from these relationships. The fact remains that neo-colonial ties have been too asymmetrical for any gains to usher significant impacts in development on the part of ECOWAS actors. These ties have also encouraged neo-colonial interference in the internal affairs of regional actors. During the Nigerian Civil War, France encouraged the Ivory Coast to recognize Biafra as a retaliation against the Federal Government's condemnation of French nuclear

tests in the Sahara. Events like these greatly cement the 'anti-colonialitude' of ECOWAS leaders.

2. Internal political turbulence would continue to be featured on ECOWAS agendas. This issue is linked to colonialism due to the fact that former colonial powers continue to interfere in the internal politics of some regional members. France still maintains 'crack-force' regiments in some West African states.

3. Civil Strife. Liberia and Ghana continue to experience this in varying degrees. ECOWAS would eventually be forced to actively pursue solutions in this area too. Most civil unrests are potential civil wars and any civil war provides ample opportunity for extra-regional interference. Civil strife, therefore, could easily become a prelude to the disintegration of ECOWAS.

4. The issue of overlapping and frequently competing regional organizations as depicted by Table 1 is bound to confront ECOWAS directly. In view of ECOWAS, the most formidable of these organizations is the Communauté Economique de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (CEAO). Established January 1, 1974, CEAO is completely Francophone. Its members are the Ivory Coast, Niger, Mali, Mauritania, Senegal and Upper Volta. Some of the leaders of this body, confronted by the question of justifying its establishment entertained the hope that ECOWAS might function in a 'secondary posture' to CEAO. However, economic realities plus the success of ECOWAS thus far continue to pose the question to CEAO actors (due to actions by founding members such as Togo and Benin which became very involved with the business of establishing ECOWAS and withdrew from the organization) opting for observer status. Until ECOWAS, Francophone states appeared hesitant to break the 'colonial mold.'

The point should be made that while these issues represent knotty

problems to ECOWAS leaders, they also provide fortuitous opportunities for articulating anti-colonialism. Indeed, anti-colonialism has become such a popular theme and so closely linked to the establishment of ECOWAS that leaders would not hesitate to expedite its application whenever the opportunity arises. However, it is possible that as significant developments follow from the synchronization of the mechanism of ECOWAS, anti-colonialism might recede. Anti-colonialism is important to the establishment and functionality of ECOWAS but it should not be allowed to overshadow the broader and certainly more crucial task that prescribed the resolve of West African leaders to establish the organization. On the other hand, it is also important to remember that economic strategies of development are created within a context of political assumptions. In the words of Udokang,

The inauguration of ECOWAS must be regarded both as an integral part of the wider revolt of poor nations against the inequities inherent in the present international economic system and as a consequence of their desire to harness their domestic resources,.....(and) secure control of their economic and political destiny.⁷⁸

Table 1
Selected West African Regional
Organizations for Cooperation and Integration

Organization	Date Founded	Members	Aim
A.D.B.--African Development Bank	4 August 1963	Independent black African states (any African country which has the status of an independent state may become a member)	Contribute to the economic development and social progress of its members individually and jointly to finance investment projects designed to make the economies of its members increasingly complementary and to bring about an orderly expansion of their foreign trade.
B.C.E.A.O.--Banque Centrale des Etats de l'Afrique de l'Ouest	1955	Benin, Ivory Coast, Niger, Senegal, Togo, and Upper Volta	Serve as a central issuing bank for the members of the West African Monetary Union.
B.E.A.C.--Banque des Etats de l'Afrique Centrale (Bank of African Central States)	15 July 1955 (in 1959, it became the B.C.A.E.C. and in 1973, it changed to the B.E.A.C.--Bank of the States of Equatorial Africa and the Cameroons).	Cameroon, Central African Empire, Chad, Congo, and Gabon	Act as the exclusive issue house for notes and coins in circulation within member states.
C.E.A.O.--Communaute Economique de l'Afrique de l'Ouest	May 1970	Ivory Coast, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, and Upper Volta	To serve as an organization of exchange for agricultural products and a special preferential system for industrial goods and to promote economic cooperation especially in industry and transportation--not intended to be a customs union.

Organization	Date Founded	Members	Aim
E.C.O.W.A.S.--Economic Community of West African States (C.E.D.E.A.O.--Communauté Economique des Etats de l'Afrique de l'Ouest)	28 May 1975	Benin, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierre Leone, Togo, and Upper Volta	Establish a customs union among member states within a period of 14 years, foster economic cooperation and development; improve relations among member countries.
Entente--Conseil de l'Entente	29 May 1959	Benin, Ivory Coast, Niger, Togo, and Upper Volta	Promote economic development in the region; assist in preparing specific projects; mobilize funds from other sources.
L.C.B.C.--Lake Chad Basic Commission	22 May 1964	Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria	Promote and coordinate the rational and equitable utilization of the water resources of the Lake Chad Basic for development purposes.
Mano River Union	3 October 1973	Liberia and Sierre Leone	Establish a customs union.
Niger River Commission	1963	Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, and Upper Volta	Navigation and general economic development.
O.C.A.M.--Organization Commune Africaine and Mauricienne	27 June 1966	Benin, Central African Empire, Gabon, Ivory Coast, Mauritius, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Togo, and Upper Volta	To strengthen African and Malagasy cooperation and promote political, economic social and technical development.

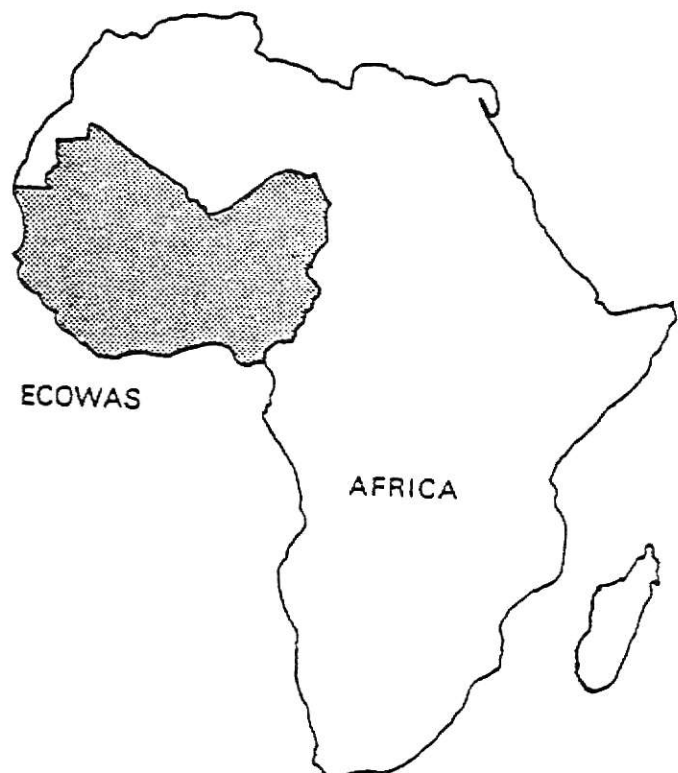
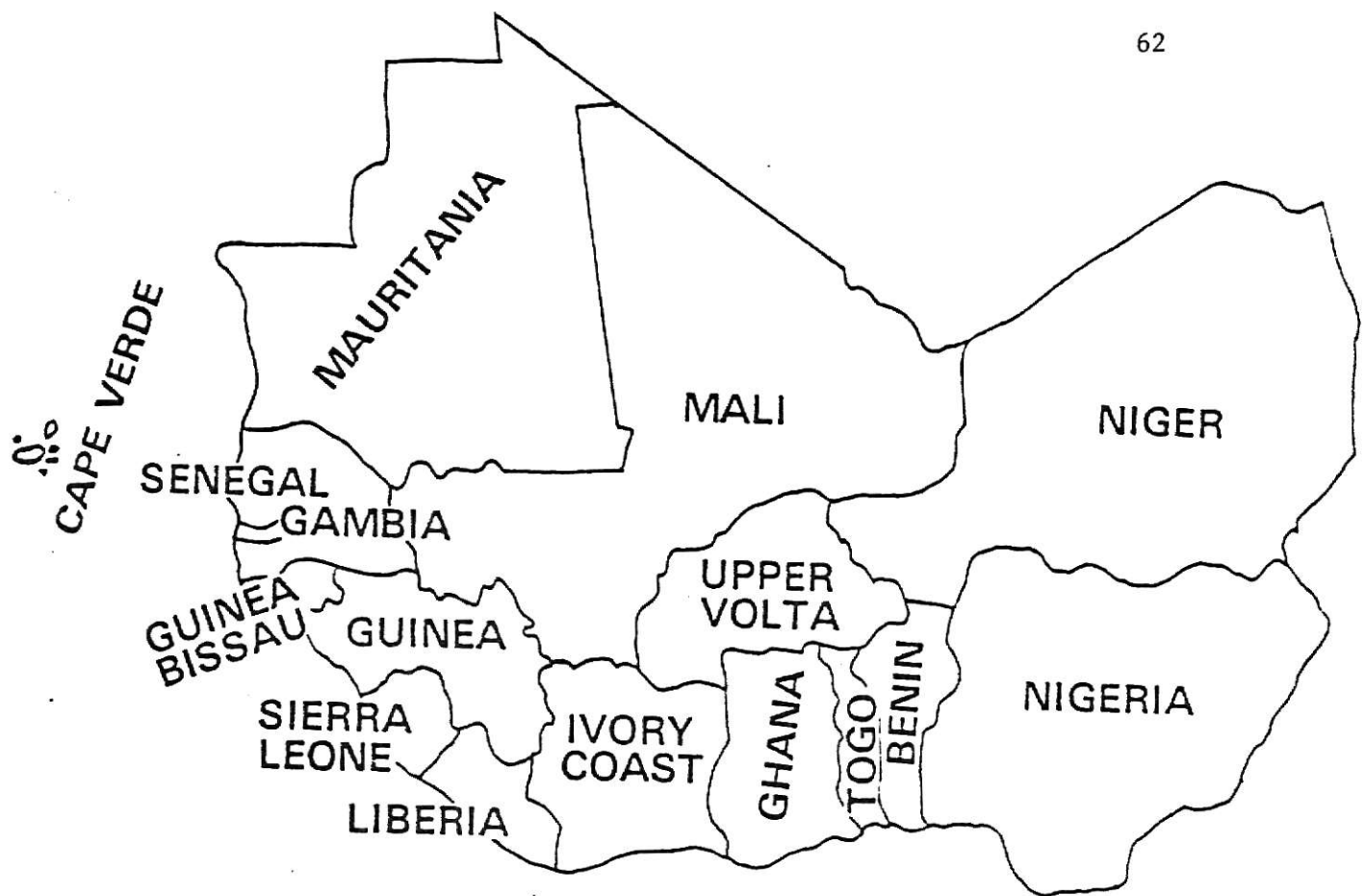
Organization	Date Founded	Members	Aim
O.M.V.S.--Organisation pour la Mise en Valeur de Fleuve Senegal (Organization for the Development of the Senegal River)	March 1972 (replacing Organisation des Etats Riverains du Senegal).	Mali, Mauritania, and Senegal	Develop the Senegal River Basin and serve a range of economic and social development functions.
U.D.F.A.C.--L'Union Douaniere et Economique de l'Afrique Centrale (Central African Customs and Economic Union)	8 December 1964	Cameroon, Central African Empire, Congo and Gabon	"The gradual and progressive establishment of a common market; the expansion of national markets through the removal of obstacles to inter-regional trade, the coordination of development programs for the different sectors of production and the adoption of a procedure for the fair distribution of industrial products;" the harmonization of development planning.
U.E.A.C.--Union des Etats de l'Afrique Centrale	2 April 1963	Chad, Zaire	Create a customs union and coordinate social, technical and defense policies.
U.M.O.A.--Union Monetaire Quest-Africaine (West African Monetary Union)	12 May 1962 (new treaty signed 14 November 1974)	Benin, Ivory Coast, Niger, Senegal, Togo, and Upper Volta	Maintain a common currency whose issue was entrusted to the African financial community and is legal tender throughout the territory of the Union.
W.A.C.H.--West African Clearing House	1976	Benin, Ivory Coast, Niger, Senegal, Togo, and Upper Volta (the members of U.M.O.A.) and Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, and Sierre Leone.	Handle payments between the central banks of the members states in order to facilitate trade and financial transactions.

Table 2

ECOWAS Rhetoric
(Condensed from Africa Research Bulletin -- 1975-1981)

Occasion	Directly Stated	Implied	Not Stated or Implied
First Summit Lagos, Nigeria May 27-28, 1975	Closing remarks by Conference Chairman, General Gowon: Signing of the Treaty should be seen as a milestone in the fight for economic decolonization.	Final Communique: That ECOWAS Treaty marks a new era of West African solidarity.	
Second Summit Lome, Togo November 4-5, 1976	General Obasanjo: Second summit demonstrates the political will of members to surmount artificial barriers instituted by colonialists.	All delegates fiercely contend that their faith in ECOWAS is based on three "imperious necessities": 1) for members to assume complete control of their economic destiny; 2) to work for a new world economic order; and 3) to work for African unity.	
Third Summit Lagos, Nigeria April 21-22, 1978		General Obasanjo: warned of divisive external forces. Siaka Stevens: preached about "ECOWAS Consciousness."	
Fourth Summit Dakar, Senegal May 28-29, 1979	President Senghor: "West African states should form a pact against foreign attacks."		

Occasion	Directly Stated	Implied	Not Stated or Implied
Fifth Summit Lome, Togo May 27-28, 1980	Senegal, Nigeria and Togo were of the opinion that ECOWAS must meticulously be protected from internal or external aggression.	Necessity for a common defense pact featured in final communique.	
Sixth Summit Freetown, Sierra Leone May 28-29, 1981	Practical acknowledgement in- ternal/external threats: Summit established an allied mutual defense force.		



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REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN WEST AFRICA:
THE ATTITUDE OF ECOWAS LEADERS

by

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

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ABSTRACT

This report deals with the attitude of West African leaders to regional economic integration, with particular reference to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

The assessment of the attitude of these leaders is based on a survey of factors that have caused interest in economic regionalism in West Africa. The point is made, that regional leaders are attracted to integration because of the economic under-development of their respective polities. They are also attracted to regionalism because of the shared belief that the advantages of pooling their resources for pluralistic development in the region far outweigh advantages of individual efforts. There is also a strong belief within this leadership that economic under-development is caused by the vestiges of the region's unprecedented colonial experience which has yielded a form of neo-colonialism through which former colonial powers have effectively harnessed their economic development in order to sustain the dependence of West African countries.

The report seeks to establish that all of these factors have aggregated to forge intense antagonism towards colonialism and this constitutes the text of the character exhibited by ECOWAS leaders. It is, however, substantiated that while ECOWAS leaders have been prolific in instituting regional schemes, the effectiveness of these organs in initiating long-term development has been meager and often in terms tantamount to complete failure. There are, on the other hand, indications that the dismal 'score-card' of West African regionalism is linked to colonial traits.

There is, thus, strong justification for the anti-colonialism of ECOWAS leaders. It is important, however, that leaders insure that their anti-

colonialism does not subjugate the more important objective of eliminating under-development.

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