

**Regional cooperation and integration:
intergovernmentalism approach to regional
integration: a case of the African Continental
Free Trade Area and effects on trade**

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Research Proposal

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ABSTRACT

The liberal intergovernmentalist approach has been applied to numerous studies within the European Union (EU) context in the past, and lately to studies within the African regional integration context. Differing experiences with regards to regional integration have emerged in the EU and African contexts. The purpose of this study was to investigate the application of the liberal intergovernmentalist approach within the African context, in particular the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). The study followed a single case research design, meaning it was conducted within the setting of the AfCFTA. The study population comprised 16 participants and documents from the African Union (AU) regarding the AfCFTA. Various data-collection methods were used, including focus group interviews, face-to-face semi-structured interviews and qualitative content analysis – the rationale being that the case study approach required numerous data-collection methods to be employed. The methods utilised for data analysis were thematic analysis for focus groups and face-to-face semi-structured interviews, and qualitative content analysis for data obtained from the AU documents regarding the AfCFTA. Findings from the study might have a considerable effect regarding the interaction of African member states when undertaking regional intergration engagements.

Keywords: Liberal intergovernmentalism, regional integration, African Continental Free Trade Area agreement, African Union

DECLARATION

I declare that this research project is my own work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy in International Business at the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University. I further declare that I have obtained the necessary authorisation and consent to carry out this research.

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29 January 2021

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AfCFTA	The African Continental Free Trade Area
AU	African Union
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CSO	Civil society organisations
EU	European Union
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
PAT	Participant
RECs	Regional economic communities
RIAs	Regional integration agreements
SACU	Southern Africa Customs Union
SADC	Southern African Development Community
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.1. Background

Since the rise of the independence movement in the early 1960s, African leaders have often spoken of unity and the importance of regional integration and cooperation. The Southern African sphere has a long-standing history of regional cooperation and integration agreements. According to Radelet (1997), more regional integration and cooperation agreements have been consummated in Africa than any other continent, but with a few exceptions have yielded disappointing results. In addition, the global share of the African population in 2019 was 17%, yet its gross domestic product (GDP) was 3.4% (Africa Development Bank, 2020). Scholars have ascribed Africa's marginalisation in global trade to the lack of effective regional integration structures that could improve the continent's intracontinental and intercontinental trade (Babalola, Danlaladi & Akomolafe, 2015; Jiboku & Okeke-Uzodike, 2017). Nevertheless, African countries are enthusiastic about regional cooperation and integration. Babalola et al. (2015) defined regional integration as the removal of barriers to international commerce by states in the same geographical area of interest, through regional integration agreements.

According to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) *Assessing Regional Integration in Africa IX* report on the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) phase II issues (2018), regional integration can be defined as an arrangement between two or more countries to cooperate, through institutions and regional rules, to eliminate trade barriers of services, goods and movement of people, achieve peace and security in the region, and manage shared resources. Regional integration has different forms of integration systems, and the study will focus on economic integration as an integral part of regional integration. Britannica (2020) explained economic integration as a process in which two or more states in a broadly defined geographic area reduce a range of trade barriers to advance or protect a set of economic goals driven by regional integration agreements.

Balassa (1976) stated that regional integration agreements (RIAs) focus on the removal of discrimination between domestic and foreign services, goods and factors of production. There are four types of such agreements, namely free trade area, customs union, common market, and economic union. Trade diversion and creation are distinct in the classic analysis of customs union. Various scholars and studies have underlined

the potential and challenges of regional cooperation and integration within the African context (Babalola et al., 2015; Gwala, 2015; Mathebe, 2017; Jiboku & Okeke-Uzodike, 2017; Geda & Seid, 2015). Be that as it may, few studies have focused on the approach through which regional cooperation and integration can be achieved within the African context (Ibrahim & Ogbeidi, 2015; Forbacha, 2020). Against this backdrop, a gap exists in literature to explore an intergovernmentalist approach to regional cooperation and integration. It is clear that there is an opportunity to extend the body of knowledge in academic circles. Thus, the paper will attempt to examine an intergovernmental approach to regional cooperation and integration, in which the focus will be placed on the AfCFTA and the impact on trade.

An intergovernmentalist approach to regional integration is one whereby the government is at the centre of the regional integration process (Forbacha, 2020). Ghali (2015) stated that intergovernmentalism suggests that governments control the level and speed of integration. As such, government reluctance to transfer sovereignty to supranational bodies, such as in the case of the African Union (AU), has been blamed for the low levels of intracontinental and intercontinental trade (Ibrahim & Ogbeidi, 2015). It is for this reason that an intergovernmental approach is suitable in explaining the role that governments can play in furthering regional cooperation and integration. Thus, this study will look at the role the South African government plays in the AfCFTA process, since member states take decisions in the AU and there is potential impact on the trade of goods. Research shows that no grand theory of regional integration exists for the world. It has been found, however, that the liberal intergovernmentalism theory mostly explains the African region's experiences, challenges and opportunities with regard to integration.

According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD, 2007), Africa continues to engage on the periphery of the global economy, as is evident from the continent's declining share in global production and trade. The majority of sub-Saharan Africa's 47 countries are small and least developed, according to UNCTAD's definition (UNCTAD, 2007). The African model is that of direct market integration, looking into step-by-step integration of capital markets, labour and goods, and eventually fiscal and monetary integration. The starting point is usually a free trade area, followed by a customs union and common market, and then the integration of monetary and fiscal matters to establish an economic union.

The achievement of political union is the ultimate objective of many African RIAs. It is well known that the majority of Southern African countries are poor and have small economies. Most important to note, however, is that 15 countries in the sub-Saharan region are landlocked, which is a significant contributor to the high costs of trade and doing business in Africa. Geographical location therefore plays a significant role and contributes to high transactional costs.

1.1.1 The road to the AfCFTA

The AfCFTA was officially launched at the 12th Extraordinary Summit of the AU in Niamey, Niger, on 7 July 2019. Adding to the significance of the event was the signing of the agreement by Nigeria, Africa's largest economy. Nigeria was a notable absentee when 44 of the 55 AU member states signed the agreement at the Extraordinary Summit on the AfCFTA in Kigali in March 2018. Thirty member states also signed the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons at the Summit. To date, 54 African states have signed the AfCFTA Agreement, which entered into force on 29 April 2019 when the threshold of 22 countries ratifying the agreement was reached. As of January 2020, eight more countries had ratified the agreement, bringing the total to 30. The AfCFTA marks an essential milestone in Africa's long and rather strenuous history of regional integration, going at least as far back as the Abuja Treaty of 1991.

According to Jiboku and Okeke-Uzodike (2016), there has been widespread support for regional integration in Africa by governments; the rationale being that numerous regional integration accords have been instituted in Africa post-independence in various sectors, regional economic communities and member states (Babalola et al., 2015). The focus of these regional integrations was trade, communication, infrastructural development and macroeconomic policy. To highlight great strides made in Africa regarding regional integration, Ibrahim and Ogbeidi (2015) established that the West African Economic and Monetary Union, and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern African (COMESA) were instrumental in trade liberalisation and facilitation (Geda & Seid, 2015). In the studies of Babalola et al. (2015), it was demonstrated that the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) played a vital role in the free movement of people in that region. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) and East African Community (EAC) played a significant role in infrastructural development (Ibrahim & Ogbeidi, 2015).

Even though the goals and success of these regional integrations vary, it is crucial to note that enormous success has been realised in the trade of goods (Geda & Seid, 2015). If the success of other regional groupings is anything to go by, South Africa could use the AfCFTA to increase regional trade and cooperation. Be that as it may, it is essential to gather substantial evidence to conclude whether the AfCFTA is the correct strategy to assist South Africa in increasing its regional trade and cooperation. This can be seen by how the AfCFTA has progressed far quicker than anticipated, and is proving to be a more promising strategy with the support received from the continent.

1.2. Theoretical Approaches

1.2.1 Approaches to explaining integration

The main focus of this section is to explicate the theoretical framework that underpins the development of regional cooperation and integration. The liberal intergovernmentalism theory has been selected as the most suitable to buttress the exploration of intergovernmentalism in regional cooperation and integration, with the emphasis placed on the AfCFTA and the effects on trade. For decades, theories of integration mostly addressed European integration. Between 1950 and 1990, the neo-functionalism integration theory dominated, and was later followed by what is generally considered to be the most significant contribution to integration over the past decade, that is Moravcsik's theory on liberal intergovernmentalism.

Wiener, Borzel and Rise (2019) argued that liberal intergovernmentalism is a theoretical framework that proposes national government as agents of regional integration, and is therefore instrumental in recognising and explicating the mechanism of economic and political integration. The development of the early theories of integration was accompanied by much discussion in literature as to how to define the concept. For instance, debate revolved around whether integration refers to a process or an end product. Deutsch (1957, 359) defined integration as "the attainment, within a territory, of a 'sense of community' and of institutions and practices strong enough and widespread enough to assure, for a 'long' time, dependable expectations of 'peaceful change' among its population". When a group of people or states have been integrated this way, they constitute a 'security community'. The next section will focus on discussion of the liberal intergovernmentalism theory.

1.2.2 Liberal intergovernmentalism theory

The birth of the liberal intergovernmentalism theory can be traced back to the propositions of Hoffman, in which an argument was submitted that national states and interests were not replaced by transnational logic of integration (1964, pp. 94-95). This was largely influenced by the classical international relations theory known as neorealism (Anderson, 2016). The neorealism theory is based on the principle that international politics deals with the interdependence of self-interested actors in a chaotic setting without underlying authority (Ibrahim & Ogbeidi, 2015). It is against this backdrop that liberal intergovernmentalism emerges from an international system represented by chaos, consisting of elements that are officially and practically equal (Anderson, 2016). International organisations are therefore a convergence for the perpetuation of power politics, which strengthens the importance of the role of government within this setting.

1.3. Key Theoretical Concepts

It is essential to discuss the key theoretical concepts of the liberal intergovernmentalism theory that will guide this study. The key concepts of the liberal intergovernmentalism theory as propounded by Rosamund (2000) are as follows:

- Liberal intergovernmentalism has the fundamental assumption that member countries possess the power in international organisations, and unanimity is the basis for decision-making. This implies that a direct decision made by governments within the regional agreement would result in an increment in power at supranational level.
- Regional integration is made up of dissimilar partners, and gains are polarised.
- Liberal intergovernmentalism rejects the concept of spillover effects propounded by neo-functionalism. Regional integration under the guidance of governments is subject to their interests, as well as to contemporary domestic political and economic matters.
- The notion that supranational organisations are on a similar level or above governments with regards to political influence was rejected.

In an attempt to apply the liberal intergovernmentalist theory to the African integration process it is apparent that, in conjunction with former Libyan leader Col. Muammar Gaddafi, “the prime movers for the reform of the OAU into the AU were President Thabo Mberki of South Africa and Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria” (Biney, 2008, p. 147).

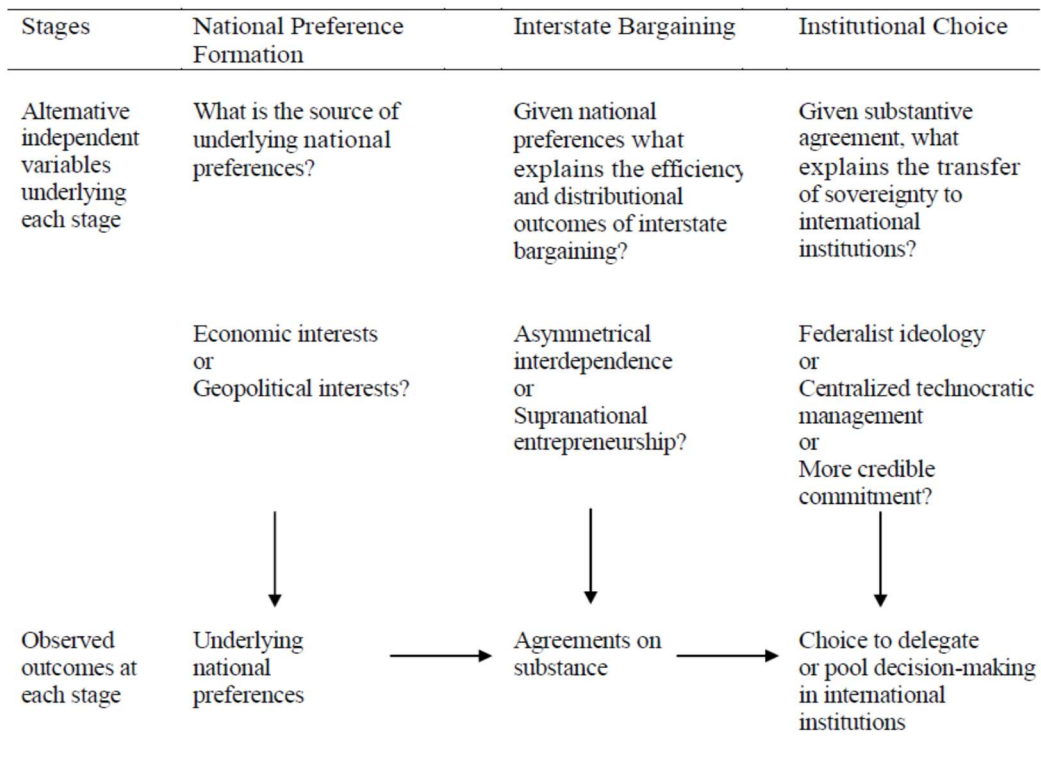
In a similar manner to its predecessor, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), the AU was created by prominent national leaders in search of gains via integration or unification, in the disguise of Pan-Africanism ideology. It is evident that governments took the initiative behind the formation of the AU, and there was no indication of them renouncing their leadership. Thus, liberal intergovernmentalism will be instrumental in providing guidance to this study with regards to the role played by governments in the AfCFTA and, in particular, the South African government.

While the liberal intergovernmentalism theory is deemed suitable for integration within the African context, it is recognised as a baseline theory that is instrumental in explicating the history and emergence of the EU (Wiener et al., 2019). As such, this theory advances the idea that regional or continental integration is feasible and strengthened if government leaders are inclined to undertake an economic interest when performing their duties, by acting reasonably and negotiating for policies suitable for the needs of their countries (Babalola et al., 2015). According to Wiener et al. (2019), the countries' interests would then be secured through the establishment of institutions that are instrumental in the implementation of the agreed treaties. For policy to be a success, it is imperative that member states put to the fore the economic interests of the entire regional unit.

Liberal intergovernmentalism is symbolised by state centrism, in which the role of the member states is promoted and the process of integration viewed as a zero-sum game (Hooghe & Marks, 2018). This means that the integration process is restricted to policy areas that are detached from crucial matters relating to sovereignty of the member states (Wiener et al., 2019). In addition, the interests and actions of the member states should take centre stage in shaping the integration process (Hooghe & Marks, 2018).

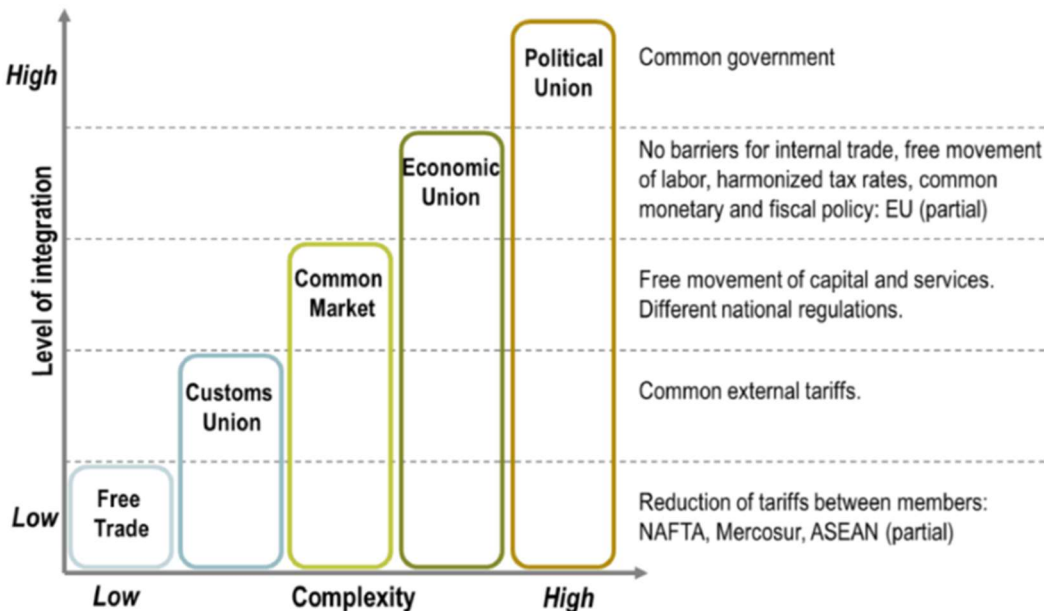
The theoretical concepts of the liberal intergovernmentalism theory will contribute to an understanding of the various facets of this study. The study on liberal intergovernmentalism by Moravcsik (1993 & 1998) has become an important reference point for most recent studies of integration, particularly with regard to the big decisions it refers to as 'grand bargains'. The framework includes three phases, namely national preference formation, interstate bargaining, and institutional choice.

Figure 1: International Cooperation – A Rationalist Framework



Source: Moravcsik (1998), p. 24.

Figure 2: The five stages of economic integration



Source: <https://theintactone.com>

1.3.1 Role of government in regional integration agreements

Governments must have the political will to fulfil regional integration agreements if they are to be successful (Jiboku & Okeke-Uzodike, 2016). This political will can be demonstrated from the outset of the establishment of regional integration agreements, with potential member-state leaders acting reasonably in the negotiation of agreements that respond to the needs of their countries and the overall regional unit (Wiener et al., 2019). It is essential that each member country's government strive to ensure that its interests are included in the regional integration agreement without conflict between member states' interests and regional interests (Jiboku & Okeke-Uzodike, 2016). To put the regional interest at the fore, member-state governments must be willing to give up some of their own interests for the good of the entire region (Geida & Seid, 2015).

It is vital that the objectives of regional integration agreements are coherent with the vision of continental integration, and it is the role of the government of each member state to ensure that this is achieved (Wiener et al., 2019). Such is the case given that regional integration agreements ought to be the foundation upon which continental integration agreements are built (Jiboku & Okeke-Uzodike, 2016). Thus, each government is responsible for initial engagements in setting up regional integration agreements. This role is critical to kick-starting the existence of the regional unit.

Once the regional integration agreement is in place, each member state must turn its attention to the establishment of institutions crucial for implementation (Wiener et al., 2019). The creation of regional institutions involves putting in place the structures essential for the operation of the regional integration agreement (Hooghe & Marks, 2018). These structures comprise rules and regulations that govern the operations of the agreement, and towards which each member state must contribute in order to uphold integrity and fairness (Geida & Seid, 2015). In addition, an office should be established to implement the regional integration agreement, implying that the government of each member state ought to play a role in deciding the location of this office – for instance, the SADC office that is hosted in Botswana and Namibia (Jiboku & Okeke-Uzodike, 2016).

In the same vein, personnel are required to manage the office that implements the agreement, signifying that it is the responsibility of the government of each member state to appoint such personnel (Wiener et al., 2019). Finally, in an endeavour to keep the regional agreement running smoothly, it is the role of each government to cooperate with the governments of the other member states (Hooghe & Marks, 2018).

1.3.2 Potential outcomes of regional integration agreements

Potential outcomes of regional integration agreements can be traced to challenges faced in such agreements, and which can be expected in their establishment (Jiboku & Okeke-Uzodike, 2016). The first challenge is that most African countries are weak, implying that they are small in terms of size and population, and therefore their economies are not sustainable (Wiener et al., 2019). In addition, there are varying levels of development in each African country, with the majority having different languages, societal norms, cultures and natural resources (Hooghe & Marks, 2018). It is important to note that these attributes present a bigger challenge to continental integration than regional integration (Geida & Seid, 2015). The degree of impact may differ, but these challenges still affect regional integration agreements, albeit on a smaller scale (Jiboku & Okeke-Uzodike, 2016).

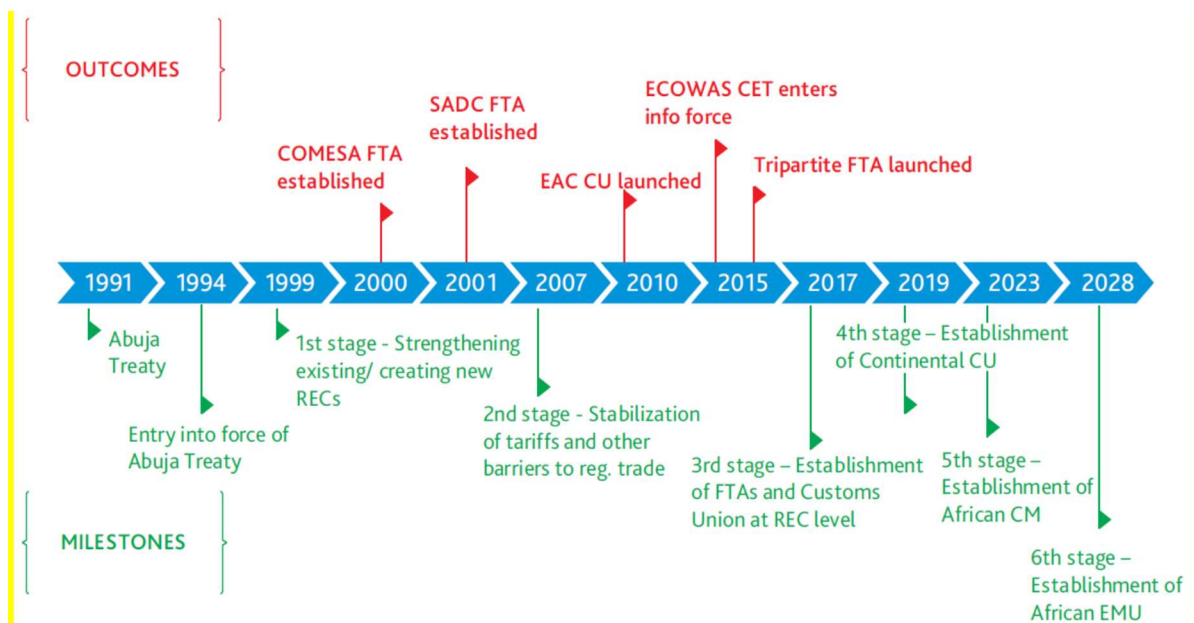
Most African countries have been faced with the challenge of managing domestic affairs post-independence; a challenge that they have been unable to tackle effectively (Wiener et al., 2019). National integration in particular has been an issue, owing to poverty, the inequitable distribution of national resources, political corruption, nepotism, poor governance and ethnic fractionalisation (Jiboku & Okeke-Uzodike, 2016). The aforementioned challenges have significance for national, sub-regional and regional development (Hooghe & Marks, 2018). Of note is the absence of shared political, social and economic interests, norms and values, all of which are at the centre of these challenges bedevilling African countries (Geida & Seid, 2015).

Thus, it is logical that regional integration agreements can expect to face a spillover effect from these national challenges (Wiener et al., 2019). It therefore stands to reason that, in the context of this study, the national challenges that threaten internal integration within African countries would be confronted at a regional level. It is at the regional level that this study is interested in investigating whether the AfCFTA is the correct strategy for South Africa to adopt in its efforts to increase regional trade and cooperation. The varying interests of each nation that is a member of the regional agreement present potential challenges to the existence of these agreements.

1.3.3 A roadmap to African integration and cooperation

According to Gerout, Maclead and Desta (2019), the Abuja Treaty, adopted by the AU in 1991 and in effect since May 1994, set out a roadmap to achieve an economic and monetary union in Africa through a gradual process of coordination, harmonisation and progressive integration of regional economic communities (RECs) over six stages spanning 34 years (Figure 1). While the treaty has been criticised for its ambitious targets, it is reassuring to note that significant progress has been made to date; the process has been delayed, but not derailed.

Figure 3: Roadmap for achieving an economic and monetary union in Africa (Gerout, Maclead & Desta, 2019)



CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Even though the liberal intergovernmentalist approach is a precise theory that stipulates significant principles in regional integration, it cannot provide a comprehensive explanation of the entire process. In an effort to carry out a comprehensive investigation, this chapter first covers the liberal intergovernmentalist approach to regional economic cooperation and integration, and discusses all the stages involved. A comparison of the EU and AU experience follows in order to address contextual concerns. As the liberal intergovernmentalist approach to economic cooperation and integration is based on the fundamental principles of mandate, state preferences, powerbase and bargaining, section 2.2 reviews the known powerbases and state preferences negotiated in regional agreements.

The assumption that powerbases are always clear is not necessarily valid as it depends on the framing of the parties involved and how they may be conceived. Party framing is therefore reviewed in section 2.2.1. Moreover, there is the assumption that state preferences are negotiated, and this is discussed in section 2.4, assuming state-level action. The role of superpowers that give rise to hegemony is omitted, and thus superpowers are covered in section 2.5. Superpowers tend to force their way in the event of disparity in state preferences, as discussed in sections 2.5.1 and 2.5.2.

2.2 An Intergovernmentalist Approach to Regional Integration

It is imperative to discuss the liberal intergovernmentalism approach in this section, given that it is one of the theories for regional integration. Moreover, the focus of this study was on regional economic cooperation and integration, in which an investigation of liberal intergovernmentalism as an approach to regional integration was made with reference to the AfCFTA. Thus, a discussion of liberal intergovernmentalism serves to provide context to the study. The liberal intergovernmentalist approach is a theoretical framework that proposes national governments as agents of regional integration, and therefore this framework is instrumental in recognising and explicating the mechanism of economic and political integration (Wiener, Borzel & Rise, 2019). In order to be able to comprehensively grasp the liberal intergovernmentalism approach, it was vital to ventilate the criticism levelled against the theory to establish the gaps that have been

covered in literature by scholars. Like any other theory, the liberal intergovernmentalist approach has attracted criticism from contemporary scholars, and these are discussed. Issues relating to the liberal intergovernmentalist approach include the state as biggest actor, sovereignty, the bargaining process, the pattern of commercial advantage, relative bargaining power, conflicting collective and individual country interests, and the need to make political institutions credible.

The liberal intergovernmentalism approach can be understood in terms of its historic origins. The approach was borrowed from Hoffmann's intergovernmentalism theory, which criticised explanations provided by Hass's neo-functional theory regarding European integration (Mareike & Pollack, 2018). The explanation provided by Hoffmann concerning why integration transpired in Europe was on the basis of national interests, since nations are principals in the negotiation process (Andersson, 2016). Such was apparent that when political institutions discussed integration issues connected to sovereignty, bargaining processes for integration were halted (Hooghe & Marks, 2018).

This notion was set aside after the signing of the Maastricht Treaty, since the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) was instituted (Kleine & Pollack, 2018). Nevertheless, Moravcsik (1993) coined the term 'liberal intergovernmentalism', which confirms the centrality of nation states in which the main focus was domestic forces that serve to shape the state preferences, the bargaining power (Schimmelfennig & Winzen, 2019). The manner in which actors interact in regional integration was summed up in the book *The Choice for Europe: Social Purpose and State Power from Messina to Maastricht* (Mareike & Pollack, 2018). The book made the assertion that "the broad line of European integration since 1955 reflects three factors; patterns of commercial advantages, the relative bargaining power of important government and the incentive to enhance the credibility of interstate commitment" (Moravcsik, 1998, p. 3). Having discussed the origins of the intergovernmentalist approach, a brief overview of the interaction of the actors in regional integration ensues.

Forbacha (2020) argued that there is a possibility for regional integration to be strengthened. As such, national leaders of member states are assumed to strive to achieve economic interest by acting logically (Coşkun 2015). In so doing, national leaders bargain for policies aligned to the interests of their countries (Wiener et al., 2019). It is vital to note, however, that critics reject the pure intergovernmental bargaining process as being influential in European integration, as highlighted in section 2.2.2 (Mareike & Pollack, 2018).

The end result of the process is the establishment of an international institution that represents the interests of its member states (Andersson, 2016). This means that as national leaders of member states set out to negotiate what is in favour of their interests, they take into account the requirements of their local voters and the external negotiating strength of competing countries on the international stage (Hooghe & Marks, 2018). This highlights the conflicting inter-state and intra-state efforts that exist in regional integration, which have to be settled through bargaining. Finally, with the persuasive bargaining between member countries concluded, the national leaders make certain that the political institutions are plausible enough to administer the instate agreements (Kleine & Pollack, 2018).

On the basis of the development of the EU, AU and Mercosur, it was argued that “a tripartite explanation of integration is economic interest, relative power, credible commitment, accounting for the form, substance and timing of major steps towards European integration” (Moravcisk, 1998, p. 4). The rationale for the assertion was to balance the economic interests of national voters with the relationship of power between external players in the international space, while displaying dedication to the engagements (Schimmelfennig & Winzen, 2019). After discussion of the interaction of actors in regional integration, a brief summary of the subsequent steps involved in the liberal intergovernmentalist approach follows.

With the liberal intergovernmentalist approach covered in general, the focus turns to the steps involved in regional integration. Coşkun (2015) opined that the intergovernmentalist approach details three distinct steps in the integration process, namely national preference formation, interstate bargaining and institutional choice. It was essential for this study to delve into these steps as they demonstrate the power dynamics within regional integration. This was apparent in preference formation, interstate bargaining and institutional choice (Kleine & Pollack, 2018). In addition, the study covered the process followed in the negotiation of regional integration, and the manner in which these negotiations were settled (Andersson, 2016). Thus, deliberation of the abovementioned steps played a critical role in the development of the study’s research questions.

2.2.1 National preference formation

In an effort to comprehend the liberal intergovernmentalism approach, it was vital to discuss each step involved.

The first step of national preference formation generally focuses on the goals of the countries, that is, what they seek to achieve from the negotiation process (Coşkun, 2015). Domestic actors, such as local voters conveying their viewpoints on monetary policy, guide the state's preferences, and this eventually gives rise to the development of the state's objectives (Mareike & Pollack, 2018). According to Babalola et al. (2015), it is for this reason that there is an assertion that a government cannot be successful if not promoted by its citizens. This means that if feasibility of regional integration is envisioned, a critical role of the state must be championed (Babalola et al., 2015). With the importance of the state's role highlighted, it is important to note that state preferences need not only focus on economic requirements, but should also include geopolitical interests, given that these preferences vary from state to state (Hooghe & Marks, 2018). Thus, the recognised outcome of this initial step was the 'underlying national preference' (Moravcsik, 1998, p. 5).

The focus of this stage is economic interests, and claims have been made that government preferences are influenced by voters' competing demands, hence the stage is viewed as 'demand side' (Coşkun, 2015). As such, the 'demand side' comprises numerous varying demands made by voters that require attention from heads of state to be incorporated into regional integration policy (Schimmelfenning, 2015). Government agents in most cases in democratic states have made attempts to remain in power through the satisfaction of the demands of voters, in a relationship similar to a principal-agent (Mareike & Pollack, 2018). Thus, the foreign policies adopted by governments are viewed as a reflection of the internal group's economic interests.

Critics argued that some societal groups affect foreign policy, indirectly implying that not all foreign policies are a direct reflection of domestic economic interests (Schimmelfenning, 2015). Besides, there is a vagueness regarding the interests of societal groups, meaning that there is some degree of freedom for governments when drafting foreign policy (Bickerton, Hodson & Puetter, 2015). Thus, restrictions on national governments change on the basis of the strength and unification of societal pressure (Moravcsik, 1993). Having noted these constraints, it was stated that this was the perspective from which the formation of EU integration could be explained (Coşkun, 2015). In summation, this paragraph covered the actors involved in preference formation.

With the actors involved in preference formation highlighted, the discussion turns to the direction from which these preferences flow.

The rationale for regional integration is policy coordination, given that the productiveness of all domestic markets is weakened by different domestic policies (Moravcsik, 1993). This serves to explicate the development of the Monetary Union, a policy of the EU, which was the result of demands from internal societal actors (Jone, Kelemen & Meunier, 2016). This resembles a bottom-up approach in state preference formation. Even though the 'demand side' of this theory is compelling, there is a criticism that societal groups might not be responsible for the policy choices of the government (Hooghe & Marks, 2018).

For instance, Moravcsik (1993) argued that intergovernmental bargaining is affected by pressure emanating from domestic policies shaped into state preferences, including monetary and agricultural policy choices of government (Mareike & Pollack, 2018). Nevertheless, critics disagreed with this assertion by highlighting that, within the context of the EU, Britain's policy preferences were influenced by the government and not by internal societal groups (Schimmelfenning, 2015). An example demonstrating Britain's policy preferences was the government's imposition of its choice during negotiations regarding monetary integration. This resembled a top-down approach to state preference formation.

Another criticism was that it was not adequate to use the economic demands of internal societal groups to explicate foreign policies of governments (Coşkun, 2015). This criticism originated from the argument that in the event of uncertainty regarding which ideas of domestic societal groups to adopt, government would have autonomy in reaching a decision (Moravcsik, 1993). Even though that is the case, government autonomy is limited due to the pressure it faces both internally from societal groups and externally from other states (Mareike & Pollack, 2018). It was therefore a deviation from the earlier arguments, and because of this became vague as to whether a country's policy was a reflection of domestic societal groups' interests or merely affected by them. Even though Moravcsik (1993) attempted to provide liberal ideology as an answer to this criticism, scholars argued that it could not explain what drives governments to select their ideologies. It was therefore viewed as a contradiction to earlier assertions (Jone et al., 2016).

While it is not clear how societal groups influence national government, national governments themselves could have reduced roles. The rationale behind this is that the EU has a multinational governance system that involves many actors apart from national governments, such as subnational (regional) actors that operate via complex policy

networks (Hooghe & Marks, 2018). The role of government as the major actor was challenged, given that it is one player in a complex network of numerous players (Bickerton et al., 2015). As a result, the role of national government is reduced (Moravcsik, 1996). In summary, it was evident that competing tensions exist between bottom-up and top-down approaches to state preference formation. These tensions are experienced both within and between states. Competing tensions within states exist among societal groups, and internationally between states. The fact that all these tensions seek to be settled through an arrival at some sort of an agreement sets the stage for interstate bargaining. The next subsection will direct its attention to the deliberation of interstate bargaining.

2.2.2 Interstate bargaining

Having discussed the first step of the liberal intergovernmentalism approach, focus now turns to the second step in which there is interaction between state actors. The second stage of regional integration is referred to as 'interstate bargaining' (Coşkun, 2015). It is at this stage where states bargain rationally at an international level, with a view to achieve mutual beneficial outcomes and, at the same time, make decisions regarding the manner in which gains would be shared with member states (Schimmelfennig & Winzen, 2019). Nonetheless, the respective bargaining power of each member state determines the negotiating outcomes, since a decision would have to be made concerning whether the state would cooperate, and the terms of such cooperation. Borzel and Riise (2019, p. 67) argued that "collective and individual interest often conflict, with hard bargaining over the distribution of gains sapping the willingness and ability of states to cooperate". This means that the desired goals of the state would not be achieved in the event that the strengthening of integration among states failed (Mareike & Pollack, 2018).

According to Schimmelfennig and Winzen (2019), various factors determine the negotiating strength of member states. A member state that has achieved international recognition as a big state has more bargaining power, implying that it could influence the negotiating outcome in its favour through intimidation of small states into cooperation or non-cooperation (Andersson, 2016). Hard bargaining therefore plays a relevant role at this stage, on account of that which matters most is efficiency of bargaining and sharing of benefits. It is 'asymmetrical independence', which explains how such integration is achieved in intergovernmentalism (Borzel & Riise, 2019). As such, some states

compromise in the course of negotiations so as to benefit economically from integration, in contrast to those that benefit least yet have more power to establish the integration terms (Schimmelfennig & Winzen, 2019). Thus, 'supranatural entrepreneurship', which is institutional leadership, is of very little importance at this stage of the integration process (Coşkun, 2015). The rationale is that non-state actors have important information concerning the preferences of member states that is required by other member states to make decisions about their national preferences; national diplomats can still collect classified information.

Criticism concerning arguments presented by Moravcsik (1998) for interstate bargaining included the rejection of the argument that member states act in an environment rich with information, meaning that the assumption of rationality made by the liberal intergovernmentalist approach does not hold water (Coşkun, 2015). Another criticism was that the autonomy of governments was limited by both domestic and external pressure (Schimmelfennig, 2015). The liberal intergovernmentalist approach was criticised for ignoring the role played by transnational society in shaping the preferences of national governments (Schimmelfennig & Winzen, 2019). The notion of a pure intergovernmental bargaining process influencing European integration was therefore rejected (Mareike & Pollack, 2018).

Even though it is not easy to conclude whether these criticisms invalidate the arguments proposed by the liberal intergovernmentalist theory, it is safe to say that it is open for further discussion on the grounds that it has put more emphasis on states, and interstate bargaining is viewed as the driving force responsible for European integration (Mareike & Pollack, 2018). Moreover, it appears to be too Eurocentric, and there are other forces driving EU integration, for instance the overwhelming desire for peace (Coşkun, 2015). In summary, after having discussed the actors involved in the bargaining process, as well as the factors that determine bargaining power and its effects, the focus turns to a brief review of the bargaining process. The next subsection concentrates on a discussion of the bargaining process.

2.2.2.1 The bargaining process

The structure of the bargaining process had to be reviewed in order to gain an understanding of the actors' experiences and what determines the bargaining outcomes. The bargaining process is intentional, meaning that any member state could have

rejected an agreement that is less beneficial than unilateral decisions (Mareike & Pollack, 2018). The next subsection concentrates on the discussion of pre-bargaining.

2.2.2.1.1 Pre-bargaining

Pre-bargaining sets the stage for the bargaining process. The EU provided all parties with essential information relating to the preferences of each member state (Schimmelfennig & Winzen, 2019). The EU proposed legislation that agreed with the aspirations of the rationally acting heads of member states, as determined by their domestic preferences (Coşkun, 2015). The next subsection focuses on the bargaining step.

2.2.2.1.2 Bargaining

With all the states aware of each other's preferences and the proposed legislation based on these preferences, the bargaining was conducted. The policy outcomes from the negotiation process were a result of the distribution of bargaining power among states (Schimmelfennig & Winzen, 2019). It is vital to note that bargaining power arose from the asymmetry of the preference intensity of the member states (Mareike & Pollack, 2018). The policy outcomes emanated from lowest-common-denominator bargaining between member states (Coşkun, 2015).

Lowest-common-denominator bargaining refers to a bargaining technique that reflects the relative power of the member states in which the outcome would appeal to the largest number of states (Borzel & Riise, 2019). The essential actors in this phase were the heads of state whose bargaining power diminished with the availability of external options (Schimmelfennig & Winzen, 2019). After the bargaining process was discussed and the outcomes of the interstate bargaining agreed upon by member states, an institution was identified as responsible for the implementation of the regional integration policy. The next section focuses on the discussion of the institutional choice.

2.2.3 Institutional choice

With the second step of the liberal intergovernmentalist approach assessed, attention had to be directed to the discussion of the third step of institutional choice. Member countries make a choice between transferring some sovereignty to the international

institution for legitimate enactment of the laws or, as a consequence of interstate, consolidating decision-making power (Coşkun, 2015). Schimmelfennig and Winzen (2019) suggested that the establishment and design of the institution is dealt with at this stage. The essence of establishing the regional institution is clarified to assist the cooperation of member states by ensuring that they attain the collective negotiation results in order to adopt, enforce and maintain agreements that would have been negotiated by the state (Andersson, 2016). The national preferences and negotiation strategies of each state are known, since the political institutions operate transparently by allowing information to move easily among member states (Coşkun, 2015).

Nonetheless, criticism exists of the arguments presented by Moravcsik (1998) regarding this stage. One criticism deals with the motive behind institutional choices (Coşkun, 2015). The first assertion by Moravcsik (1998) was that member states combined sovereignty and transferred authority to areas in which governments were effortlessly tempted to repudiate agreements. Critics were quick to point out the role of concepts and ideology that inspired the formation of the distinctive community and the creation of eurozone institutions, including the noteworthy independent European Central Bank and the expansion of the powers of the European Parliament, neither of which it is claimed could be explicated exclusively by means of the logic of credible commitments (Mareike & Pollack, 2018). Credible commitments refer to the ability of a government to monitor its own and other states' compliance and implementation of the agreement through the intergovernmental body (Andersson, 2016).

The second claim involved the long-term development of EU institutions and the emphasis by Moravcsik (1998) that governments remained in control throughout large parts of the process. Critics highlighted that unplanned consequences, institutional legislation, economic rules, contracts and developments based on past experience resulted in these institutions developing in anticipated and subpar ways. Schimmelfennig and Winzen (2019) contested such arguments by indicating that there is motivation for governments to restrain the future choices of their successors, but this also meant that ensuing governments would be displeased with the institution. The next section focuses on the discussion of the European and African experiences of the liberal intergovernmentalist approach to regional integration.

2.3 Contextual Concerns: Overview of the European and African Experiences of the Liberal Intergovernmentalist Approach to Regional Integration

As indicated earlier in section 2.2, the liberal intergovernmentalist approach was proposed in an effort to explicate European integration. Given that the focus of this study was on the African continent, the European experience is discussed in order to juxtapose these two continents. The liberal intergovernmentalist approach was applied to five fundamental cases in the history of the union of Europe, comprising the treaties of Rome, the Consolidation of Common Market, Monetary Integration, the Single European Act and the Treaty of European Union (Schimmelfennig & Winzen, 2019). The conclusion reached was that domestic economic motivations were the basis for the formation of national preferences in which these policies were integrated by means of a sequence of bargains among states (Mareike & Pollack, 2018).

Eventually, these states assigned their power to the European institution in order to realise their collective goals (Borzel & Riise, 2019). Notwithstanding being prompted to transfer authority to powerful supranational elites, the member states were practically continuously in complete control of the integration process, combining and transferring national sovereignty to the lowest degree in order for their mutual obligations to appear credible (Coşkun, 2015). Since its establishment, the liberal intergovernmentalist theory has become one of the most popular approaches to regional integration, despite its contextual origins (Mareike & Pollack, 2018). Consequently, it was taken as appropriate to employ in the context of African regionalism, to establish the manner in which political leaders of the AU member states would negotiate and implement treaties to satisfy the requirements of their states and explicate regional integration outcomes (Ibrahim & Ogbeidi, 2015).

African countries attempting to achieve regional cooperation and integration is not a new matter (Forbacha, 2020). The formation of regional cooperation and integration agreements in Africa can be traced back to 1963 when an institution known as the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) was established (Ibrahim & Ogbeidi, 2015). The OAU was ratified by presidents of African states; presidents who had gained independence in an effort to create a pan-African vision, an Africa free and united (AU, 2019). Whereas the chief motive for the establishment of regional cooperation and integration institutions in Africa was to bring an end to colonialism and apartheid, the

Sirte Declaration of the OAU proposed the formation of the AU as its replacement (Forbacha, 2020). The AU was established with the aim of accelerating regional cooperation and integration in Africa, thereby facilitating the continent to play a decent role on the global stage (AU, 2019). Regional economic cooperation and integration theories such as the liberal intergovernmentalist approach can therefore also be tested on the AU and not restricted to the EU (Babalola et al., 2015).

The AU as an intergovernmental body seeks to achieve the national interests of member countries through the integration framework (Forbacha, 2020). An intergovernmental body refers to an institution that was established through a treaty and comprising two or more states to work with integrity in connection with matters of common interest (Ibrahim & Ogbeidi, 2015). Olurontoba (2020) argued that the national interest is the chief reason why African leaders pursue integration, implying that it is clearly concealed in Pan-Africanism. Thus, African regional economic cooperation and integration was ascribed to the task of national leaders pursuing gains by means of integration (Ibrahim & Ogbeidi, 2015).

Even though the formation of the AU came closer to what is taken to be a constitution-like treaty, African leaders shared concerns on relinquishing state sovereignty to a supranational institution (Forbacha, 2020). Thus, it was concluded that within the African context, given that the AU decisions are made by member states, every effort be made to control the integration process in keeping with the national interests, and this meant that African states were not likely to submit their well-earned sovereignty for AU endeavours (Forbacha, 2020). The reluctance to transfer sovereignty to international institutions in African regional economic cooperation and integration might have been the reason behind the lack of a continent common currency, as well as the delays in the establishment of a central bank and the implementation of a common passport for the African continent, in comparison with the EU (Babalola et al., 2015). The intergovernmentalist approach, while stating that sovereignty remains with the member states, posits that it might be in the states' interest to combine sovereignty and assign particular powers to the regional institutions (Ibrahim & Ogbeidi, 2015).

The intergovernmentalist approach has always been unsatisfactory with regards to the question of sovereignty (Olurontoba, 2020). Even though there are numerous reasons for this, it is apparent that the starting point for the analysis emanates from the appreciation and role of the Sovereign National State (SNS) in regional integration (Forbacha, 2020). For instance, the history, capability and structure of the states in Africa

and the EU were dissimilar prior to engagement in regional integration (Olurontoba, 2020). The perception of the SNS after African states attained independence is not similar to the one after World War II (WWII) in Europe (Ibrahim & Ogbeidi, 2015). Regional integration efforts in Europe were focused on rebuilding the continent post-WWII and restricting the extreme nationalist sentiments that led to German aggression and fermented France-German relations (Forbacha, 2020). Contrary to that, the basis of regional integration efforts in Africa were nationalist strategies, the focus of which was cooperation in search of solutions for political issues relating to emerging African states (Olurontoba, 2020). It is vital to grasp the disparities in relation to the underlying circumstances that gave rise to regional integration efforts in the EU and Africa in order to recognise that the liberal intergovernmentalist approach cannot be applied as a one-size-fits-all approach (Ibrahim & Ogbeidi, 2015).

The application of the liberal intergovernmentalist theory to the EU and AU made it clear that state actors ceased to be the significant actors in determining state preferences within the context of regional economic cooperation and integration (Ibrahim & Ogbeidi, 2015). There is recognition of the fact that economic interdependencies managed by intergovernmental bodies and subnational actors also determine the formation of domestic preferences (Forbacha, 2020). In addition, international negotiations are conducted on the basis of nationally attained preferences, even though they are influenced by the relative power of member countries at the negotiating table, which echoes the theory of liberal intergovernmentalism (Olurontoba, 2020). These negotiations are based on Putnam's two-level game theory, in which member countries act in both domestic and international affairs (Ibrahim & Ogbeidi, 2015). Thus, the intergovernmental bodies play a bigger role than member states with regards to regional affairs (Forbacha, 2020). On that count, the issue regarding states transferring sovereignty to matters that they will repudiate was not fulfilled as highlighted by critics. The next section directs its attention to the discussion of disparity of state preferences.

It was essential to deal with the disparity of the state preferences at this stage of the discussion, given that it brought to the fore the role of superpowers in regional integration. The earlier section 2.2.1 examined state preference formation and discussed the actors and issues involved. Nonetheless, it was evident that the liberal intergovernmentalist approach did not highlight the role of superpowers in regional integration in section 2.2.1. In an effort to address the role of the superpowers, a separate section 2.4 had to be discussed to avoid muddling things up. The discussion of the

separate subsequent section serves to reveal the role of superpowers in regional integration.

2.4 Disparity of State Preferences

Earlier, section 2.2.1 dealt with national preference formation and discussed the actors involved. This section focuses on a discussion of the disparity of state preferences that determine the outcome of the bargaining process. It was important to explore the preference formation process by member states in order to grasp and assess the regional outcomes. Moravcsik (1993, p. 473) suggested that “state actions reflect the rational actions of governments constrained at home by domestic societal pressures and abroad by their strategic environment”. It was through the idea of ‘rational states behaviour’ that this school of thought demonstrated that the actions of member states in the international arena are mainly linked to economic interests, given that this is the biggest deciding element of national preference (Forbacha, 2020).

The liberal intergovernmentalist approach stated that member states bargain in connection with national preferences until they reach common ground, implying that it is then that the national preferences coincide (Mareike & Pollack, 2018). Consequently, when state preferences coincide they are favourable to each member state, and either broader or vaster integration ensues as an outcome of regional integration (Schimmelfennig & Winzen, 2019). Preferences are a vital matter of the liberal intergovernmentalist approach, in a similar way to a change in preferences that have gradually been gaining importance in research for international relations, given that the behaviour and goal of the state can be grasped as a result of its preferences (Forbacha, 2020). Even though national preference formation is driven by economic factors, other determinants of state preferences are pursued by member countries in intergovernmental integration, such as defence policy, which might end up at the top of the agenda (Moravcsik, 1998).

With domestic pressure constantly changing, the liberal intergovernmentalist approach stipulated that member states have diverse foreign policies, the preferences of which “are aggregated through political institutions” (Moravcsik, 1993). As such, this demonstrates the country’s logical capacity to operate as a middleman with regards to the demand and supply chain of regional cooperation and integration (Forbacha, 2020). This culminates in the two-level game theory, an approach that shapes demand and

supply behaviour for regional cooperation and integration (Hooghe & Mark, 2018). Moravcsik (1993) defined demand for regional integration as “identifying the potential benefits of policy coordination perceived by the national government”, whereas supply is viewed via the process of interstate strategic interaction and “defined by the possible political response of the union's political system”. Member states act in their rational choice when regional institutions are established, implying that institutions serve the interests of such states (Schimmelfenning, 2015). State conduct is described in two stages that mould the demand and supply function (Coşkun, 2015). The first stage is for the state to establish a set of particular goals, and the second is to bargain to achieve those goals (Moravcsik, 1993).

Following the discussion above, member states establish international institutions, provided that their preferences coincide, and it would be for their mutual benefit to cooperate (Bickerton et al., 2015). The key question is: What would happen when there is discord in the course of the negotiations (Coşkun, 2015)? The subsequent sections serve to demonstrate that in the event of disparity in connection with member states' preferences, the priorities of powerful member states take precedence (Forbacha, 2020). Thus, according to the domestic-politics explanation, national preferences vary as a result of dissimilarities regarding the set-up of the domestic political economy and the political cost of realising price stability (Schimmelfenning, 2015).

National preferences cut across numerous matters of state, such as foreign goals (Hooghe & Mark, 2018). There can be a variation in ideas among member states as well as in the manner in which the objectives can be realised to achieve mutual gains (Schimmelfennig & Winzen, 2019). In that regard, strain is placed on intergovernmental cooperation in as far as communicating with one voice that resembles an integrated region (Mareike & Pollack, 2018). The next section focuses on the deliberation of hegemony in regional integration.

2.5 Hegemony in Regional Integration

The emergence of disparities in state preferences in regional economic cooperation and integration, coupled with the presence of states that vary in size, made it necessary to deliberate on the meaning of hegemony and superpowers. With unclear power structures within the liberal intergovernmentalist approach, superpowers take it upon themselves to control the destiny of regional integration of less powerful states. Mlambo and Ogunnubi (2018) highlighted that one of the most discussed topics within the school of international relations was the manner in which big states relate to small states,

particularly when situated in the same region. This prompted numerous studies to be conducted regarding regional superpowers as an enabler or hindrance to regional integration, implying that it is a widely held belief that geopolitical hegemony is associated with 'hard-to-look-past' consequences on regional integration (Bulmer & Joseph, 2016).

It was for this reason that the school of international relations employed the term 'hegemony' to describe the relationship between big states and small states, although prior to this the term was understood to refer to the bilateral interaction between the United States of America and other states (Myers & Irwin, 2019). Hegemony depicts a ranked system in which there are big states and small states, and applies to both regional and global contexts (Mlambo & Ogunnubi, 2018). A superpower relates to a state that distinctly exceeds other states in the region with regards to economic development, population and market size (Wehner, 2017).

According to Bulmer and Joseph (2016), states that take responsibility for the geopolitical engagements within their vicinities are often nominated by external actors to deal with matters relating to their regions, given that they are powerful actors and therefore fall within this category. Forbacha (2020) stated that it is logical for the realist to be perplexed as to why big states would wish to undertake integration engagements with small states, given that they have little to offer owing to their small economies. The intergovernmental view is that "that major states may advance their interest through non-coercive means by applying a strategy of cooperative hegemony, which implies an active role in regional institutionalism" (Pedersen, 2002, p. 680). The next subsection focuses on the deliberation of hegemony on the African continent.

2.5.1 Hegemony on the African continent

The African continent has states that vary in size and stature, implying that there are both big and small states. Without any clear power structures within regional integration, superpowers will emerge as the natural leaders in regions and thus take control of the activities within those regions (Coşkun, 2015). This is especially the case when a region is faced with disparity of preferences and superpowers take control of the regional engagements in connection with policy deliberations. Thus inter-country efforts would eventually override intra-country consensus. This section discusses the activities of big states within the African continent, highlighting the activities of superpowers.

Algeria, Angola, Egypt, Liberia, Nigeria and South Africa were the African countries with the largest economies per GDP (Abrego et al., 2020). This explains why these six African states shoulder 60% of the AU budget (Forbacha, 2020). It was through covering a sizeable portion of the AU budget that scholars expressed the growing importance of these six states and their influence on the regional dynamics of Africa, despite them being beset by the customary institutional configuration (Wehner, 2017). Forbacha (2020) expressed that even though South Africa is very influential in the African region, the research conducted by the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) revealed that of Africa's 'Big Five' superpowers that fall in the emerging category (Algeria, Egypt, Ethiopia, Nigeria and South Africa), Nigeria is the one that is capable of playing an increased global role.

According to Cilliers, Moyer and Bello-Schunemann (2015), Nigeria is "the African state with by far the greatest capabilities to play a global role, if only Nigeria were able to take the necessary steps that would see far-reaching changes to the governance issues and social challenges that currently beset the country, it could become Africa's lone superpower." Apart from this, Egypt has been identified as one of the actors with the capacity to challenge Israel within the region of the Red Sea and North Africa, thus demonstrating hegemony in the Middle East as well in Africa (Myers & Irwin, 2019). Thus, hegemony of a state in any region plays a role in shaping the integration within that setting (Forbacha, 2020).

A contrasting view stated the case for the importance of South Africa. The studies of Ogunnubi & Akinola (2017) highlighted that South Africa is one of the mainstays of the AU and that is reason to envisage it as a regional hegemony. The activities of regional hegemony served to highlight how interstate efforts could override intrastate consensus. Despite South Africa entering into the game later in 1994 after attaining freedom, it was as a result of her influence that she had to "play a significant role in the political economy of Africa through South African companies" and was heavily involved in ending the civil war in Burundi (Ogunnubi & Akinola, 2017, p. 32). Mlambo (2020) indicated that South Africa was the major actor in engagements that resulted in a successful referendum on a new constitution in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

After demonstrating its efforts via institutionalisation, South Africa pioneered a memorable campaign known as "African Solutions to African Problems" and progressed towards instituting a New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) (Ogunnubi & Akinola, 2017). According to Mlambo and Ogunnubi (2018), South Africa is the only African state that is recognised with the term "emerging power" and it forms part of the

BRICS, which includes Brazil, Russia, India and China. Having been part of the G20, Woolfrey, Apiko and Pharatllhatle (2019) suggested that there is an expectation that South Africa's power and influence would grow not only in Africa, but also internationally. The next subsection focuses on the discussion of hegemony in Southern Africa.

2.5.2 Hegemony in Southern Africa

Having explicated hegemony on the African continent, attention is directed to the discussion of hegemony in Southern Africa. Gwala (2015) suggested that it is noteworthy to mention that South Africa exhibited a benign hegemonic feature within the region if the state's hegemonic ambitions are to be viewed in a positive manner. Such was the case because the republic had been involved in the regional political arena in which numerous contributions were made towards peacekeeping efforts in the DRC, Lesotho and Zimbabwe (Mlambo & Ogunnubi, 2018). In particular, South Africa led a military intervention in Lesotho and the DRC, and a diplomatic intervention in Zimbabwe. South Africa displayed the necessary response by assisting the region to achieve economic growth and development-focused frameworks (Woolfrey et al., 2019).

The republic played a key role in the formation of the African Renaissance concept pioneered by former President Thabo Mbeki, and it was the driving force in inspiring the NEPAD initiative mentioned earlier in this section (Mlambo & Ogunnubi, 2018). This is an example of a top-down approach to preference formation within the African context, which competes with the bottom up approach as discussed in section 2.2.1. South Africa's public and private organisations took the initiative in broadening infrastructural development within the region (Gwala, 2015). This resulted in the rapid growth of most economies within the Southern African region, apart from South Africa, over the last two decades.

Hegemony is a combination of political and economic muscle, as in the example of South Africa. Mlambo and Ogunnubi (2018) highlighted that South Africa's investment expedition is palpable in numerous SADC countries, which comprised US\$80 million by Shoprite in the DRC, US\$94 million by Vodacom in the DRC, US\$75 million by Nampak in Angola, and US\$1.2 billion in the Sasol pipeline in Mozambique, to mention a few. This explains the widespread considerable growth in trade recorded within the region, particularly in exports from South Africa to the rest of SADC (Arndt & Roberts, 2018). The studies of das Nair and Chisoro (2016) noted that even though corporations from South Africa have experienced massive growth in other SADC states, corporations from

other SADC states that have tried to enter the South African market have not enjoyed the same growth experience. For example, big supermarkets such as Payless and Choopies of Botswana, Woerman Brock of Namibia, Melissa of Zambia and Eloolo have an enormous business footprint locally but no presence in the South African market (das Nair, 2018). This has been ascribed to South African companies having already captured a solid, dominant position with a sizable market share in their home country (Zahonogo, 2016). Even though this was the case, it was crucial to reaffirm the essential role played by South Africa in regional integration in the SADC (Arndt & Roberts, 2018).

Nonetheless and without debate, South Africa's hegemonic attributes have occasionally been used inefficiently (Mlambo & Ogunnubi, 2018). Again, this was not covered by the liberal intergovernmentalist approach. In tracking South Africa's history of hegemonic powers, it was apparent that in 1995 the republic used its hegemonic status to biasedly repeal provision 311 of the SACU Treaty. On the basis of that treaty, other members of the SACU – that is, Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland – could have been permitted to import goods from outside the SACU borders to use as raw materials for textile production (Woolfrey et al., 2019). The reason for this was that the South African producer was not able to satisfy SACU demand (Arndt & Roberts, 2018). Apart from that, South Africa negotiated on behalf of the SACU without consulting member countries when the negotiations for the SADC Free Trade Area were ongoing (Farole, 2016).

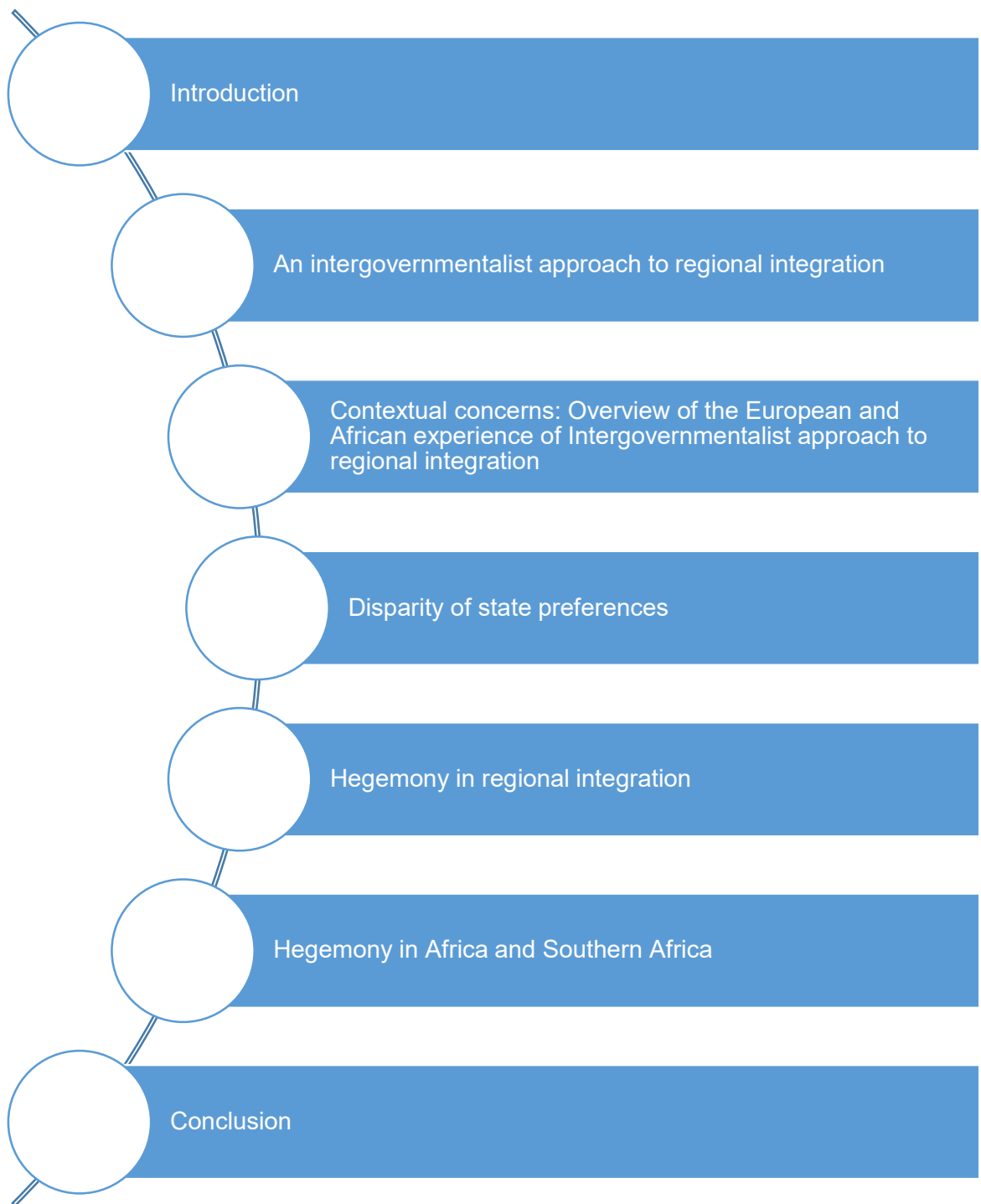
Similarly, South Africa made the decision to singlehandedly negotiate trade policies with the EU without taking counsel from the SACU members (Mlambo & Ogunnubi, 2018). These are examples of a top-down approach to preference formation, as discussed in section 2.2.1, and where South Africa exerted hegemonic influence. It was through the exercise of hegemonic power by big states that debate started raging in academic circles regarding the effect of disparities in state preferences. The hegemonic effect emerged with the obscure power structures and the presence of states that vary in stature. Thus, it is reasonable to question whether a big state is an enabler or obstacle to integration (Bulmer & Joseph, 2016). According to Mlambo and Ogunnubi (2018), in view of the AfCFTA, it would only be a matter of time before hegemonic power contestations are set in motion.

2.6 Conclusion

The main goal of this chapter was to review the main principles on which the intergovernmentalist approach to economic cooperation and integration is based. Issues

linked with liberal intergovernmentalism and criticisms cited from other scholars were explained. As such, all stages of the liberal intergovernmentalist approach have been discussed, from state preference formation to interstate bargaining and institutional choice. An attempt was made to apply the approach to the EU and AU in order to assess the differences and similarities. Some gaps emerged regarding the role of superpowers, which were omitted from the liberal intergovernmentalist approach. In the event that there is disparity in state preferences, problems emerge as to how to strike a balance between these conflicting preferences in regional economic cooperation and integration. The absence of clear power structures highlighted that superpowers would take control of regional economic cooperation and integration activities when disparity of state preferences exists. Although most of the activities of superpowers within the region yield positive results, they do at times produce negative results.

Figure 4: Summary of the chapter



CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The purpose of the study was to research the role and approach of governments in regional integration and cooperation, treating the AfCFTA as a case study. The study also aimed to extend the application of this theory specifically to the role of government, and understand the impact of the AfCFTA agreement (Walliman, 2011, p. 366) defined a research question as “a theoretical question that indicates a clear direction and scope of a research project”.

3.1 Primary Research Questions and Sub-Questions

The study seeks to answer the following primary research question and sub-questions:

3.1.1 Main research question

The main research question of this study was: Regional cooperation and integration: the intergovernmentalism approach to regional integration: a case of the AfCFTA and effects on trade.

The research instrument asked the following questions to answer the main research question:

1. Could you please tell me about yourself and your relation to the AfCFTA agreement?
2. Could you please tell me about the stakeholders involved, who they are, and how they relate or related to each other? Were there any signs of dominance?
3. How were you involved in the formulation of the AfCFTA? How did the formulation process relate to your work?
4. Could you please tell me more about African integration/cooperation?
5. Have you worked on any other regional agreement?
6. What is your understanding of the intergovernmentalism approach?
7. To what extent does the intergovernmentalism approach suit regional cooperation and integration in Africa?
8. Which states do you believe have the most power when it comes to decision-making in regional agreements?
9. What steps do you think are crucial in government negotiations in Africa?
10. What are the different interests? What are the national interests?

11. What are the interests within a country?
12. Could you please tell me about relations between countries for the African continent about conflicts?
13. How are conflicts resolved?

3.1.2 Sub-Questions

The four sub-questions follow:

Research sub-question 1: Are big states enablers or obstacles to regional integration within the African context?

Research sub-question 2: Who holds the most power among the actors in the liberal intergovernmentalist approach within the African context?

Research sub-question 3: What are the steps in the negotiating process of the liberal intergovernmentalist approach within the African context?

Research sub-question 4: How are conflicting collective and individual interests balanced or settled in African regional economic cooperation and integration?

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

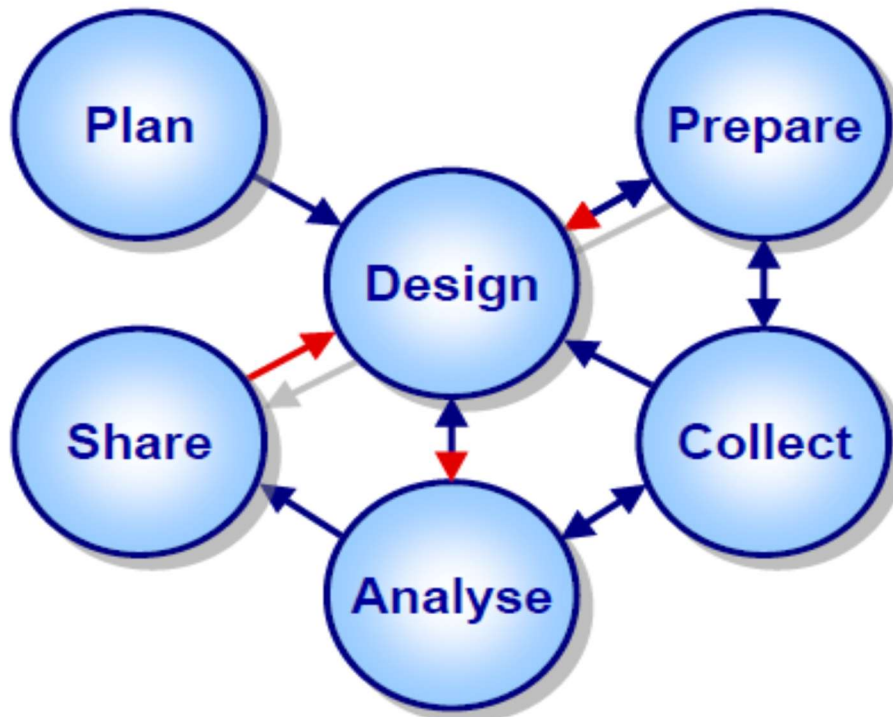
The aim of this chapter is to outline a detailed method of approach followed for this research project that tested the research questions in Chapter 3. The research project followed a qualitative method to interpret and understand the role of government in the AfCFTA agreement. The qualitative method of research required the triangulation method of data collection, which mandated the use of semi-structured interviews, literature reviews and publicly available information, the results of which are presented in Chapter 5 and discussed in Chapter 6.

4.2 Choice of Methodology

The study was carried out in line with qualitative research, as directed by the interpretivism paradigm (Cresswell, 2014). Qualitative research undertakes to examine and reveal issues under study since insufficient information is known with regard to the research problem (Apuke, 2017). Interpretivism is a philosophy that guides qualitative research and is deeply rooted in the principle that the procedure adopted to grasp knowledge concerning human and social sciences is based on the interpretation of the world by human beings (Bryman et al., 2016). Since the study followed a qualitative approach, it stands to reason that a single case study was adopted. Bryman et al. (2016) opined that a case might be one organisation, location or event. Given the above, the study adopted a single qualitative case of South Africa.

Given that a single case study approach was used, the study was carried out under the direction of Yin's (2017) six-stage case-study process comprising the stages of planning, designing, preparing, collecting, analysing and sharing, as depicted in Figure 5 Yin (2017) highlighted that one can benefit from earlier theoretical propositions to guide the data collection and analysis. Over the years, the case study approach has evolved and developed into a valuable research method that involves a deep dive and thorough understanding of data collection and data analysis. The research commenced with the online collection of documentary research, and was followed by a qualitative phase of personal, in-depth and semi-structured interviews. The advantage of the chosen case study methodology was that it looked at the overall conditions set and not only the outcomes.

Figure 5: The case study research process



Since the sample size was limited, the research attempted to understand certain contextual conditions rather than to uncover causal relations. This specific approach was chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of the subject as it was described in the literature, and as a means to overcome some of the limitations posed by a purely survey-based approach. In addition, the research did not aim to be predictive and utilised the information gathered.

Surveys provide evidence on practices, attitudes and knowledge. Authors aim to provide guidance to both researchers and readers in conducting and interpreting survey research. Like all research, surveys should have clear research question(s) and use the smallest possible number of high-quality, essential survey questions (items) that will interest the target population (Story & Tait, 2019). Surveys are time-dependent and usually focus on the current situation.

The chosen methodology was flexible in that it operates with multiple sources of data, such as interviews, documents, observations and artefacts. The study sought to determine to what extent the liberal intergovernmentalism approach was suitable for regional cooperation and integration in Africa. The investigation centred on the role and

power of governments with regard to agreements on the African continent. Thus, it satisfied the criteria for study as a unique case that is also revelatory, particularly with regard to the liberal intergovernmental approach, given that it has been mostly applied in Europe and the rest of the world and not so much in Africa.

The research was conducted over a period of one month, using semi-structured interviews in which research questions to which participants provided responses were articulated. Participants included academia, the business sector, government, regional blocs and international networks that have worked in the AfCFTA. The questions (Appendix A) asked in the semi-structured interviews required the participants' understanding of key emerging issues, which the research linked to the literature and theory explored in Chapter 2 of this research report.

4.3 Unit of Analysis

Başkarada (2014) suggested that unit of analysis relates to the subject of the case study, and can be a process, event, individual, group or organisation. The population of the study is the substance that the researcher attempts to examine so as to acquire knowledge (Yin, 2017). Three units of analysis were used in this study: The first was an event, namely the AfCFTA meetings; the second was people output, such as external and internal publications and/or reports from the AU, academics and media; and the third was individual people, namely three high-level government employees working on the AfCFTA agreement.

4.4 Population and Research Setting

The population of relevance consisted of government employees working on the AfCFTA, the private sector, academics, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), government agencies, chamber of commerce agencies, embassy employees, and consumers of good from other African countries. The government employees must have worked at the department for at least three years in a management role. In addition, this study is of relevance to any large organisation that will be impacted by the AfCFTA agreement in the marketplace.

4.5 Sampling Method, Sampling Frame and Size

Sampling refers to a specific method that is employed in selecting members of the population that will participate in the study (Bryman et al., 2016). The purposive sampling method is the most appropriate when a case study is used (Cresswell, 2014). Since this was a case study on the AfCFTA, purposive sampling was used when selecting members of the population. Purposive sampling refers to recognising and selecting individuals or documents on the basis of the knowledge they possess regarding the study (Walliman, 2015). The sampling frame was the source of data, institution, individuals and documents. The study sample size was four individuals per identified organisation.

In the first stage, research data was obtained from primary and secondary sources, including the AfCFTA agreement, media reports, press releases, and government and academic reports and articles. The second stage looked at non-probability sampling, which is a group of sampling techniques that helps researchers to select units from the populations they are interested in studying. A core characteristic of non-probability sampling is that samples are selected based on the subjective judgment of the researcher, rather than random selection (that is, probabilistic methods), which is the cornerstone of probability sampling techniques (Laerd Dissertation, n.d.) Interviews were held with individuals instrumental to or affected by the implementation of the AfCFTA agreement.

4.6 Measurement Instruments

A measurement instrument is an indicator that assists in gaining understanding regarding the study (Cresswell, 2014). These indicators comprise a set of questions, official statistics, content analysis or recordings (Bryman et al., 2016). Two measuring instruments were used for this study: The first phase consisted of official meeting minutes, academic reviews and archival files; and the second of semi-structured interviews in the form of virtual interviews and telephonic communication.

4.7 Data-Gathering Process

The study collected qualitative data through face-to-face semi-structured interviews, focus-group interviews and qualitative content analysis (Bryman et al., 2016). The rationale for using numerous sources of data was to enhance the quality of the findings

through triangulation (Walliman 2015). Data was obtained from a number of different sources, namely:

1) AU-specific data:

- AU meeting records
- AU website
- AfCFTA agreement
- Press releases detailing advancements of the agreement
- Interviews with three key players in government, business and academia

2) Regional integration reports and media articles:

- Tralac law centre regional reports
- Peer-reviewed regional integration reports
- UNECA AfCFTA reports
- UNCTAD articles
- African Development Bank reports

4.8 Data Analysis Approach

To support the propositions, the primary and secondary data from the reports, articles and publications listed above were analysed to provide qualitative data. The data analysis employed for face-to-face semi-structured interviews and focus-group interviews was thematic content analysis (Clarke & Braun, 2013), while qualitative content analysis was used for documentation. Primary data collected during interviews was analysed to provide insight on findings, explanations, logic and contributing factors that are not readily available in the written documentation.

4.9 Quality and Validity Criteria

It is crucial that the researcher deals with the veracity of the data, from the design of the study to the examination of the results (Cresswell, 2014). The veracity of data from face-to-face semi-structured interviews and focus-groups interviews was substantiated through construct validity, internal validity and external validity, while content analysis was substantiated through credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability (Bryman et al., 2016).

4.10 Limitations

The limitation of the study was that it focused on one free trade agreement on the African continent, namely the AfCFTA, since contrasting results could have been obtained if the study had been carried out on more than one agreement. It is understandable that most origin-related rules in trade agreements across the world share some likenesses; although most of the origin-related rules in preferential trade agreements across the world have certain similarities, more conclusions were drawn from the EU, South African and SADC outlook. Attention was given to the EU, South African and SADC external trade in goods, as opposed to trade in the internal (domestic) market.

The agreement is still new and not much academic research exists relating to Africa. The most significant limitation of this case was the fact that only one of this type of agreement was considered, as it was unique to other regional bloc agreements. The agreement was fairly new, and not much had been written about it and its impact on South Africa. The period under review was limited to five years. With regard to the interviews, the interviewer was new to such but aware of the possibility of bias.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is presented in two sections: The first provides an overview of the sample, including transcripts and profile; and the second discusses the interview results, identification, exploration and data analysis. Following this are the results of the three research sub-questions namely; RQ1, RQ2 and RQ3, which consist of five themes.

The study aimed to investigate the government's role in regional integration and cooperation. The case study was the AfCFTA agreement, and the role that the state and private sector play in the formulation of such agreements. The study applied the qualitative research method. Data was obtained from government, education, regional bodies, the business sector and international bodies through semi-structured interviews with respondents. Respondents were targeted based on their roles and responsibilities in relation to the AfCFTA agreement, thus making the response good. In addition, the chosen respondents have some influence over the negotiation and implementation of the AfCFTA agreement. The study comprised 16 participants, and the data was analysed using Atlas T.I version 8. The sample covered nine regions, namely South Africa, Nigeria, Botswana, The Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Addis Ababa, the United States and Switzerland.

5.2 Overview of sample: Details of transcripts and profile of participants

The sample's overview was analysed by understanding the details of the transcripts and the profile of the participants. The interview transcripts totalled 32 622 words. Participants' work experience at the AfCFTA ranged from more than three years to more than ten years. The sample was made up of a total of 16 participants, 10 of whom were male and six female. The respondents included your Honourable Excellency (H.E.) Wamkele Mene, who is the Head of the AfCFTA agreement. Mene has been part of the agreement since its inception and provided insight on stakeholder composition and the steps followed in negotiation and conflict resolution. In addition, the study interviewed Business Unity South Africa's director, who is a representative of the business community in South Africa operating in the rest of Africa, as well as directors from multinational corporations based in Nigeria and Kenya. Regional bodies included project managers from the SADC and ECOWAS who had extensive knowledge of regional

cooperation agreements. Renowned lawyer and author Professor Eleanor Fox was also interviewed. Fox has authored a book entitled *Making Africa Markets Work*.

The study sample was largely made up of government officials who had worked directly on the AfCFTA agreement and were based at the Department of Trade and Industry. This was pertinent as the AfCFTA is a forum that focuses on regional integration, striving for an arrangement between two or more countries to cooperate (through institutions and regional rules) to eliminate trade barriers of services, goods and movement of people, thereby achieving peace and security in the region as well as managing shared resources. The participants were from various regions in Africa, and outside Africa.

Table 1: Summary of interviews

Description	Quantity
Number of interviews	16
The total duration of the interviews	284 min 10 sec
Average duration	20 min 18 sec
Shortest duration	11 min 0 sec
Longest duration	32 min 24 sec

With reference to Table 1 above, the shortest interview was 11 minutes in duration and the longest 32 minutes and 24 seconds. Interestingly enough, the shortest interview was with an economist from the government sector who made excellent points with regard to the role of government in regional agreements. The interview was not lengthy because the respondent was thorough and clear in answering the questions, even when prompted. The total duration of the interviews was 284 minutes and 10 seconds.

The above interviews provided multi-layered perspectives and views for the research from government, education, regional networks, the private sector and international networks. According to Buxton (2008), multilevel modelling is an approach that can be used to handle clustered or grouped data and provides a useful framework. Table 2 summarises the respondent profiles.

Table 2: Profile of the participants

#	Interview Candidate	Years' operating in AfCFTA	Gender	Region	Level in role	Company	Industry
1	PAT1	3+	F	South Africa	Divisional Manager	Competition Commission South Africa	Government
2	PAT2	5+	M	Kenya	HOD	Bayer	Business
3	PAT3	10+	M	Ghana	Honourable Excellency Secretariat (Head) of AfCFTA	African Union	Government
4	PAT4	7+	M	South Africa	Director	Department of Trade and Industry	Trade Policy Directorate
5	PAT5	8+	M	Addis Ababa	HOD	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa	International network
6	PAT6	10+	F	South Africa	Director	Department of Trade and Industry	Government
7	PAT7	7+	M	South Africa	Deputy Director	Department of Trade and Industry	Government
8	PAT8	5+	F	Switzerland, Geneva	Manager	UNCTAD	International network
9	PAT9	10+	F	USA	Lawyer	University of New York	Education
10	PAT10	6+	M	Botswana	Programme Officer	SADC	Regional network
11	PAT11	8+	M	Nigeria	Programme Officer	ECOWAS Regional Authority	Regional network
12	PAT12	8+	M	Kenya	Negotiator	UNECA	International network
13	PAT13	5+	F	Nigeria	Executive	Procter & Gamble	Business
*14	PAT14	10+	F	South Africa	Director	SADC	Regional network
15	PAT15	5+	M	The Gambia	Director	ECOWAS Regional Authority	Regional Network
16	PAT16	8+	M	South Africa	Executive Director	BUSA (Private business representative) for South Africa	Business

- - No recording, completed a written response

5.3 Rigour and credibility of the design and findings of the study

The four study elements of credibility, transferability, confirmability and dependability were discussed in Chapter 4 to confirm the rigour and credibility of the study's design and findings. Those complemented by the discussion on the design and the sample would validate the study's rigour and credibility. Johnson, Adkins and Chauvin (2020, p. 138) explain that the “attributes of rigor and quality and suggested best practices for qualitative research design as they relate to the steps of designing, conducting, and reporting qualitative research”.

The 16 participants interviewed have several key attributes that qualify them for the study. These include experience working on the AfCFTA, level in the organisation, regional location, and company and industry diversity. According to Monarch (2019), diverse sampling can be defined as ‘unknown unknowns’, gaps in the model knowledge that are found to be not so obvious. This confirms the relevance of the sample, as advised by Guetterman (2015), as one of the key aspects of sample credibility. In addition, the number of interviews was adequate at 16, not only because it falls within the range of 12 to 20 as advised by Sim, Saunders, Waterfield and Kingstone (2018), but also because it is higher than the recommended 12 participants in homogeneous groups proposed by Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) to reach saturation.

The study's overall design, using the qualitative research approach and focusing on case study design as one of the four design methods recommended by Zikmund, Babin, Carr and Griffin (2010), was ideal for the study based on several fronts. Firstly, despite the fact that the liberal intergovernmentalism theory can be traced back to Hoffman's propositions in the 1960s (Hoffman, 1964), development within the Africa context in particular has been slow and remains inadequate. This means there is a continuous need to expand, and qualitative study is one of the most useful research approaches for exploring and providing participant experiences. To explain this, Scotland (2012) highlighted that qualitative research is grounded on a constructive or interpretive paradigm that knowledge is developed based on lived experiences. This points to the relevance of the selected research approach and methods. Secondly, the purposive sampling allowed for selection of relevant participants.

5.4 Findings of the empirical data

The transcribed interviews were analysed using the Atlas T.I version 8. The researcher employed both deductive and inductive approaches in analysing the data. The deductive approach uses an organising framework comprising themes for the coding process (Bradley et al., 2007; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Burnard et al., 2008; Miles & Huberman, 1994). The framework, often referred to as a start list (Miles & Huberman, 1994), is applied in the analysis in anticipation that certain core concepts are in the data (Bradley et al., 2007; Thomas, 2006). The inductive approach involves working exclusively from the participant experiences, which drive the analysis entirely.

According to Creswell (2013), researchers use both deductive and inductive analysis. Researchers who start with a theoretical framework would use deductive methods, while those who develop theories from their data would use inductive analysis (Creswell, 2013). The study consists of three research questions that discuss its aim, which is to investigate the government's role in regional integration and cooperation. The case study is the AfCFTA agreement, and the role that the government plays in the formulation of such agreements. Research questions with linked themes and code groups are presented in Table 3. To this end, five themes were developed from the study's research questions, and relevant code groups were constructed to discuss the findings of the study.

Table 3 sets out the key themes, namely identification of stakeholders involved, power of stakeholders, steps for the negotiation process, balancing of collective and individual interests, and methods of settling conflicting collective interests. Each is matched to individual questions in the table, and core aspects are further broken down under each code group.

Table 3: Research questions, themes and linked code groups

Research Question	Themes	Code groups
Research sub-question 1: Who holds the most power among the actors in the liberal intergovernmentalist approach within the African context?	Theme 1: Identification of stakeholders involved	Internal stakeholders (African stakeholders)
		External stakeholders (international stakeholders)
		Roles and Responsibilities
	Theme 2: Power of the stakeholders	Equal power within the stakeholders
		Dominance of developed or larger economies
Research sub-question 2: What are the steps in the negotiating process of the liberal intergovernmentalist approach within the African context?	Theme 3: Steps for a negotiation process	Commitment to process
		Set-up of a negotiation team
		Construction of negotiation position
		Recognition of power
		Formation of fully functional structure
Research sub-question 3: How are the conflicting collective and individual interests balanced/settled in African regional economic cooperation and integration?	Theme 4: Balancing of the collective and individual interests	Collective interest of members of the AfCFTA
		Interests of individual state
	Theme 5: Methods of settling conflicting collective interests	Effective dispute-resolution mechanism
		Dialogue between the states
		Dispute adjudicating panel

5.4.1 Research sub-question 1

As per Table 3 above, research sub-question 1 saw two themes emerging, namely identification of stakeholders involved, and power of stakeholders. The two themes seek to discuss internal stakeholders (African stakeholders) and external stakeholders (international stakeholders) and their roles and responsibilities. A background to the research question follows, prior to discussion of the themes.

5.4.1.1 The actors in the liberal intergovernmentalist approach in the context of Africa

The first research question of the study can be recapped as follows:

Research sub-question 1: Who holds the most power among the actors in liberal intergovernmentalist approach within the African context??

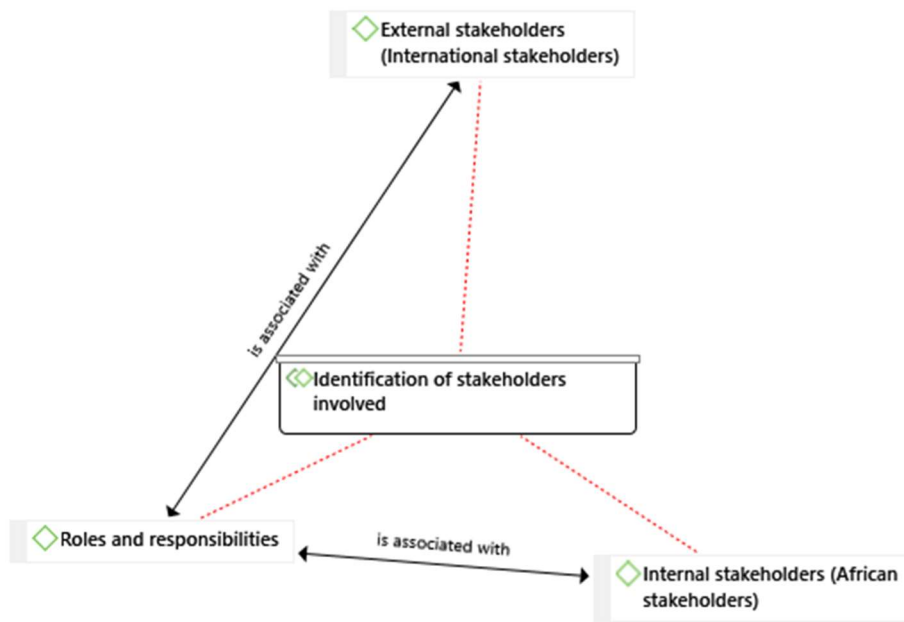
The purpose of this research question was to understand which of the actors in the liberal governmentalist approach hold the most power in the African context. The study needs to first understand the stakeholders and then the power of the actors.

5.4.1.1.1 Theme One: Stakeholders of the intergovernmentalist approach

Theme one was developed to discuss the stakeholders and their roles in the liberal intergovernmentalist approach. The interviewer asked the participants to identify the stakeholders involved in the negotiations. Stakeholders were classified as internal and external: Internal (African) stakeholders are those that have a direct link to or role in the negotiations, while the external (international) stakeholders are those that do not. There was general consensus among respondents that the most influence was to be found in Africa (internal stakeholders). External stakeholders are consulted for input or advice, but not involved fully in the negotiation process.

The participants were also asked to discuss the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders. As a result, three significant elements were constructed to discuss this theme: Internal stakeholders (African), external stakeholders (international), and stakeholders' roles and responsibilities. Figure 1 shows the core elements that will be presented under research question 1, 'Who holds the most power among the actors in the liberal intergovernmentalist approach within the African context?' Results regarding internal stakeholders will be presented first, followed by those of external stakeholders and, last, stakeholder roles and responsibilities.

Figure 6: Identification of stakeholders involved



Internal stakeholders

According to the responses of the study participants, internal stakeholders are those stakeholders that have a direct link to the AfCFTA processes. Participant 10 [PAT10] mentioned that there are internal stakeholders who are part of the private sector and ensure that services are channelled from exporters to public departments, such as the agricultural sector. Participant 12 [PAT12] explained that internal stakeholders included agencies and departments involved in the AfCFTA process. Table 4 below presents participant responses with regard to internal stakeholders.

Table 4: Participants' quotations about internal stakeholders

<i>So, there's firstly internal stakeholders in the division, trade policy negotiations and cooperation and also was in the department you know, various other divisions in the department, like the industrial development division and also the competition commission [PAT9].</i>
<i>So, there is obviously the internal stakeholders within the private sector, and it covers really the full ambits of the private sector from exporters to the agricultural sector to the services sectors and so on [PAT10].</i>
<i>you would have in terms of agencies, you know, that also consulted the competition commission. Of course, the phase two issues have not started the SABS, MISA, SANAS, SARS, the revenue services, and so on and so forth. And then sister departments the main ones that would be involved in the AFCFTA process [PAT12].</i>

The category 'stakeholders from the African continent' was identified to further discuss internal stakeholders. These stakeholders work together to share information and strategies that could be useful in the liberal intergovernmental approach. Participant 7

(PAT7) explained that stakeholders involved in the negotiations are from the African continent. In line with the views of PAT7, Participant 1 (PAT1) emphasised that the stakeholders involved in the negotiations form part of various organisations on the African continent. Participant 11 [PAT11] also emphasised that there are stakeholders from the African continent and stated that the AU supports the AfCFTA. Most of the study participants mentioned that the negotiations included stakeholders from the African continent. Participant responses regarding African stakeholders are presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Participant quotations about African stakeholders

<i>we use the forum, which is the African competition forum as a structure for cooperation, information sharing in terms of our strategies and just broadly coordinating our work around a regional integration [PAT7]</i>
<i>Experts were representatives from Government (Regulators on Competition, Intellectual Property, Investment etc.) Academia (from Universities in Africa and abroad), NGOs (CUTs), Regional Economic Communities (COMESA, EAC, ECOWAS) and from UN Organizations (UNECA, UNCTAD), African Union and at times African Development Bank as financiers [PAT1].</i>
<i>We are a UN agency. The AFCFTA is, I mean, initiative of the African union and we supported the African union on this initiative. So I, think perhaps we need to look at, the level of the African union. At the level of own work. At the level of the member States that were involved in the negotiations. So, there are a whole range of stakeholders [PAT11].</i>

External stakeholders

Participants also identified the category of 'external stakeholders', which can be described as stakeholders from outside the African continent who do not directly link to or participate in the agreement negotiation process. This category of stakeholders is not directly involved in the AfCFTA processes but are instead consulted to provide guidance.

Participant 9 [PAT9] stated that the external stakeholders are only there to be consulted for specific advice. It was further elaborated that these stakeholders include government departments such as the South African Revenue Service (SARS) and the Department of Agriculture. Other departments that form part of this category include the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC) [PAT9]. Participant 10 [PAT10] mentioned that there are external stakeholders, while PAT 16 specified academia as external stakeholders. Moreover, participant 15 [PAT15] mentioned that external stakeholders are not involved in the negotiation processes, but rather perform Secretarial work and observe during negotiations. All these participants identified and described stakeholders that could be referred to as external stakeholders. Participants' responses are presented in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Participants' quotations about external stakeholders

<i>"then the external stakeholders, firstly, are other government departments like the DIRCO, SARS, department of agriculture, and then outside of government, NEDLAC , national economic development labour council, which is the main, consultation body that represent business and labour. So that is where we are obliged to consult" [PAT9].</i>
<i>Our primary stakeholder externally, of course, would be the departments of trade industry and competition, that are leading the negotiations with the negotiating partners on the continent [PAT10].</i>
<i>And we also have the academia. We have some experts from the university, and there is a lady from university of Johannesburg. And also, we had a professor from the US who is Kenyan by birth, but he is a trade expert [PAT16].</i>
<i>for me that the stakeholders are principally the trade negotiators and the secretariat for the negotiations, African union commission and regional economic communities who are observers to those negotiations [PAT15]</i>

The category of the external stakeholders was mainly identified as being international stakeholders that are from outside the African continent. Participant 7 [PAT7] explained that international stakeholders work together within the negotiations to exchange research material on regional integration. Participant 15 [PAT15] explained the role that international institutions play in the negotiations. Participant 2 [PAT2] also shared their view about international stakeholders. What was more significant is that international trade agreements are used as a reference or guiding principle during the agreement negotiations. The agreements of the AfCFTA are conducted based on international trade agreements to ensure that they are of the same standard. Participant responses with regard to international stakeholders are presented in Table 7 below.

Table 7: Participants' quotations about international stakeholders

<i>but we also have other international authorities that are involved in trade and competition policy, for instance, the WTO and the OACD and maybe the international competition forum or competition network, where it is really around, exchanges of, research material on the topic of regional integration, but even at some level where there would be capacity building exercises [PAT7].</i>
<i>in terms of the international institutions, which providing technical advice like us, and we also have the African development bank there as well. [PAT15].</i>
<i>And during this contract frameworks, they are usually based on international trade agreements, like incoterms, or they are based on regional trade kind of contracts. So, they are usually standard UNFPA, world bank and IMF kind of standards that are adopted from the global trade agreements. [PAT2]</i>

After having identified the categories of stakeholders involved in the intergovernmentalist approach negotiations as internal and external stakeholders, the participants were then asked to explain their roles and responsibilities.

Stakeholder roles and responsibilities

It was evident that the identified stakeholders have certain roles and responsibilities in the negotiations; it is where they provide their expertise on the integration matters under discussion. Study participants explained these stakeholder roles and responsibilities. Participant 14 [PAT14] supported the views of PAT12, stating that stakeholders specialise in specific areas. PAT12 mentioned further that the Department of Agriculture is part of the agreement negotiations on matters relating to agriculture. The department provides advice on agricultural matters during the negotiations [PAT12].

PAT14 and PAT7 both shared their views about what they think is the government's role in the integration negotiations. Both PAT14 and PAT7 mentioned that the role of government is to represent the private sector to ensure that there are no barriers to trade between the states. This will result in integrated and well-conceptualised trade among states and ensure that the private sector is not excluded from the process, because economic growth requires the cooperation of both government and the private sector [PAT14 and PAT7]. Participant responses about the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders are presented in Table 8 below.

Table 8: Participants' quotations about stakeholder roles and responsibilities

<i>that in fact, let me start with the most important one would be that the DIRCO, and the AFCFTA really resides from a political point of view where the DTI of course comes in to now deal with the technical detailed related to their agreement and negotiations there off [PAT12]</i>
<i>You would also have the department of agriculture of course, given their expertise within the agriculture space [PAT12].</i>
<i>There are also what we call cooperative partners. You know, they are some, these are the technical institutions, which specialize in specific areas for instance, the world trade organization [PAT14].</i>
<i>the role of government is to represent the interests of the private sector and other stakeholders [PAT14]</i>
<i>I would say that the main role of government is to ensure that there is well conceptualization as well as develop conceptualization of agreements that would reduce barriers to trade between the countries and help the countries to integrate [PAT7]</i>

Summary

In summary, study participants identified and discussed the stakeholders of the intergovernmental approach and highlighted their roles and responsibilities in the agreement negotiations. While all the identified stakeholders have a role to play, some have a more direct link to the negotiations and bigger roles than others. The external

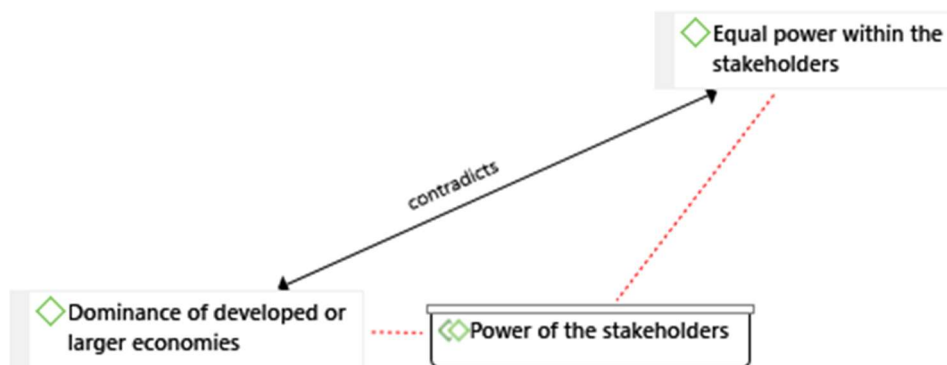
(international) stakeholders, for example, provide consultative services, and international trade agreements act as the guiding framework against which the AfCFTA must be measured to meet global standards. The discussion will now turn to Theme Two, which focuses on the powers of stakeholders.

5.4.1.1.2 Theme Two: Power of the stakeholders

Theme Two was developed to discuss the power of the stakeholders. According to Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.), power can be defined as the ability to control people or events. The study participants were asked to explain the level of power or dominance that they believed each stakeholder to hold in the course of the AfCFTA negotiations. Respondents identified stakeholders to have more or less the same level of dominance or power, however, some stakeholders appeared to be more assertive than others.

Figure 2 below captures the core components of Theme Two and clearly shows the contraction of dominance of developed or larger economies versus equal power between stakeholders.

Figure 7: Power of the stakeholders



Equal power within the stakeholders

Participants were of the view that there is equal power among states in the negotiation process. PAT6 and PAT2 mentioned that all member countries are equal and there is no specific stakeholder dominance. Participant 8 (PAT8) supported the views of PAT6 and PAT2 by stating that all member states have equal power during negotiations; no state

is more powerful than another. Participants further mentioned that population size is immaterial and does not impact on the power of states in negotiations – PAT8 used the example of Nigeria versus Lesotho, where Nigeria has a much larger population, but does not hold more power in negotiations. Overall, participants' views aligned. They emphasised that states had power just by being part of the agreement negotiations. Participant responses are presented in Table 9 below.

Table 9: Participant quotations about power equality among stakeholders

<i>Not sign of real dominance, but we can note that the Minister in charge of trade driving all processes. [PAT2]</i>
<i>Member countries are sovereign and equal when it comes to negotiations and agreements are usually taken by consensus. [PAT6]</i>
<i>There is no state which will be considered more powerful than others because in most cases, in fact, one of the guiding principles is that the decisions must be taken by consensus. And whenever member States negotiate, they negotiate as equal partners. So irrespective of the size, in terms of the geographic extent, in terms of the size of the economy, in terms of the population size that is immaterial, whether you are talking about the large economy like Nigeria versus Lesotho, when they are on the negotiating table they are equal partners. You can't really say this country is more powerful. [PAT8]</i>

Dominance of developed or larger economies

Despite the fact that study participants mentioned that all the member states have equal power in agreement negotiations, some participants explained that some countries do have a level of dominance or power over others. Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.) defines dominance as the quality of being more important, strong or successful than anything else of the same type.

According to the participants, the most significant reason for this dominance is resources. Countries that are well established in terms of economy and development are more powerful. PAT2 mentioned that even though no sign of dominance is portrayed by member states during the negotiations, it has been noted that when the Minister of Trade is present at the negotiations the Minister would take charge by driving all the processes. PAT11 stated that the country's economic status determines the power that state has during the negotiations. It was further mentioned that the more developed states, in terms of economic status, have more power. PAT14 supported this view, emphasising the countries resources as the determinants of power during negotiations. The views of these participants are in agreement. They all believed that some member states have a level of power over others during negotiations, with particular reference being made to

those countries with resources and economic status. In this way, it is believed that the most developed and stable countries have power over the underdeveloped and unstable countries in terms of economy.

Table 10: Participants' quotations about dominant countries

<i>No sign of real dominance, but we can note that in most country that the Minister in charge of trade driving all processes [PAT2]</i>
<i>The most integrated region is more power when it comes to decision making in regional agreements. In that case the biggest economy in each have more influence in the decision-making. [PAT11]</i>
<i>So you would say there is that balance of power, but then again, there is the resources that one has the expertise the human resources, financial muscle, to be able to partake in the negotiations, firstly, but also to have the technical acumen to deal with very technical issues that come up during the negotiations. [PAT14]</i>

Summary

The above has revealed that there are two sides to the theme of power, with some respondents stating that stakeholders have equal power and others arguing that dominance occurs when more developed or larger economies are involved in the negotiations.

5.4.2 Research sub-question 2

As per Table 3, research question 2 has one emerging theme, that is, steps in the negotiation process. The theme seeks to discuss commitment to the process, negotiation team set-up, recognition of power, and the formation of a fully functional structure.

5.4.2.1 Steps in the negotiating process of the liberal intergovernmentalist approach within the African context

The second research question of the study can be recapped as follows:

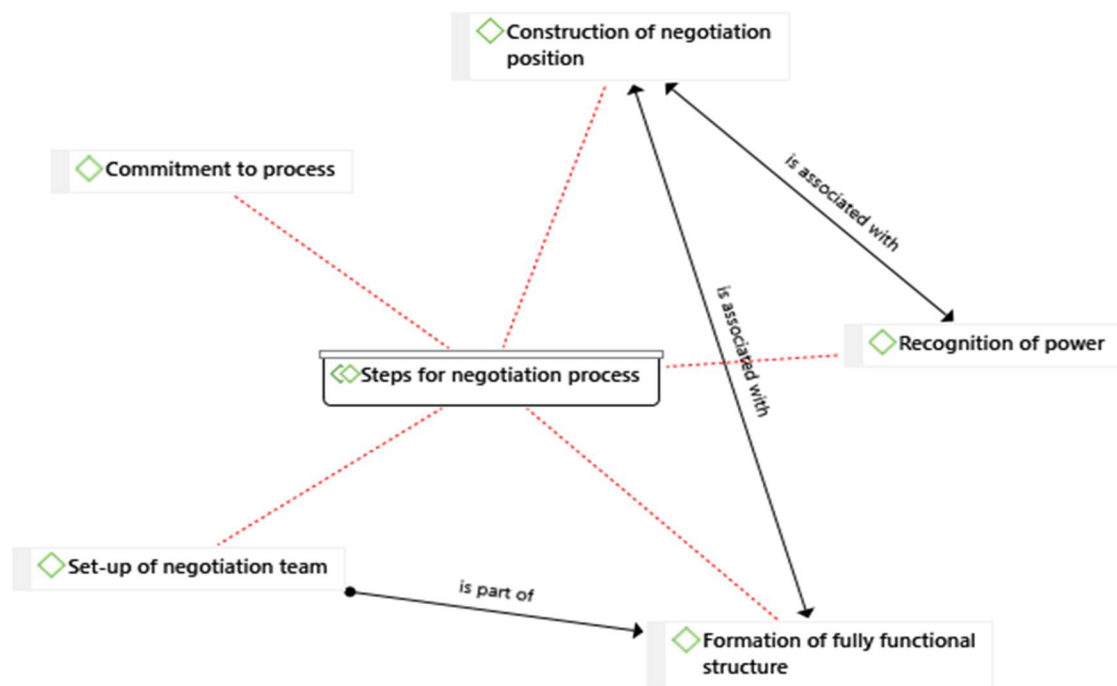
Research sub-question 2: What are the steps in the negotiating process of the liberal intergovernmentalist approach within the African context?

This research question aims to determine the steps in the negotiating process of the liberal intergovernmentalist approach within the African context. Below follows the presentation of results with regards to theme three, which covers five discussion points.

5.4.2.1.1 Theme Three: Steps for the negotiation process

Theme Three was developed to discuss the steps for the negotiation process. The participants were asked to identify the steps that they believe are crucial for governments to negotiate within Africa. Five significant elements were identified as commitment to the process, set-up of the negotiation team, construction of negotiation position, recognition of power, and a fully functional structure. The core elements are presented in Figure 3 below.

Figure 8: Five steps for the negotiation process



Commitment to the process

The study participants identified commitment to the process as a crucial step in the negotiation process. All stakeholders must be committed at all levels and be fully involved in the negotiations. They must be willing to be held accountable for decisions taken during the negotiations. PAT1 mentioned that states should consider what would be of benefit to their citizens; their initiatives must not be too domestic-focused. States should commit to initiatives that promote integration and working with other states to

create growth opportunities that would be of benefit to their citizens. It was further mentioned that the protocols of trade between the states must be well understood by each member state to show that they are committed to the negotiation process [PAT1]. PAT10 explained that the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (the DTIC) has demonstrated its commitment to the agreements through the convening of frequent meetings, which is something that was not taking place before. PAT15 further mentioned the issue of accountability, stating that the trade negotiators must be accountable. Table 11 presents the responses of participants with regard to commitment to the process.

Table 11: Participants' quotations about commitment to process

<i>Looking at the gains for the whole and not be too domestic focused. Understanding the protocols and what they entail and the benefits thereof for the region [PAT1].</i>
<i>I can tell you; we have heard directly from the DTIC that is over the next few weeks that they are essentially meeting every day, which is a rare occurrence as far as trade agreements are concerned. So, that is the stark difference [PAT10]</i>
<i>So, the trade negotiators and the ministry of trade it has to after negotiations be accountable for them and for them working [PAT15].</i>

Set-up of the negotiation team

The participants stated that another step crucial to the negotiating process within Africa is the establishment of the negotiation team. PAT2 mentioned that all negotiating governments must have a team representing them. This team needs to consist of people who have the best interests of the country at heart. It should comprise people who will be able to represent their country during the agreement negotiations [PAT2]. Both PAT9 and PAT2 expressed the importance of consultation when setting up a negotiation team. PAT9 further stated that it is vital for governments to understand their interests; this is important when setting up their negotiating teams.

Study participants emphasised that before negotiations commence, there must be thorough consultation and search of information about the topic under discussion. In addition, stakeholders should understand one another's interests before entering into discussion. This will ensure that each member state is able to negotiate with other states. Negotiation teams must be well informed and have all the information about the topic under discussion at hand. The negotiating teams should comprise members who are versatile and do not only understand the proceedings of their own states, but are also knowledgeable about the interests of other states. Table 12 presents participant responses regarding the establishment of negotiating teams.

Table 12: Participants' quotations about negotiating teams

<i>The crucial steps in governments negotiating within Africa can be set up of the negotiation team. [PAT2]</i>
<i>It starts with consultation to understand the interests of the various stakeholders, because after all, we are doing the agreement for stakeholders, particularly business [PAT9]</i>
<i>"Wide consultation, especially with Non-State Actors in particular the Organized Private Sector". [PAT5]</i>
<i>They have to understand their interests and then, but also, they often have opposing interests [PAT9].</i>

Construction of the negotiation position

The construction of a negotiation position is another step identified by study participants as crucial to the negotiation process within Africa. PAT2 explained that it is crucial for stakeholders to formulate their positions through careful planning of resources before negotiations commence. Such resources include relevant partners, investors and other stakeholders. This requires the representatives of member states to be well informed on matters relating to their countries so that they are able to mobilise the relevant partners.

PAT3 explained that countries must ensure their negotiating positions align with their country's economic development, and are presented by well-informed representatives in order to be effective. Both PAT2 and PAT 3 emphasised that development of negotiating positions has to align with the country's economic development, which can be achieved through mobilisation of relevant partners. It is therefore crucial that all the representatives are well informed about their countries [PAT2 and PAT3]. These views are presented in Table 13.

Table 13: Participants' quotations about negotiation positions

<i>The formulation of negotiation position for each topic, area and sector which need to be based on the solid survey for each country on its status and potential capacity, and the mobilisation of the relevant partners, stakeholders, and financial resources to do the job and follow the process [PAT2]</i>
<i>Development of negotiating positions that are aligned to the country's economic development, appointing skilled personnel to advance and defend these positions as well as to seek alignment with likeminded states [PAT3].</i>

Recognition of power

PAT3 explained that stakeholders in the negotiation process needed to recognise the powers behind national positions and have an understanding of the political and economic conditions of the African countries involved, in order to be able to make decisions that align with the political and economic states of the countries. This view supports the construction of the negotiation position, emphasising that the countries must be aware of the economic states of all the countries involved in the negotiations. This statement is presented in Table 14 below.

Table 14: Participants' quotation about recognition of power

<i>recognition of powers behind national positions as some could be donor or political driven i.e. Understanding of the political and economic landscape. PAT3</i>
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Formation of a fully functional structure

The formation of a fully functional structure is another step identified by participants as crucial for governments involved in negotiations within Africa. PAT4 explained that each country must have in place structures that are responsible for different roles during the negotiations, including representatives and people assigned to specific tasks. PAT6 supported this view by mentioning economic communities as part of the fully functional structure that is needed during negotiations. Responses from participants with regard to the formation of a fully functional structure are presented in Table 15 below.

Table 15: Participants' quotations about fully functional structures

<i>Establishment of a fully functional secretariat and structure within regional blocks as well as assigning country representatives attached to the trade and chamber of commerce [PAT4].</i>
<i>Regional economic communities as building blocks towards continental integration [PAT6].</i>

Summary

In summary, the following steps were considered by study participants to be crucial for governments negotiating within Africa: Commitment to the process, set-up of the negotiation team, construction of negotiation position, recognition of power, and a fully functional structure. It was evident that the representatives of each member state in the negotiations should be knowledgeable about the issues under discussion. They should have a solid knowledge that would enable them to represent their states effectively. Representatives should be able to mobilise relevant partners, understand global trade protocols, and be knowledgeable about their country's economic status. These steps that have been identified and discussed should be implemented by states when appointing representatives for agreement negotiations.

5.4.3 Research Sub-Question 3

As per Table 3, research question 3 comprises two themes, namely, balancing of the collective and individual interests, and methods of settling conflicting collective interests. The question seeks to discuss the collective interest of members of the AfCFTA, the interests of individual states, effective dispute-resolution mechanisms, dialogue between states, and dispute adjudicating panels.

5.4.3.1 Settlement of conflicting collective and individual interests in African regional economic cooperation and integration

The third research question of the study can be recapped as follows:

Research sub-question 3: How are conflicting collective and individual interests balanced/settled in African regional economic cooperation and integration?

This research question aims to determine how the collective and individual interests are settled in African regional economic cooperation and integration. This resulted in the construction of themes four and five. The discussion turns to theme 4 of the balancing of collective and individual interests.

5.4.3.1.1 Theme Four: Balancing of collective and individual interests

Theme Four was developed to discuss conflicting collective and individual interests. As stakeholders were identified, it became evident that conflict emerges between states during negotiations. These conflicts sometime occur between states and individuals. Nevertheless, they need to be balanced and this theme was therefore developed to address how this could be achieved.

Interests were identified as the collective interest of members of the AfCFTA versus the interests of the individual state. Some respondents supported collective interest by balancing of interest by member states. Other respondents argued that each country has its own citizens' interests at heart and there is nothing like collective interest. In summary, there was found to be a contradiction between what is defined the collective interest versus the individual interests of members.

Collective interest of members of the AfCFTA

Collective interests are those interests of the different countries involved in the agreement negotiations. These interests differ from one country to another, and the manner in which to balance them also differs. According to study participants, the individual countries will look at their own interests and try to balance them. Because various states are involved in the negotiations, each with differing interests, the way in which to balance them would be to allow each member state to prioritise their own interests; therefore, a balance of interests can be achieved. PAT2 stated that those countries that are more advanced in technology have manufacturing skills and resources, and so their interest would lie with the manufacture of products to sell to countries with fewer manufacturing resources and skills.

Contrary to the views of PAT2, PAT4 believes that each country has its own citizens at heart and would therefore aim their welfare [PAT4]. This view was supported by PAT13, who stated that the most important thing that countries consider is protecting their citizens during the trading process from any form of exploitation by foreign states [PAT13]. Participants' responses with regard to the collective interest of members of the AfCFTA are presented in Table 16.

Table 16: Participant quotations about collective interest of members of AfCFTA

<p><i>Some countries are advanced in technology, manufacturing, ecommerce, while others are exporters of raw materials. The advanced ones will be looking at markets in other countries for their produce, FDI in other countries. [PAT2]</i></p>
<p><i>The small countries will be looking at gaining from the developments of the advanced economies. The AfCFTA should critically look at all these angles and find a common ground, through the protocols, the Annexes and implementation process and ensures that everyone, big and small is included. [PAT2]</i></p>
<p><i>Each Members State in the region want to give the best to is citizens. It can be some time the national interest relating the comparative advantage for production some good. [PAT4]</i></p>
<p><i>Interest that address a country's needs in trade, that reduce the bottle necks associated with movement of goods and agreements and protecting the citizens from external traders. [PAT13]</i></p>

Interests of individual states

Interests of individual states are those interests that are specific to each country. The country identifies the interests that would be of benefit to it and its citizens by looking at the strengths and skills it possesses, in order to ensure the development of its citizens without inclusion of foreign countries. PAT2 provided an example by referencing Kenya and how the country would balance its interests within its borders [PAT2]. In addition, PAT14 explained that stakeholders within a country have different interests; there might be government interests and private interests, but the main aim is to develop the economy and the welfare of the citizens of that particular country [PAT14]. Participant responses with regard to the interests of individual states are presented in Table 17 below.

Table 17: Participants' quotations about interests of individual states

<p><i>For example, Kenya will be looking at finding markets for its agricultural products, its art, and cultural items, FDI to other countries to establish businesses dealing with both goods and services. Developments in real estate's etc. [PAT2]</i></p>
<p><i>Different stakeholders in a country have different interests. E.g. Government interests may differ from private sector interests. [PAT14]</i></p>

Summary

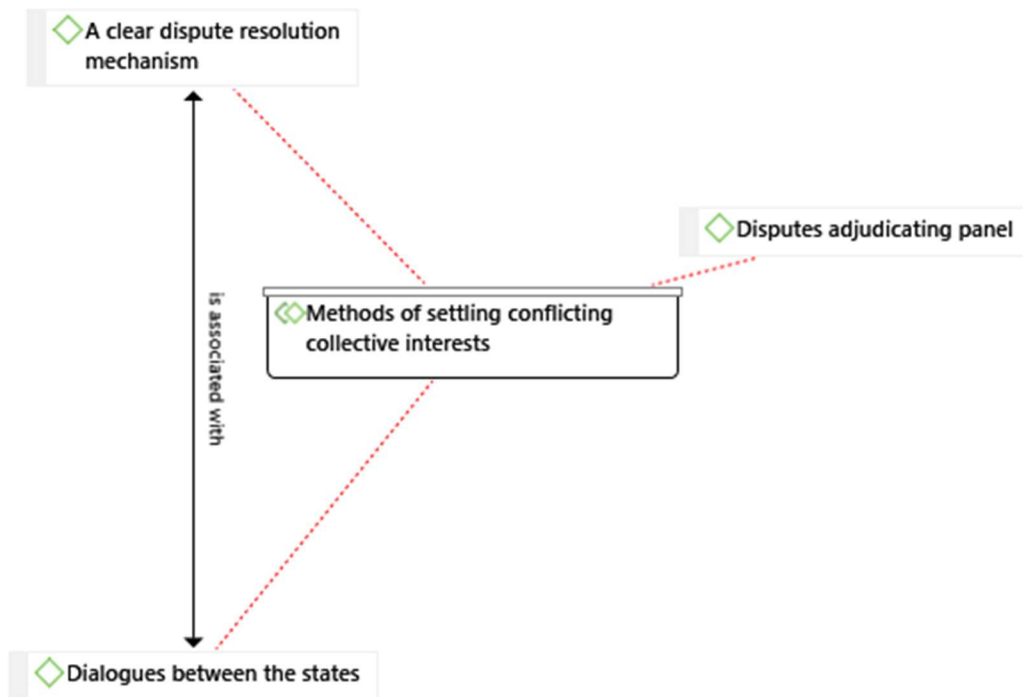
In summary, interests were identified as collective interests of members of the AfCFTA and individual interests of the states. These interests are balanced by identifying and prioritising what each member state believes would be of benefit to it. It was evident from the participant responses that there are interests that are collective interests of the members of the AfCFTA and there are interests that are individual interests of a state, but what was more significant was that these interests needed to be balanced.

The states must be aware of their strengths and resources, and utilise these to reach favourable outcomes. States further advanced in terms of technology, for example, should invest in and produce services that could be sold to states that are not as technologically advanced. In addition, participants also highlighted the need for government and the private sector to work together for the benefit of the state. The discussion now turns to Theme Five, which will focus on the methods by which to settle conflicting collective interests.

5.4.4 Theme Five: Methods of settling conflicting collective interests.

Theme Five was constructed to discuss the methods of settling conflicting collective interests. It often occurs that where there are collective interests, conflicts are likely to arise due to differing opinions. The study participants were asked to discuss interests, conflicts and how they are resolved. Three significant elements were identified in order to discuss the methods of settling conflicting collective interests, and these are clear dispute resolution mechanisms, dialogue between states, and dispute adjudicating panels. These were grouped and are presented in Figure 4 below. Respondents appeared to agree that clear dispute resolution mechanisms can only be developed through dialogue between states and the existence of adjudicating panels to assist should conflicts arise.

Figure 9: Methods for settling conflicting interest



Effective dispute resolution mechanism

Clear dispute resolution mechanisms can be used by states to resolve conflicts. Such mechanisms need to be agreed upon and accepted by all states party to the negotiations. PAT8 stated that experts in international law should approve the dispute resolution mechanism. This view shows that the dispute mechanism that is chosen must be in line with the requirements of the law; it must not infringe on the rights of any stakeholders. In any manner. PAT6 further explained that there must be political will among member states in discussions, PAT6 believed that political will and commitment to achieving the objectives of the regional integrations would be an effective dispute-resolution mechanism. The participant responses are presented in Table 18 below.

Table 18: Participants’ quotations about effective dispute resolution mechanisms

<i>From the word go there must be a noticeably clear and agreed dispute resolution mechanism that can be adopted and accepted by everyone and commitment to following that dispute resolution protocol or document when disputes arise, but also the over-arching objective of integrations should be the guiding principle [PAT7].</i>
<i>The way to work is that we have now a dispute settlement mechanism that is completely separate from national governance and a dispute settlement mechanism that is going to comprise experts in international law [PAT8].</i>
<i>But once the political will is there to sustain it, we can find way to resolve all those challenges and stick with the objective of one Africa [PAT6].</i>

Dialogue between the states

PAT1 stated that dialogues between parties and the inclusion of a third party is another method by which to resolve conflicts. PAT15 stated that dialogues between the states may not always have the same results because some states are more effective in dialogues than others. This postulates that when conflicts arise among the states, they must sit down and talk to resolve these disputes. Every state must be represented by persons skilled in communication in order for these dialogues to be successful. Table 19 presents participant responses on dialogue between states.

Table 19: Participants' quotations about dialogue between states

<i>Conflicts are resolved through dialogue between parties and mediation by third parties [PAT1].</i>
<i>Not all the countries are good at not all governments are very good at liaising closely with their business sectors and with their civil society organisations. Some are particularly good, but others are not [PAT15].</i>

Dispute adjudicating panels

PAT8 indicated that adjudicating panels should be in place as means to settle disputes that arise between states. PAT8 further indicated that this panel should consist of experts in trade law, and not comprise individuals who do not have experience or knowledge of trade law. Table 20 below presents the response regarding dispute adjudicating panels.

Table 20: Participants' quotations about dispute adjudicating panel

<i>So, the panel itself that adjudicates on the dispute is going to comprise of the best experts in trade law that we will be able to find. It will be advised by an expert review group and then it will deliberate an issue or ruling. If you do not like the ruling, we have the right to appeal [PAT8].</i>

Summary

In summary, three factors were identified as the methods of settling conflicting collective interests. These factors are a clear dispute-resolution mechanism, dialogue between states, and dispute adjudicating panels. Most of the participants mentioned that it is essential to have a dispute resolution mechanism in the negotiations. It was also emphasised that mechanisms such as the adjudicating dispute panel should be made up of people who understand trade law.

5.5 Answering the research questions

Research sub-question 1: Which actors in the liberal intergovernmentalist approach hold the most power within the African context?

This research question aimed to determine which actors hold the most power in the liberal intergovernmentalist approach within the African context. The study managed to answer this research question by identifying the categories of stakeholders. Stakeholder dominance was discussed and revealed to be dependent on the issue under discussion. Some participants, however, believed that there is no dominance and all member states are equal in the negotiations.

Research sub-question 2: What are the steps in the negotiating process of the liberal intergovernmentalist approach within the African context?

The study managed to answer this research question, which aimed to determine the steps in the negotiating process of the liberal intergovernmentalist approach within the African context. Steps were identified and discussed from the participants' points of view.

Research sub-question 3: How are conflicting collective and individual interests balanced/settled in African regional economic cooperation and integration?

This research question aimed to discover how conflicting collective and individual interests are settled. The study managed to answer this research question from the responses given by participants.

5.6 Chapter summary

Sixteen participants were interviewed in the study, the findings of which revealed that the actors or stakeholders in the liberal intergovernmentalist approach fall into specific categories, which are those actors from the African continent that have a direct link to the AfCFTA (internal stakeholders), and international (external) stakeholders that are consulted for input and advice, but do not have a direct link to the AfCFTA.

The study revealed that stakeholder dominance is dependent on the issue under discussion at any particular time. Some participants expressed the belief that all member states are equal in the negotiations, there is no one state that is more powerful than another, and all the decisions are made through consensus. Some steps were identified as being crucial to the states involved in the negotiations within Africa.

The study showed that a thorough plan must be in place of how discussions will unfold, and that sufficient human, knowledge and research resources must be available to for the discussions to be a success. The study also revealed that conflicts exist among the states owing to their differing interests. It was, however, indicated that mechanisms must exist to resolve conflicting interests among member states. It was mentioned that in order for these mechanisms to be effective, they must be drafted and reviewed by experts in trade law.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

6.1 Introduction

The main objective of the study was to investigate regional cooperation and integration, particularly the intergovernmentalism approach to regional integration. The AfCFTA marks an essential milestone in Africa's long and rather strenuous history of regional integration. This chapter discusses each research question in turn and its relevance in terms of the literature and thus a conceptual model is developed.

The literature chapter reviewed the intergovernmentalist approach to regional integration, elaborating on national preference formation and interstate bargaining. The literature further reviewed institutional choice, contextual concerns, disparity of state preferences and hegemony in regional integration. The research data was collected through 16 semi-structured interviews with government officials, the Head of the AfCFTA, the education and business sectors, and regional and international bodies.

The selected respondents had roles and responsibilities relating to the AfCFTA, with some having been negotiators in the agreement. The interviews aimed to discover the role that government plays in ensuring regional agreements work, to enhance regional cooperation, discover other stakeholders at play and determine how conflict would be resolved. This chapter discusses the results from the interviews, what the literature outlines in reference to the intergovernmentalism approach, and the influence of other elements. The discussion is contextualised and introduced by the conceptual model for regional cooperation and integration using the intergovernmentalism approach.

The chapter will end with the conceptual model that seeks to capture the three research questions and research themes. First, the guiding principles and governance structure talks to RQ.1 themes one and two. Second, the negotiation process talks to RQ.2 theme three. Third, balancing the collective and individual interests speaks to RQ.3 theme four and, last, conflict resolution talks to theme five. The model extends that for continuous improvement and better results, all identified elements must be continuously monitored and evaluated. Lastly, the model will discuss the largest contribution from this research. But first is a discussion on the research questions.

6.2 Discussion on research questions

6.2.1 Power among actors in liberal intergovernmentalist approach

Research sub-question 1: Who holds the most power among the actors in the liberal intergovernmentalist approach within the African context?

The purpose of this research question was to bring to the fore where power lies within regional integration. Awareness of who holds the most power leads to an understanding of the interaction between the actors in regional integration. Moreover, having an understanding of where the power lies would assist in determining whether such power is put to good use.

Research question 1 saw the emergence of two themes, namely the identification of stakeholders involved, and the power of stakeholders. The two themes seek to discuss internal stakeholders (African stakeholders), external stakeholders (international stakeholders), and the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders. The two themes are clearly stated in the conceptual model in Figure 10 at the end of this chapter. This chapter will first reveal what was uncovered in question 1 and then move on to discuss the relevant literature reviewed in Chapter 2.

6.2.1.1 Theme one: Identification of stakeholders (groupings under theme one include – internal stakeholders, external stakeholders and roles and responsibilities)

It emerged that there is general consensus among respondents that the most influence was found to be in Africa (internal stakeholders), while external stakeholders (international) and regional bodies were used for advisory roles and as guiding frameworks against which the standard of the AfCFTA could be measured. What was significant is that all identified stakeholders have a role to play in the agreement negotiations. The standard of the AfCFTA must be measured against the provisions of the international stakeholders to ensure that the negotiations are well-conducted.

Hooghe and Marks (2018) indicated that the actors involved in liberal intergovernmentalism consist of national governments and issue-specific interests. The studies of Reinold (2019) revealed that there have been increasing calls for non-state actors, such as civil society organisations (CSOs), to play a role in regional cooperation and integration.

The studies of Reinold (2019) focused on the participation of CSOs in regional organisations consisting of EAC, ECOWAS and the SADC. It was demonstrated that CSOs were playing an increased role in regional organisations such as ECOWAS, and to a lesser extent in the EAC and SADC (Reinold, 2019). The involvement of CSOs was largely dependent on the goodwill of Secretariat officials and was prevalent in ECOWAS to a greater extent than in the SADC (Zajontz & Leysens, 2015). The studies of Mlambo (2020) echoed the same sentiments, that there is low involvement of CSOs in regional integration in sub-Saharan Africa.

The participants of the study highlighted the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders. It was evident that all stakeholders have a specific role to play. The existence of different stakeholders playing different roles is advantageous because it means that tasks are well distributed and input is comprehensive. The negotiations can therefore be regarded as efficient. It is also advantageous to have different inputs from different states. The presence of international stakeholders brings an added advantage in that the negotiation processes of the AfCFTA can be measured against the international trade agreements, enabling compatibility with global trade standards. Theme two, which forms part of RQ1 and focuses on the power of stakeholders, will now be discussed.

6.2.1.2 Theme two: Power of the stakeholders (groupings include equal power within the stakeholders and dominance of developed or larger economies)

The respondents revealed that identified stakeholders operate at different levels of dominance or power during the course of the negotiations. There are those stakeholders with more assertive power than others, and this depicts a contradiction between the dominance of developed or larger economies and unequal power within the stakeholder group set. This brings the study to the question of who holds the most power, with findings revealing contrasting views, the most dominant being there is no specific stakeholder dominance, as all member countries are equal and as such have equal power in negotiations.

Coşkun (2015) pointed out that the state that holds the most power is the one whose economic interests are the most intense. This notion was supported by Krapohl, Meissner and Muntschick (2014), who revealed that in instances where there are

disparities of preferences regarding regional cooperation and integration matters, superpowers (that is, states with more political and economic power) use their influence in negotiations to their benefit. An example cited was negotiations concerning the establishment of the Union Government Initiative (UGI) spearheaded by Lybia, in which South Africa and Nigeria used their power as states that had contributed some of the highest revenue to the AU (Forbacha, 2020). In response to this move, Lybia (also one of the biggest contributors of revenue) threatened to withdraw its donation to the AU if agreement to establish the UGI was not adopted (Forbacha, 2020). Such is a demonstration of attempts by states to use power to force other members of the AU to support their positions.

Other participants in the research study believed that even though there is a balance of power, there are actors or states with more resources, more expertise, more human resources and more financial muscle to be able to partake in negotiations and exert more power.

Krapohl et al. (2014) explained that superpowers tend to provide leadership in the event that regional integration is in harmony with extra-regional interest. Contrary to that, when regional integration is not in harmony with extra-regional interests, superpowers tend to be disruptive, to such an extent that any progress made might be negatively affected (Forbacha, 2020). Mlambo and Ogunnubi (2018) concurred with the aforementioned assertion in their studies, which mentioned that South Africa negotiated trade policies with the EU on behalf of the SACU without its knowledge. As a result, South Africa was viewed as attempting to promote its own interests and not those of the SACU (Arndt & Roberts, 2020).

a) Summary of key findings

The study revealed that all respondents held a general belief that commitment to the process is crucial, and that the establishment of a negotiation team forms part of a fully functional structure. In addition, it emerged that the construction of a negotiation position is associated with recognition of power.

In summary, the steps committed to the process, namely the set-up of the negotiation team, construction of negotiation position, recognition of power and a fully functional structure, are crucial for governments when negotiating within Africa. It was evident that

the representatives for each member state in the negotiations must be knowledgeable about the issues under discussion.

- Representatives need to have a solid knowledge that will enable them to represent their states to benefit them economically.
- They must be able to mobilise the relevant partners.
- They must understand global trade protocols.
- They must have knowledge of their state's economic statuses.

When states are appointing representatives in agreement negotiations, they must practise the steps identified and discussed above.

In summation, the findings from the study not only confirm and extend certain matters written in the literature review, but also contrast with other matters regarding this question. In relation to the actors within the liberal intergovernmentalist approach, the study confirms that there are internal stakeholders that participate. The literature review pointed out that the actors comprise national governments and issue-specific interest groups. In addition, non-state actors have been playing an increasing role in regional cooperation and integration. The term internal stakeholder is broad and encompasses national governments and their issue-specific interests, as well as civil society organisations (CSOs).

Moreover, the study confirmed that external stakeholders played an indirect and consultative role in the negotiations. Nonetheless, the findings were in contrast to the literature in connection with which actors hold the most power in regional cooperation and integration. The findings from the study revealed that all actors have equal power in their interactions around regional cooperation and integration. In contrast, the literature review depicted that in the event of differing preferences between the member states regarding regional integration, superpowers take matters into their own hands and drag the entire regional grouping towards their own preferences.

b) Conclusion

The literature review confirms that national governments are actors of great influence in liberal intergovernmentalism. There have been increasing calls for non-state stakeholders and networks to play a role in regional integration and cooperation. This confirms that the dominant members use economic and political power to influence negotiations. Superpowers exist on platforms such as the AfCFTA.

This research paper confirms that governments are the main actors in agreement negotiations, and extends that there are more roles and responsibilities in negotiations thus the involvement of other actors such as business, international networks, regional networks and the education sector. Having different stakeholders playing different roles is advantageous because the tasks are well distributed and input is comprehensive. The negotiations can therefore be regarded as efficient. The presence of international stakeholders brings an added advantage in that the negotiation processes of the AfCFTA can be measured against international trade agreements, enabling compatibility with global trade standards.

The research paper further confirms that dominating members or superpowers exist in these negotiations. There are those stakeholders with more assertive power than others, and this depicts a contradiction between the dominance of developed or larger economies and the unequal power within the stakeholder group set. Lastly, this research has found contrast in that in some cases equal power does exist. The research was not expecting the existence of both equal and dominant powers in the negotiations.

6.2.2 Steps in negotiating process of liberal intergovernmentalist approach

Research sub-question 2: What are the steps in the negotiating process of the liberal intergovernmentalist approach within the African context?

The purpose of this question was to gain an understanding of the bargaining process in which member states are involved in regional cooperation and integration in accordance with liberal intergovernmentalism. As such, the bargaining process stipulated in accordance with the liberal intergovernmentalism approach was compared with findings from this study. The expectation was that the bargaining process from the literature review would be similar to the bargaining process from the findings of this study. The bargaining process from the literature review is discussed below.

The pre-bargaining step of the bargaining process involves preparation for bargaining in regional cooperation and integration. Member states are provided with fundamental information regarding preferences for each participant (Schimmelfennig & Winzen, 2019). The supranational body submits a proposal of new legislation in line with the ambitions of the rationally acting member states heads. It is vital that such a proposal be in keeping with the domestic preferences of the member states (Coşkun, 2015).

Research question 2 has one emerging theme, the steps for a negotiation process. The conceptual model depicted in Figure 10 highlights the following elements as forming part of research question 2, namely commitment to the process, negotiation team setup, recognition of power, and the formation of a fully functional structure. The findings in research question 2 will be discussed first, followed by a discussion of the literature reviewed in chapter 2 that is related to research question 2.

Once all member states are aware of each other's preferences as well as the proposed legislations based on those preferences, bargaining can begin. The policy outcomes that flow from bargaining are a consequence of the distribution of power among the member states (Schimmelfennig & Winzen, 2019). The bargaining power of the member states stems from the asymmetry of the intensity of member state preferences (Mareike & Pollack, 2018). The lowest common denominator among member states determines the policy outcome (Coşkun, 2015). Lowest-common-denominator bargaining refers to a bargaining technique that reflects the relative power of the member states in which the outcome would appeal to the largest number of states (Borzel & Risse, 2019). The only fundamental actors in this step are the state heads whose bargaining power diminishes with the availability of external options (Schimmelfennig & Winzen, 2019).

a) Conclusion

Literature reviewed focused on the steps of pre-bargaining and bargaining. Pre-bargaining involves preparation for bargaining in regional cooperation and integration. The supranational body submits a proposal of new legislation that is in line with the ambitions of the rationally acting heads of the member states. Once the member states are aware of each other's preferences and the proposed legislation, bargaining can commence. The distribution of power among member states are policy outcomes that flow from bargaining. Policy outcomes are determined by the lowest common denominator among member states. Lowest-common-denominator bargaining refers to a bargaining technique that reflects the relative power of the member states in which the outcome would appeal to the largest number of states (Borzel & Risse, 2019).

This research paper confirms that commitment to the process is crucial, as is the setting up of a negotiation team to form a fully functional structure. In addition, the construction of a negotiation position is associated with recognition of power, as per the literature. The paper extends that commitment to the process, set-up of the negotiation team,

construction of a negotiation position, recognition of power, and the formation of a fully functional structure are crucial for governments negotiating within Africa. It is evident that the representatives of each member state in the negotiations must be knowledgeable about the issues under discussion. They need to have solid knowledge that will enable them to represent their states to benefit them economically.

6.2.3 Conflicting collective and individual interests balanced or settled

Research question 3: How are the conflicting collective and individual interests balanced/settled in African regional economic cooperation and integration?

The purpose of this question was to grasp the manner in which conflicting collective and individual interests are settled in regional integration within the African context. Thus, a comparison was made of the study findings with the literature reviewed.

Research question 3 has two themes, namely balancing of the collective and individual interests, and methods of settling conflicting collective interests. The themes seek to discuss the collective interest of members of the AfCFTA, the interests of individual states, effective dispute-resolution mechanisms, dialogue between states, and dispute adjudicating panels.

6.2.3.1 Theme four: Balancing the collective and individual interests

Theme four was developed to discuss the conflicting collective and individual interests. As the stakeholders were identified, it became evident that conflicts between states occurred during negotiations. These conflicts of interest, however, need to be balanced and thus this theme was developed to highlight how this is achieved. To discuss this, interests were identified as collective interests of members of the AfCFTA and interests of the individual state. Some respondents supported collective interest as balancing of interest by member states. Other respondents, however, argued that each country has its own citizens at heart and there is nothing like collective interest. In summary, there was contradiction between collective and individual interests of members.

As domestic pressure continuously changes, the liberal integovernmentalist approach stipulates that member states have diverse foreign policies “whose preferences are aggregated through political institutions” (Moravcsik 1993, p. 481). It is for this reason that member states bargain in connection with their national preferences up until they

reach a common ground, implying that it is then that the national preferences coincide (Mareike & Pollack, 2018). When state preferences coincide they are favourable to each member state, and either broader or vaster integration ensues as an outcome of regional integration (Schimmelfennig & Winzen, 2019). It was therefore imperative to examine the manner in which conflicting collective and individual interests are settled among member states.

In summary, interests were identified as collective interests of the members of the AfCTFA and interests of the individual state. These interests are balanced by identifying and prioritising what each member state believes would be of benefit to it. It was evident from the participants' responses that there are interests that are common interests of the members of the AfCTFA. The states must know their strengths and resources, and leverage these to reach favourable outcomes. When a state is more advanced in terms of technology, for example, it must invest and produce services it can trade with other less capable states. It was also highlighted that the government and private sector need to work together towards the benefit of the states.

6.2.3.2 Theme five: Methods of settling conflicting collective interests

Borzel and Risse (2019, p. 67) argued that “collective and individual interests often conflict, with hard bargaining over the distribution of gains sapping the willingness and ability of states to cooperate”. This meant that the desired goals of the state would not be achieved in the event that the strengthening of integration among states failed (Mareike & Pollack, 2018). Hard bargaining therefore plays a vital role, given that what matters most is efficiency of bargaining and the sharing of benefits at this level. It is ‘asymmetrical independence’, which explains how such integration is achieved in intergovernmentalism (Borzel & Risse, 2019). As such, some states compromise in the course of negotiation so as to benefit economically from integration, in contrast to those that benefit least yet have more power to establish the integration terms (Schimmelfennig & Winzen, 2019).

Theme five was constructed to discuss the methods of settling conflicting collective interests. It often occurs that conflicts arise when there are collective interests, owing to the differing opinions. In this study, participants were asked to discuss the interests within a country, the conflicts, and how they are resolved. Three significant elements were identified to discuss the methods of settling conflicting collective interests, and these are:

- clear dispute-resolution mechanisms
- dialogues between the states
- dispute adjudicating panels

The respondents seemed to agree that a clear dispute-resolution mechanism can only be developed through dialogue between the states, and that an adjudicating panel should be available to assist when conflict arises.

In summary, three methods were identified to settle conflicting collective interests. These are clear dispute-resolution mechanisms, dialogue between states, and dispute adjudicating panels. The majority of participants mentioned that it is essential to have a dispute-resolution mechanism in place in the negotiations. It was also emphasised that these mechanisms, such as the adjudicating dispute panel, must comprise people who understand trade law.

a) Conclusion

Literature reveals that member states have different foreign policies and needs. They often bargain in connection with their own national preferences until they reach a common ground. Literature shows that collective and individual interests often conflict. Hard bargaining plays a vital role. Surprisingly, it was revealed that some states compromise in the course of negotiations so as to benefit economically from integration, in contrast to states that benefit least yet have the power to establish the terms of integration and cooperation.

This research study confirmed that collective and individual interests conflict more during negotiations. The study's findings have revealed that there must be a promotion of dialogue between states, dispute-resolution mechanisms, and dispute adjudication panels as a means by which to balance or settle conflicting collective and individual interest issues between countries in African regional economic cooperation and integration.

Some respondents supported the collective interest as the balancing of interests by member states. Other respondents voiced contrary views, arguing that each country has the interests of its own citizens at heart and there is nothing like collective interest. In summary, the study found a contradiction between collective and individual interests of members. The research confirmed the literature in its discovery of methods to settle

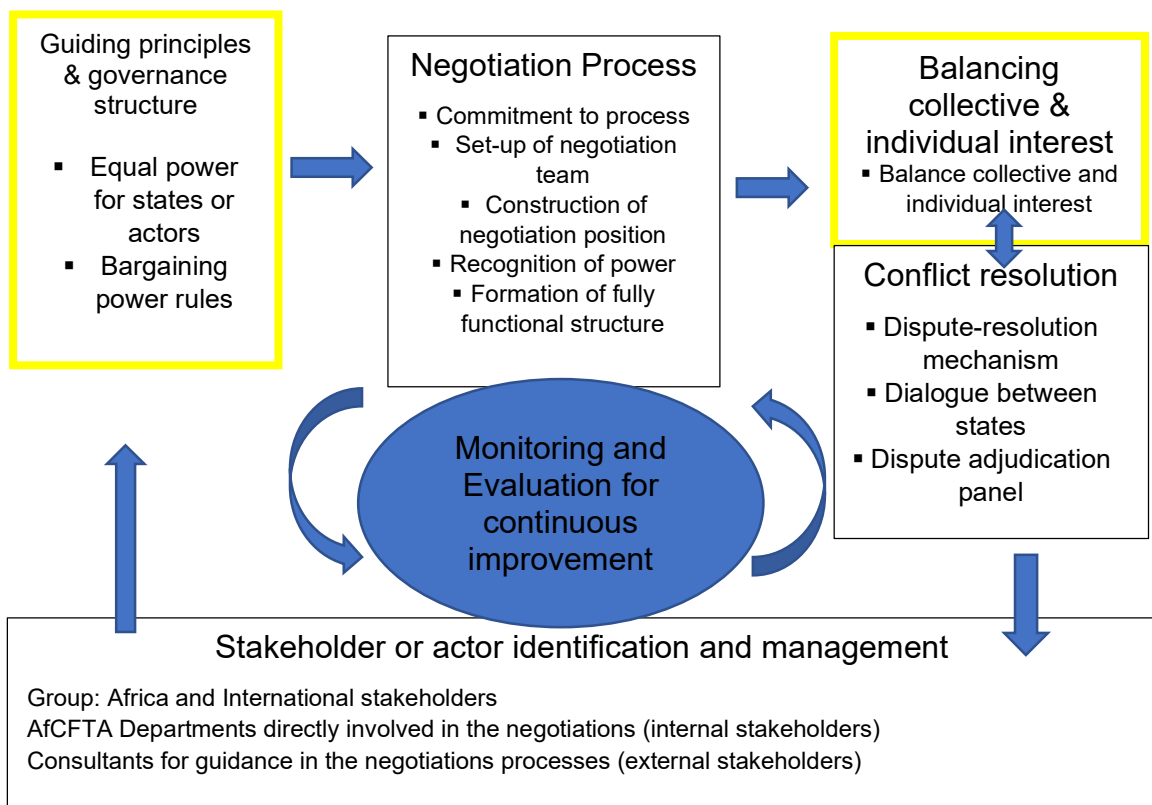
conflicting collective interests. Three significant elements were identified to discuss the methods of settling conflicting collective interest and these are:

- clear dispute-resolution mechanisms
- dialogue between the states
- dispute adjudicating panel

6.3 Conceptual model for regional cooperation and integration using the intergovernmentalism approach to regional integration

The conceptual model below captures Chapter 6. The yellow blocks represent that the research parts with the largest contribution are found in themes two and four because they stand out in contrast to what the literature has said and the study has confirmed.

Figure 10: Conceptual model for regional cooperation and integration using intergovernmentalism approach to regional integration



CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

This chapter presents a summary of the findings of the research study, which investigated regional cooperation and integration within Africa, specifically in relation to the liberal intergovernmentalist approach. Furthermore, the chapter explains the implications and limitations of the research, and considers recommendations for future research.

7.1 Research Findings

The liberal intergovernmentalist approach has played a crucial role for more than a quarter of a century as a paradigm approach in grasping the EU process of integration and, lately, that of the AU (Forbacha, 2020). The main focus of this study was therefore to examine the application of the liberal intergovernmentalist approach to regional integration and, in particular, the AfCFTA agreement. The AfCFTA marks an essential milestone in Africa's long and rather strenuous history of integration.

One of the key tenets of the liberal intergovernmentalist approach is that power in connection with international institutions is possessed by member states, and decision-making is based on unanimity (Wiener et al., 2019). With various states having different economic and political power forming part of regional integration, however, there are instances where big states tend to have more influence on the proceedings (Mlambo & Ogunnubi, 2018). This prompted research questions such as whether big states are enablers or obstacles to regional integration, which actors hold the most power in the liberal intergovernmentalist approach, what is the negotiating process of the approach within the African context, and how are the conflicting collective and individual interests balanced or settled in African regional economic cooperation and integration.

The findings of the study are summarised under five main themes, which emerged from the three research questions. The first and second themes sought to identify the stakeholders involved in the agreement negotiations and to determine the power of those stakeholders. These themes discussed internal (African) and external (international) stakeholders, as well as their roles and responsibilities in negotiations within the African context. The third theme centred on commitment to the negotiation process, the set-up of the negotiation team, recognition of power, and the formation of a fully functional structure. Themes four and five focused on the collective versus individual interests, and

the methods employed to settle conflicts. The theme sought to discuss the collective interest of members of the AfCFTA, the interests of individual states, effective dispute-resolution mechanisms, dialogue between states, and dispute adjudicating panels.

Chapter one focused on the introduction to research problem. This was followed by Chapter 2, which spoke to the literature. Chapter 3 discussed the research questions, and Chapter 4 elaborated on the research methodology. Chapter 5 analysed the data and chapter 6 discussed the results. Lastly, came the conclusion.

Important to note is the largest contributions to the findings of the study were found in themes two and four, which stand out in contrast to what the literature has said and the study has confirmed. This has been demonstrated in chapter 6 in the conceptual framework.

7.1.1 Research sub-question 1: Who holds the most power among the actors in the liberal intergovernmentalist approach within the African context?

The study answered this research question by identifying the categories of stakeholders. The study interviewed 16 participants, and the findings revealed that the actors or stakeholders in the liberal intergovernmentalist approach fall into specific categories, namely actors from the African continent (internal stakeholders) that are directly linked to the AfCFTA, and international or external stakeholders who merely play a consultative role and do not have a direct link to the agreement. The study also revealed that stakeholder dominance depends on the issues under discussion. At the same time, it showed that member states are equal in the negotiations; that no state is more powerful than another and all decisions are taken by consensus.

7.1.2 Research sub-question 2: What are the steps in the negotiating process of the liberal intergovernmentalist approach within the African context?

The study answered this research question by identifying and discussing the steps crucial to governments involved in agreement negotiations within the African context. It emerged that there must be a thorough plan of how the discussions will unfold as well as sufficient human, knowledge and research resources to sustain the discussion to ensure success. The study also revealed that conflicts among states emerge during negotiations as a result of differing interests, but indicated that mechanisms exist to resolve such conflicts.

7.1.3 Research sub-question 3: How are the conflicting collective and individual interests balanced/settled in African regional economic cooperation and integration?

This research question aimed to find out how conflicting collective and individual interests are settled. The study managed to answer this research question from the responses given by the participants, identifying effective dispute-resolution mechanisms, dialogue between states, and dispute adjudicating panels as essential elements.

7.2 Implications of the Study

It is vital to note that the study made a considerable contribution to the body of knowledge for African regional integration and within academic circles, bearing in mind that there has been numerous research regarding the liberal intergovernmentalist approach within the EU context and to a lesser extent within the African context (Forbacha, 2020). Moreover, the differences of experience in regional integration of the EU and the AU, which were explicated in section 2.3, made it clear that the liberal intergovernmentalist approach cannot be applied as a one-size-fits-all approach (Ibrahim & Ogbeidi, 2015). As such, the study highlighted that hegemony comes to the fore due to the presence in African regional integration of member states with varying economic and political powers as well as disparities in state preferences (Mlambo & Ogunnubi, 2018). Thus it was plausible to opine that the liberal intergovernmentalist approach does not provide for all the facets of regional economic integration within the African context (Forbacha, 2020). This might be food for thought for other contemporary scholars to take into account when applying the liberal intergovernmentalist approach to the African context.

7.3 Limitations of the Study

The limitations of the study include the following factors:

1. The sample was a select number of people on a management level who have worked closely on the AfCFTA agreement in different roles.
2. The majority of the sample was government officials.
3. The researcher had personal work relations with most of the sample and that could have led to bias in terms of analysis of responses.

7.4 Recommendations for Future Research

The research was conducted on the role of government in regional integration and cooperation, with the AfCFTA being the single case study. The research looked at stakeholders, roles and responsibilities, the negotiation process, and collective and individual interests.

Both the literature review and the study findings suggest that future research should focus broadly on the following:

1. Improvement of stakeholder data and its documentation relating to the AfCFTA
2. Stakeholder activity and structures to be adequately defined
3. Formation of structured expert working groups to implement the AfCFTA
4. Improvement of different stakeholder strategies towards implementation of the AfCFTA
5. Alignment of different stakeholder strategies in relation to the AfCFTA
6. Future research on regional structures centered around the AfCFTA
7. Investigative studies on whether the new AfCFTA dispute systems actually work

In conclusion, there has been widespread support for regional integration in Africa by governments (Jiboku & Okeke-Uzodike, 2016); the rationale being that numerous regional integration accords have been instituted in Africa post-independence in various sectors, regional economic communities and member states (Babalola et al., 2015). Even though the goals and success of these regional integrations vary, it is crucial to note that enormous success has been realised in the trade of goods (Geda & Seid, 2015). If the success of other regional groupings is anything to go by, South Africa could use the AfCFTA to increase regional trade and cooperation. This can be seen by how the AfCFTA has progressed far quicker than anticipated, and is proving to be a more promising strategy with the support received from the continent. This research hopes that the government and other stakeholders involved in the implementation stages of the AfCFTA are able to put in place the necessary resources and teams to manage the work of stakeholder identification and negotiation, as well as the resolution of disputes that will arise in implementation of the agreement to ensure its success.

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APPENDIX A: RESEARCH GUIDE

Interview guide

- Allow me to start by thanking you for agreeing to participate in this interview.
- The goal of this research is to investigate the intergovernmental approach to regional integration and cooperation for which AfCFTA is the case study.

The interviews will be semi structured via telephone or virtual teleconference in a convenient environment. The interview will take approximately 10min. Please see questions below which I will be asking during our meeting. I would also like to request that you please complete the questions on this template and sign the consent form. Kindly note all interviews will be treated as anonymous. Your response would be highly appreciated.

Questions

1. *Please tell me about yourself and your relations to the African Continental Free Trade agreement?*
2. *Please tell me about the stakeholders who were involved, who are they, how did they /do they relate to each other, any sign of dominance?*
3. *How were you involved in the formulation and how did the formulation process work relate to your work?*
4. *Could you please tell me more about African integration/cooperation?*
5. *Have you ever worked on any other regional agreements?*
6. *What is your understanding of the intergovernmentalism approach?*
7. *To what extent do the intergovernmentalism approach suits the regional cooperation and integrations in Africa?*
8. *Who do you feels have most power when it comes to decision making in regional agreements?*
9. *What are the steps that you think are crucial in governments negotiating within Africa?*
10. *Tell me about the different interests? Tell me about national interests?*
11. *Tell me about interests within a country?*
12. *Tell me about relations between countries for the African continent about conflicts?*
13. *How are conflicts resolved?*

Anything else that you would like to add?

APPENDIX B: TRANSCRIPTS

Interviewer: Background, the aim of my research is to investigate the role of government in regional integration and cooperation for which the agreement, which is the AFCFTA is the case study. Um, the interview will be conducted on your social space and your views will not be taken um, as of your employer. Um, the interview will be approximately 15 minutes and please feel free to interject at any point. And that the last thing that I'd like to inform you about is that the interview will be recorded. Um, are you okay with it or not?

Interviewee: No, I'm fine with that.

Interviewer: Okay. I will then jump right into it. Um, for record purposes, may you please say your name, the company that you employed for designation and the role that you have played in the AFCFTA. So basically just please tell me about yourself.

Interviewee: Okay. So my name is Mapato Rapokgopa, I'm the manager in the office of the Commission at the Competition Commission. Um, part of my, I am an economist profession and part of my responsibilities is, uh, management of international relations. Um, so my responsibilities in international relations extends to advancing the work of the AFCFTA, uh, particularly around fostering regional integration and assisting in the development of a continental competition policy protocol. So I think that provides the background.

Interviewer: Thank you very much. Um, so please tell me in your engagement so far with the AFCFTA or which have relations today, agreement who have you engaged with, who were the stakeholders involved and, yeah.

Interviewee: So our main stakeholder is a, the government department responsible for negotiating the AFCFTA, uh, which is the Department of Trade and Industry. So, uh, we act as sort of advise us on some of the critical areas and of the agreement. So for instance, eh, the phase two of the agreement was meant to negotiate the competition policy protocol. So as a competition authority, we were requested then to, you know, provide sort of guidance to the Ministry in terms of what options to consider when they negotiate, uh, the competition policy protocol. So our main stakeholders in the, in the government department is responsible for negotiation, but we have other stakeholders where we are also trying to cooperate and influence the agenda of the AFCFTA. Uh, so it would be other colleagues from other competition authorities in the African continent, uh, where we use the forum, which is the African competition forum as a structure for cooperation, information sharing in terms of our strategies and just broadly coordinating our work around a regional integration. Um, but we also have other international authorities that are involved in trade and competition policy, for instance, the WTO and the OACD and maybe the international competition forum or competition network, where it's really around, eh, exchanges of, uh, research material on the topic of regional

integration, but even at some level where there would be capacity building exercises. So at the high level, I would say that those are main stakeholders that we've been involved with.

Interviewer: Okay, thank you very much then it leads to my next, um, question where your, from your personal feel, how, what do you think the government's role is in promoting African integration or cooperation? And to what extent should their role, um, be up to.

Interviewee: South Africa if it has to develop, right. Um, it, it can only do that through integration with the rest of Africa. And when you look at a regional communities that have been successful, like the EU, it's because of integration, um, there's a lot of resource sharing that they do. There's a lot of programs that we can share together to advance each other's countries development. So I think that, you know, the, the government has to take an active role to ensure that, eh, the integration happen. Integration when you look at, you know, previous researches or previous policy documents, it's always something that's been on the agenda, whether it's through the AU, through SADC, so various platforms. And I think time for us to start implementing, you know, things is now and what is nice the, um, the AFCFTA is that, and it's at a continental level, so it's not only focused on maybe specific region such as, you know, with SADC but rather it broadens the integration to a continental level. So I think government must take an active role to ensure that, you know, there's movement in terms of implementation, because I think most of the agreements that have been negotiated previously, eh, there has been a little bit of slow movement in terms of implementation. So yeah, I think there's the [inaudible] here. Thank you.

Interviewer: Um, which leads us to the last question, which talks to the agreement itself. So as you know, the agreement is made up of different African countries, which will naturally present national.....different national interests, right. Um, and this might also bring up conflict. So what's your take at looking at, um, the different national interests, your thinking on how conflicts might be resolved if any arise, and what's crucial for governments to note for this to be a success.

Interviewee: Look, I think, um, one of the things to consider is firstly, the levels of development of each country and secondly, the strengths and the weaknesses of different countries, because once you have recognition of those, it would be easier to formulate objectives that accommodate all members interests. So if you knew that South Africa's strength is A, and, um, let's say Kenya strength is B, you are able to drive the objectives of the corporation agreements factoring in the different areas of strength and as I said, also, the different areas of weaknesses, uh, but also important is that from the word go there must be a very clear, and agreed dispute resolution mechanism that can be adopted and accepted by everyone and commitment to following that, eh, the dispute resolution protocol or document, eh, when disputes arise, but also the over-arching objective of integrations should be the guiding principle. So everyone should be working towards integration. So even when you encountered a dispute, but a member should always be a way of the objectives of integration.

So, I mean, we, you know, where you avoid having a dispute on something that, um, you know, is minor to the overall objective. Um, those disputes should be done away with very quickly. So as not to derail the overall objective.

Interviewer: Great. Mapato, thank you very much, um, for enlightening me and then I gave thank you very much for your time. I don't know. Do you have any questions for me

Interviewee: No. not really, uh just good luck with this is very interesting.

Interviewer: Thank you. Thank you. Thank you very much. And just one thing may you please kindly don't forget to send me the, the completed one with the signed consent.

Interviewee: Okay. We'll do that. Do I have to respond to all those questions.

Interviewer: No, you can choose. No, because with this interview you covered almost all of them. So I only have three questions, which I broke down to 13 questions. Yes. So you can please answer the ones that you're comfortable with.

Interviewee: Okay. All right. No, that's fine.

Interviewer: Thank you.

Interviewee: Thanks, bye.

[10:43]

Interviewer: Okay, sir. Um, for the purposes of this meeting, may you kindly state your name, your role, and the organization that you work for?

Interviewee: Um, one [inaudible], secretary general, AFCFTA.

Interviewee: Okay. And what is your relations to the AFCFTA?

Interviewee: My relations?

Interviewer: [Inaudible]...look at it as you are teaching a student, group of students who don't know anything about it.

Interviewee: I'm the head of the AFCFTA secretariat

Interviewer: Okay. And it would now lead to if you are the Head, who do you work with your stakeholders directly to making this agreement work.

Interviewee: Um, my stakeholders are governments, private sector, um, primarily governments, uh, we refer to them as stake parties, cause they are the ones who have ratified the agreement. Of course the private sector is important because without the private sector, the agreements are meaningless. So, uh, we have to work with governments to make sure that the facilitate private sector, commercial activity. That's what we have [inaudible],

Interviewer: Um, maybe something more about your involvement in the formulation stages of this agreement.

Interviewee: So I was the head of, um, the negotiating team for South Africa. Um, when we started negotiating this agreement five, five years ago. Um, so I've been involved in it from the very beginning, uh, when we drafted what we called the agreement, establishing the AFCFTA and other subsidiary instruments. So I was involved from the very, very beginning from the very first meeting that we had as, um, as the African Union member States. So it is, um, something that I had been involved in from the very beginning.

Interviewer: Okay. And have you ever worked on any other regional agreements outside of AFCFTA?

Interviewee: Yes, SADC. I negotiated SADC, trade protocol, the tripartite trade FTA. So, um, I've been involved in a few.

Interviewer: Great. And may you please, from your, um, from your personal view, how do you feel about African integration and cooperation general broad?

Interviewee: It is, it is, um, it is moving slowly. Um integration on the continent is moving slowly, um, because in general, uh, regional integration is always difficult process. You, as a country, you have to align your laws to, um, whatever regional norm or regional standards you agree to. So you have to persuade your own country and domestic constituencies to align everything to an international instrument. Um, that's not easy. It takes a very, very long time. So, um, but that's to be expected. Europe took over 50 years to get to the point of, um, you know, a single market and and single currency. So it's a, it's a very, very difficult process, but it does have benefits. If you look at the fact that, uh, Eastern European countries, Poland, the Czech Republic, these are countries that after joining the, the common market peer review, they prospered, uh, uh, I think Poland, um, increased their GDP by over \$200 billion from, you know, from when they joined, um, the, the, um, the European union. You can see the, the difference it makes in a country's economic prosperity. So it's going to be equally difficult on the African continent. Um, and there will be setbacks, but we have to continue because we're trying to, if we want to build a market that by the year 2035 will be a combined US trillion dollars of almost \$7 trillion by the year 2035, if we want to leverage on that market, we have to continue and accelerate our regional integration efforts. So it's a difficult, um, process, but we have to take it to step by step.

Interviewer: I totally agree. It now leads me to the next question then, what do you think is the government's role in regional cooperation?

Interviewee: Well, uh, governments have to, as I was saying earlier, they have to, um, uh, uh, amend their laws, uh, amend their policies, uh, so that they, they are in line with their regional, uh, integration norms that would have been agreed to. Um, so governments play a critical role, uh, in, in that process. Um, there are things also that are outside of the hands of governments, for example, legislatures, parliaments have a role to play, uh, because most of the time the government has to go to the

parliament to have their agreement ratified. So parliament also has the legislative branch also has a role to play in facilitating regional integration.

Interviewer: So this leads us to national interest because with the AFCFTA, you have different member States, you have dominant economies, you have small, what you call small economies. How will this play out? I know you have a dispute resolution in their agreement, but here in Africa, how is it going? How is it happening and what what's, what's your take.....

Interviewee:about dispute settlements?

Interviewer: yes

Interviewee: ..well disputes are not a bad thing, uh, between countries, um, particularly in the context of the trade agreement. They're not a bad thing. In fact, if anything, they help to clarify the law. Um, they help to, um, build a, uh, jurisprudence that we can point to, uh, for guidance beyond the text itself. You, you have to have the case law, um, that is how you gain clarity on, um, on a particular provision, on a particular issue. So I, I don't think dispute settlement or disputes are a bad thing. Um, the, the way to work is that we have now a, um, a dispute settlement mechanism that is completely separate from national governance and a dispute settlement mechanism that is going to comprise, um, um, experts in international law. So the panel itself that adjudicates on the dispute is going to comprise, um, the best experts in trade law that we will be able to find. It will be advised by an expert review group. Um, uh, and then it, you know, it will deliberate an issue or ruling. If you don't like the ruling, we have the right to appeal. And, um, you know, where the appellate body will take the matter on review. Um, once the panel body issues the ruling, then you are bound by the outcome of ruling. Um, you have to bring your measures in conformity with the ruling of the panel of the appellate body, rather. There will be countries that will not agree not agree to bring their measures in compliance. We know that that happens in the WTO. Um, but I think that, um, the majority of countries will abide by outcomes of the ruling, uh, by outcomes of the appellate body, because this also has to do with the countries, um, uh, perception of, um, compliance with the rule of law. And that has an impact on

investor sentiment. I don't know many countries that do not want to have a positive investor perception.

Interviewer: True. And what would your, your, um, your feel be currently you being at the head, um, there's a say that, you know, agreements usually benefit these dominant countries? I can give you three from the three countries that came out of the interviews that I'm conducting as Nigeria, South Africa, Nairobi. Um, what's your feel? What have you seen happen with the younger, with the younger countries and how are they supported through in this agreement that you don't have a scale like this?

Interviewee: Um, we have to do two things before I get to the two things that we have to do. They, there will be immediate beneficiaries, um, of this agreement. Countries that are relatively industrialized, uh, that have already an industrial base and an industrial depth, um, will be the primary beneficiaries. So Kenya, Morocco, Egypt, South Africa, um, these are the countries that that will be because they already have an export capacity. Um, but to your point, what we have to do is to make sure that the countries that today don't have any industrial base, that in time, 15, 20 years down the line that we built, um, regional value chains, um, uh, that will enable them to build their productive capacity and to build their industrial base. If you look for example, at, um, uh, the automobile sector, um, about 15 to 20 years ago, Lesotho was not on the value chain of the auto sector, but today Lesotho is. Uh, and you do that by, by building a regional, uh, value chain, uh, network for countries and it doesn't have to be a sophisticated, um, network of value chain. It can be something as simple as leather seats for a car. Uh, for example, there are over 30,000 components in manufacturing, a car. So, um, this is an example of how a country that does not have an auto strategy does not have an auto sector, but is a very, very important part of the auto, um, value chain on the African continent, uh, sorry in SACU. So there are examples of how countries are today may not have an industrial base today, may not have, um, the, the manufacturing capacity, but if you create the conditions, um, you would get there. Uh, so I think it's a, um, it's a political economy question of determination to get it done. Um, uh, that, that to me is, is, is very, very important. The immediate, um, losses, there will be short term revenue losses for countries that, um, uh, as they liberalize, uh, their trade and as they reduce their tariffs, the average tariff from the African continent is at about

10%. Uh, so as countries reduce their tariffs, there will be short term losses. What we would, what we are negotiating with Afreximbank is an adjustment facility that will be for countries who, um, who are in that situation who may experience short-term revenue losses. These countries will be able to access that facility, um, uh, to support for support. Uh, it's a short term facility. It's not going to be, um, for the long term. It is just an adjustment cost containment measure. And that will be targeted at productive investment for, uh, investing in productive sectors that may....let's say textiles for example. If your textile has suffered as a result of liberalization and you're facing competition from your peer, um, you would be able to, to have this adjustment facility, uh, assist you, uh, for the short term,

Interviewer: Um, in closing what steps do you think are crucial in governments, negotiating in Africa. So we are all going in and you know, what cross board, what, what steps do you think.....to make this a success? We've seen other agreements you've seen them slow down, you've seen them die. Um, what do you think, and this is a fresh start. What do you think is crucial for, for this?

Interviewee: We already have, um, the most important elements, um, political will is there. Uh, most agreements and certainly agreements that I've seen, you, you don't have a political will at the highest level. The difference here with this agreement is that we do have that, um, on Monday, I'm meeting with the President to report to him on the progress that we're making with all the heads of States. I am meeting them and tell him because they want to, they want to make progress, they want to know this is, this for me, is the big difference is that we now have the heads of States themselves are driving the implementation of this agreement. They meet twice a year to talk about this agreement and how far we're going in terms of its implementation. Second, you need to commit a legal commitment. We now have 30 countries out of 55 countries. We have 30 countries that have ratified the agreement. Uh, we have 54 out of 55 countries have signed the agreement, which is, uh, again, a signal of political will. And so I think this to me is the biggest difference, uh, that, that, uh, um, that I have seen vis-à-vis the other trade agreements. Uh, there will of course be difficulties in implementation because countries are in different levels of capacity to implement. Um, but as I say, the most important things is that there is a commitment to do it. So my job is to work

with the governments to, to help them to, um, uh, to implement the agreement and to establish the capacity to implement, uh, the agreement.

Interviewer: Sir. That was a mouthful. Thank you very much. Thank you very much. Do you have any questions for me? Okay. Would you like to see the report when it comes out?

Interviewee: When it comes out, yes. So is it a report or a thesis?

Interviewer: It's a thesis. So um, so I've, uh, I needed to interview government, uh, the business. Oh, and I haven't been a message from BUSA to you, uh, that you're doing a great job. They felt highly engaged in, from the private side, so, and job well done to you. And I've also interviewed some academics, uh, from the US from Senegal, um, just to get their view. So it's been a great journey, so it will come out in Jan and I'll surely make it that you get a copy of it.

Interviewee: So if it's coming out in January, there's no holiday for you.

Interviewer: I'm nearly done. I've on my timelines I've managed to, to the COVID helped because there was no traveling from work.

Interviewee: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. you could focus. And, uh, I suppose that was a blessing, a blessing for you then.

Interviewer: Yes. I mean, this is the first time in international relations in the past 10 years that I haven't been on a flight for six months. So it was great.

Interviewee: Yeah, yeah, yeah. No, it, it, it, it has been, um, it has been an adjustment for all of us. Uh, let me, let me give you my, uh, where is it?

[18:29]

Interviewer: Um, to take the interview with me and helping me through my Masters. Um, I'm currently in my last year of my Masters with international business with Gibbs. And, um, this is part of my research work that I have to do. Um, the aim, just to give a bit of background, the aim of the research is to investigate the role of government in regional integration and cooperation with the AFCFTA being the case study. So the interview is, um, based on our social space. So you will not be representing the views of the DTIC. Uh, it will take approximately 15 minutes, please feel free to interject at any point. And, um, I will be recording the meeting so that it can assist me with transcribing if it's fine with you.

Interviewee: That's good

Interviewer: Thank You. So if you're ready, uh, can I start for the purposes of the meeting, Elizabeth, may you please kindly state your name, your role, your, the organization that you work for and the role that you've played in the AFCFTA, or how it relates to you? So

Interviewee: My name is Elizabeth van Reenen, uh, Chief Director for Trade policy and Research in the department of trade industry and competition. Okay. So the how I relate to the AFCFTA, I work in the division, um, trade policy, negotiations and corporation, which is the division that negotiate free trade agreements, like the AFCFTA. Uh, I've been working there for 11 years. And before that, I also worked in the trade policy environment in department of agriculture. So I've, I've been involved in before in this for some time. I'm not directly a part of the AFCFTA team, but because it's part of the environment in which I work and, and, you know, I'm, I'm aware of what they do. And, and I, I, um, you know, I make some inputs here and there.

Interviewer: Okay, perfect. Thank you very much, Elizabeth. So may you please tell me more about in the agreement space or in the AFCFTA space and meetings, who are the stakeholders who are involved, um, who are they, how do they relate to each other?

Interviewee: Hmm. Okay. So there's firstly internal stakeholders in the division, trade policy negotiations and cooperation. Um, and, and also was in the department, uh, you know, various other divisions in the department, like the industrial development division and also the competition commission. Um, because competition is part of the second phase of the negotiations in the CFTA. Um, then the external stakeholders, firstly, are other government departments like the DIRCO um, SARS, uh, department of agriculture, and then outside of government, NEDLAC uh, national economic development labour council, which is the main, um, uh, consultation body that represent business and labour. So that is where we are obliged to consult. Um, we also consult other industry bodies when it's necessary, and then there's the SACU member States, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Namibia and South Africa because we are part of the SACU customs union, they have to negotiate as a customs union. We can't negotiate as South Africa is, I mean, this, this is very important to

understand. So we negotiate as the five of us together, which means that when we go to the negotiations, we have to have the consolidated SACU position on everything. We, we don't talk South Africa, we talk as SACU. Um, so, so I mean, they are a very important stakeholder in this well, more than a stakeholder, a full partner. Um, yeah.

Interviewer: So Elizabeth please tell me, so with all the stakeholders that you've mentioned, how would a normal formulation, um, process work, uh, in terms of agreements? So you don't have to go into all the steps, but you can just give us the high level. Usually if there's an AFCTA that needs to be done, thought, the formulation steps or processes.

Interviewee: It starts with consultation to understand the, the interests of the various stakeholders, because after all, we are doing the agreement for stakeholders, particularly business and labour stakeholders. They have to understand their interests and then, but also they, they often have opposing interests. So as a government, you also have to find balance between those. So it's all about, about understanding interests about, um, formulating positions based on those, but in a way that finds balance and in the end consensus, because, um, you know, you, you have to get agreement amongst them that even if, if, if the position or any particular bodies position is not entirely represented, but is part of the, of the compromise in there and the balance.

Interviewer: Great. So also, um, touching on that, so how would you, from your personal sense, how would you, um, could you please tell me more about the government's role in regional integration and cooperation or what you feel it might, yeah, it, it, it needs like a standard that the government needs to take to enhance this, this integration.

Interviewee: Um, we, okay. I'm talking about economic integration. I'm not, I'm not talking about, um, political and security and defense kind of issues. Yes. We have been following for some years, um, what we call a developmental integration approach. When we do a free trade agreement, we don't only do market access, so it's not only about tariffs, but it's also about industrial development and about infrastructure development. Um, infrastructure is important because it underpins anything that you do in economy, but it also underpins your ability to trade if you can't move goods you can't trade them. Uh, so, so, so that is, that is our basic starting point. We, we do these three things in tandem. And, uh, this is, this is something that, that now wide buy-in, in Africa. It is settled in SADC, in the tripartite agreement when we negotiated that and also in the safety way.

Interviewer: Okay, great. Um,

Interviewee: We, sorry, we have, no, we have no hesitation about the importance of regional and African economic integration. This is something that has been a dream since the 1960s, probably, you know, that, the Abuja Treaty and more recently the agenda 2063 that is a very important part of it.

Interviewer: Noted. Thank you. And, um, as I understand, since you are chief director in the trade division, um, policy, which other regional agreements have you worked on?

Interviewee: I've worked, I've worked on SADC others, others also. But, uh, my, my initial position at the DTI was director SADC, which I did for six years. Um, so I've been, I've been, um, very much involved at that time in the, in the implementation of the SADC trade protocol, which is the free trade agreement in SADC. Um, and also at the time when, when the, when the whole switch and thinking came that, that industrial development has to have much more attention. After all, I mean, if you, if you, if your trading efforts don't actually facilitate your production, your manufacturing....you still haven't made a difference to people's lives. Um, so, so that up until the, the, the adoption of the first, uh, industrialization strategy in SADC, I was very much involved there. And then also in the, in the start of the, of the Tripartite free trade agreement negotiations, I was, I was involved until the conclusion of the, of the, of the framework agreement. Uh, I have also in, in, even before that, when I was still in agriculture, I worked on, on the Mercosur agreement, South America and, and on the margins with the, with the European agreements, particularly with the AICPA that we started negotiated things since about 2006. And I've also worked a bit on AGOA with the U S which of course is not a, not a trade agreement as such. It's a, it's a non-reciprocal handout.

Interviewer: So, you seen a lot of agreements with the, also with all the agreements that you've seen, what would your feeling be, uh, towards...who has more power in negotiating these agreements? Is it the private, is it government? Is it negotiators? Is it the consultants? Is it the funders? What, what is your, your personal feel?

Interviewee: Hmm. You know, it's not a matter of power as such. It's a method of, of different roles. Um, the, the, the industry, their role is to, is to inform what we do, to say, this is what we need from you. Now, you're going wrong now let's bring you back to, to this line. That's, that's the role. Um, the, the, the funders I'm very hesitant to talk about funders. I don't think that process is likely, should be funded from, from, from anywhere in particular, not from outside of Africa. Um, if, if there's, if there's a real economic interest for a country in this, you should seek participation. Uh, because I mean, I don't have to explain to you in the interest. I mean, consultants have much the same feeling about them because they, they often get appointed by and paid by someone outside. So who's their master, you know, and it's talk about it about government, about business. It's, it's a matter of different roles. It's not a matter of power as such, and in the end, it's a matter of, of finding balance and finding consensus.

Interviewer: Great. So to touch on my last question, Elizabeth, it comes to different national interests. So, uh, looking at an agreement like the AFCFTA with so many countries and with all countries, individual countries protecting their national interest, what is your feel towards the national interests and, um,

and conflict. Should there be potential conflict how do you think this agreement will manage it or what they should do?

Interviewee: Okay. If you say, conflict, you mean what kind of conflict?

Interviewer: So, for example, uh, so maybe I should've left it first that the national interest you seeing, how you answer with the different interests. So for example, if Nigeria feels a certain way about a different sector or movement of people, of movement of goods, where South Africa is a contradicting plan, uh, related to ours. So, so how do you now work coming from different national interests together in this platform?

Interviewee: Can you see why it's taking as long? It's a matter of seeking consensus, you talk, you, you try to understand what, what, what underpins the position that, that other country puts on the type. And you understand, you try to understand how you can, or you can, can, can accommodate that without giving up on your own. So it's, it's, it's, it's seeking consensus and it's matter of talking and talking and consulting again and talking again. And in the end, we will always get there in the end. We'll always get up to a point where everybody's equally unhappy. You know, that's a good outcome for negotiations. Everybody's equally unhappy.

Interviewer: Yeah, that's a great, so I think

Interviewee: There must be something in it for everyone. Otherwise it's not sustainable, you know, then 10 years down the line, you see a country, something not implemented or simply does what he wants because there was never, that it was never a real interest in the outcome for him, it didn't serve him.

Interviewer: So we do agree that national interests play a big role in getting to the finish line for most of these agreements. So implementation. Okay.

Interviewee: You have to have an international interest that you're serving otherwise, what are you doing there? You just talking. You have to come back with, ohh...it is going to make a difference at home. That's your job. Um, but you also have to allow the other one to be able to go home and not not have his head chopped when he's there.

Interviewer: Not sure, but with that said, I don't know if you have any more questions for me. On my side, that's the end of my questions.

Interviewee: Yeah. So it would be curious to see your thesis when done if that's possible.

Interviewer: Yes, you will. You will get to see it. Um, did we, I think we will be ending them in now in December. So the final result, the final ones because of COVID will only be released, I think next year, Jan, end of Jan, but thank you very much. This has been fun.

Interviewee: Thank you. Keep well Precious

[15:12]

Interviewer: Give you again another background is to investigate the role of government, um, in regional integration and cooperation for which the AFCFTA is the case study. So the interview, um, I'm interviewing you in your social space and your views don't represent those of ECOWAS. And, um, the interview will be maximum 15 minutes. Please feel free to interject me at any point in the interview. And lastly, just note that I will be recording the interview so that I'm able to transcribe it. If that is fine with you...

Interviewee: Yes, it's fine with me

Interviewer: Great. Thank you, sir. So the first question for the purposes of this recording, may you can kindly tell me your name, the company you work for, your designation and the role you had in the AFCFTA. So basically tell me about yourself.

Interviewee: Okay. Thank you very much dear [inaudible] I am Dr. Sako Seydou. I am ECOWAS Programme Officer in charge competition and creates. I work in ECOWAS since 2004 almost now 16 and 70 years. And, I've got big background, what is going on in our region. Um, you know, ECOWAS have his own specific, uh, the economy economic community, but we have 15 member States before it was 16 and now it's 15, but Mauritania was part of ECOWAS and Mauritania went out. Anyway Mauritania and ECOWAS we have some agreement who most of the time Mauritania work with ECOWAS, bilateral agreement or economic agreement or trade agreement with a tripartite. Trade directorate part of department in charge trade directorate custom union and free movement. We can say even if the rules of the integration process. That's where I'm seeing what I'm working.

Interviewer: [inaudible, MUTED]

Interviewee: I can't hear you

Interviewer: Sorry about that. I was muted. Um, thank you very much for the introduction. May you kindly also highlight in meetings that you had to attend or that you have knowledge of, of the ASCFTA, who, who were the stakeholders involved and how did they go about, especially in your role for as ECOWAS.

Interviewee: This is a big issue in big agreements where all African as calling a continental free trade area. ECOWAS has been involved as I think it is for more coming from the background of the AFCFTA, but it has been said that the AFCFTA will be built in the act of the REC as it has been build in the act of the REC it mean the regional community has been involved in the process of this negotiation agreement, no, but we don't use, we have not in the first position, that is AFCFTA is [inaudible] The role of the REC is we give them content of our role as REC is out to make sure that the major states negotiate this agreement no going sometime beyond the red line what we already have in the

REC. It's mean we have to be in background to be near to help them to coordinate the position who can be not in the conflict situation of what has been brought adopt it, as you could actually indirectly, this is our road. Now the relevant parties on this AFCFTA are member States. Member States come as teams in the negotiation process. In each member State they have the negotiate chief negotiator. They are coming from various areas some from trade administration, some from private sector, some from chamber of commerce. It's dependent of the country how their coming as a team and they have chief negotiator. I only used to coordinate now as REC. Our mandate in the negotiation what is the topic? What we have as a levers provision in the REC, how to do we don't go behind on this matter to get complexity. That is our role. As partner elected inside ECOWAS as commission, we have various technical directorate who is involved as is negotiation. For example, trade directorate is in just negotiation in ECOWAS. Negotiate on which topic. You know ECOWAS [inaudible] That is one of the most important what you have [inaudible] you have to be careful UTC. It will not be on what you have as we call it our common external tariff how to manage, and how manage. But to get external tariff it was almost, we can say 20 years process to get common external tariff. Now, as we started to do a custom in your setting by first June, 2015, how to make it sure that we can negotiate, we can liberalize the product with third party, but all come in as third party that we can, cause it can be to arrange these two, at the same time, we can see a protax, liberalize and to see how the process can move in properly. That is the status.

Interviewer: Sorry, Dr. So just to build up on what you're saying, what would personally, what would you say the role of government is in Africa regional integration and cooperation.

Interviewee: The role of government, you know we can say each country wants to protect its sovereignty that is even the regional worry we are facing as original workers. When regional process is meaning the governments enter what amount has to lessen the sovereignty and to leave something to the region, how to make now this inter-governmental process that they leave sometime their sovereignty and to be part of the regional process, that is a big challenge, but every country wants to its own country.

Interviewer: So coming to come in your point. I've jumped a couple of questions because this one relates to what you're talking to now, which is national interests. And we know that the AFCFTA has so many countries they are all different and every government, as you said, looks out for their interests. How do you think this will go about in the AFCFTA and should conflict arise? How do you think it should go about it?

Interviewee: Yes. As soon as this is the natural process for me, it's natural process why? As each government want at the same time protect law, you have to know also there is no one country who is sufficient to give all the same thing to its citizens and since the point is here as the country is not sufficient to give all the citizens in, there is the possibility to get some things from others to complete your needs inside your country. Now how to make this process properly, that where you are not very

competent to give to your citizens for their better life how we can get this one in the least financial to bring this one to your country that is the real challenge. And at this is the point my [inaudible] can have the compromise. They will get it. I really [inaudible] that one.

Interviewer: And what do you think, um, is crucial the crucial steps that governments need to take when they're negotiating?

Interviewee: Yes, that is a crucial step, but you know, they really have to know the needs is there, know the scarcity, potentiality, where you can improve, what you can give towards other and what you are ready to receive from others. Each member State needs to know that. They need to have a good survey to know the state of the economy, its sectors, the potentiality of the and finally, to make a formulation of a good negotiation position when they go to negotiate. The other thing is the team who is going to negotiate? Who's supposed to negotiate? What are the finances that need to be mobilized? How to mobilize these financial resources? You supposed to have relevant people, relevant [inaudible] basic on is this knowledge to go and negotiate.

Interviewer: Well, well said, well said. Um, and the last question I have is then who do you feel has the most power when it comes to decision-making in regional agreements? So I've heard, you mentioned negotiators, members States, but from your viewpoint, who do you think has the most power?

Interviewee: The most power first of thing is coming [inaudible] where the regional is more integrated it has more power to negotiate, but it will come down to the level of the intergovernmental. The most powerful countries who have know how many in Africa, 54 countries, there is big, there are small the are medium. The biggest countries [inaudible] as your country, Nigeria they are really powerful, Nairobi, Cote d'ivoire, Kenya, they are more powerful when they negotiate, but their economies went a little far. They are no more the interests. The previous sector are growing on this countries, they know what they want. They can influence on the decision what they want. The country one who are just looking just to get food to eat is different from the country that want to make profit or something. Their interest are little different. As the country is more powerful economically trading more their interest is a little in the medium level there are more, eh, workers who are trading better than ourselves. They are making more decisions and they have a good position than the countries that are less developed, such is a position and also there, wasn't a phase now about the regional economy without solidarity. But you are trying to make the less developed and the less developed countries are the major countries in the region. To make that you can get better leads to all the members in one region that is a combination, it is a compromise] and even when you harmonize for example in the region we take a major what can be harmonized as policy in the region and what can left to the members driving, but if they can do it [inaudible] can go beyond what has been already been adopted in the regional level. That is our approach everytime when we want to harmonize policy in the region.

Interviewer: Um, dr. Sacko on the last question, why do you think the AFCFTA would be different from other regional agreements? Or maybe they I'm asking you in the wrong way? What makes the AFCFTA so different?

Interviewee: You know, the idea of AFCFTA is old as Africa. At the same time but if you see the AFCFTA is coming from the issue of you have to go in the root is coming from since we get independence. One economic, one, Africa, how to materialize that one, maybe it was very, I was born on this period. I know when you go through the documents the Pan Africanist didn't come from today. It started from a long time. We know also the country who have the best position, the developed country they know what we have as potential in our region, as the resources. We got any finance, don't like these that use your facility. We fight to get out any independence. The first period was we understand that there is too much enthusiasm until we come to a common AU, the first panel of African independence. They want to resist unity in Africa that we have one big continent who can do everything together. Time has passed, who was more developing they do all the things to divide us, to continue to use our resources. As a period come now, well I can say even defeat of the APA . I call them defeat, but economic partnership agreement we start to negotiate if you go straight inside, it is like Europe who wants to add Africa but you don't know if you go likely that is what is our resource. Again in this period now, more consensus how to trade amongst ourselves. We not try to potentialize our resources and to make better. You see almost this 60 years if you want to trade in Africa like the AFCFTA, you have to bring your capital, your investment to put in Africa to produce in Africa. And we will trade it you produce inside Africa in our rules of origin, but there is way now, if they go to buy China to bring to us or to bring to us if our our economic is bigger, we have almost how many million million people that is another way of making a transfer of technology that way I believe on AFCFTA. I believe in AFCFTA really. It is one way Africa can find its own development,

Interviewee: But with that said, Dr. Sacko, thank you very much for enlightening me with all the information. I do not want to take up more than my 30 minutes, but you have managed to answer all my questions and I look forward to receiving the documents from you.

Interviewee: Okay. Thank you very much Mathibe. I wish you the best.

Interviewer: Thank you. Have a great day.

Interviewee: Thank you. Bye.

[20:44]

Interviewer: Okay. Um, so, um, just not to take much of your time, cause I'm sure you're a busy man. Um, my name is Precious Mathibe I'm doing my last year at Gibbs for my Master's in international business. I'm currently employed by the competition commission in the commissioner's office. Um, the aim of this research is just to investigate the government's role, um, in regional integration and cooperation in which the agreement AFCFTA is the case study and also the role that private sector plays in, in, in formulation of these agreements. So part of, uh, just the, some of the things I would like you to know is that this interview will be conducted in a social space. So your views will not be, you will not be quoted as BUSA. Um, it's, it's, it's, it's easier that way. Um, can you please feel free to interject at any point and I will be recording the meeting. Are you comfortable with that? It's just for my transcripts. If I miss something, then I'm able to go back to the recording.

Interviewee: Yeah. Precious. I'm comfortable with that. That's fine. Um, may I just ask for a favor. Sorry to do this. My bandwidth for some reason is, uh, is a bit variable this morning. I'm not sure what it says. Would it be possible for you to perhaps turn off your camera? It might somewhat. I'm not sure why that is. I'm sorry about that.

Interviewer: Not a problem, not a problem. I hope it'll be better, but you can hear me. Everything is fine.

Interviewee: Perfect. In fact, it's already a bit better. Yeah, that's great. Thank you for that. And I'm comfortable with being recorded.

Interviewer: Okay, perfect. Thank you very much. So, um, for the purposes of the meeting, um, may you kindly state your name, your designation and the organization that you work for

Interviewee: Sure. Uh, Olivia Serrao, uh, I'm executive director of economic policy at, uh, business unity, South Africa. That's BUSA

Interviewer: Perfect. Thank you very much. And, um, you please just let me know about your, your knowledge around the AFCFTA or in your relation to the AFCFTA.

Interviewee: Yeah, so we, as BUSA clearly have, uh, an interest in, uh, the successful, uh, African continental free trade agreements. And our primary means of influencing A, the contents of the agreements, uh, the benefits accrued to, uh, the South African private sector, uh, but also the successful implementation of the agreement once concluded, uh, is through, uh, the NEDLAC forum. And that is the national economic development and labor council, um, which has as one of its focal areas, a trade policy. Uh, there's at NEDLAC a trade and industry chamber, which is one of four, uh, chambers at NEDLAC. And there's a specialist subcommittee of their chamber, uh, called Teselico that's the Technical Sectoral Liaison Committee. And that has as it's a special focus area, uh, all things to do with trade policy and the AFCFTA, as you would imagine, has been a key and prominent feature of that subcommittees agenda for the past few years. Uh, so, so that's our primary means of interacting with governments, uh, the DCIC, but also organized labor on the AFCFTA. And it's, that's part of our internal work program as well, of course.

Interviewer: Okay. Um, so you've mentioned a couple of stakeholders. Um, do you want to maybe just go deeply? Who would you really work with, uh, when you talk agreements at the BUSA level?

Interviewee: Yeah, yeah. So there's, there's obviously the, the internal stakeholders within the private sector and there, it covers really the full ambit of, uh, the private sector, uh, from exporters, uh, to, uh, the agricultural sector to, uh, uh, the services sectors and so on. And we consult internally with, uh, as I said, the full ambit of, uh, BUSAs membership in terms of putting forward, uh, perspectives, uh, to governments. Our primary stakeholder externally, of course, would be the departments of trade industry and competition, uh, that are leading, uh, the negotiations with, uh, the negotiating partners, uh, on the continent. Uh, and of course, two it to a lesser extent, uh, the problems of agriculture land reform and rural developments on some of the agricultural issues, but, but our primary interface is with, uh, with the DTIC. Um, and, and of course to a lesser extent, other

government departments, uh, and agencies, for example, SARS, we have, uh, engaged SARS on, uh, the implementation aspects of, of the AFCFTA. Um, and then of course, another critical stakeholder is, um, is, uh, organized labor and that's primarily through the NEDLAC forum. Um, and then of course, if you wish to go further a field, uh, but to a much lesser extent, um, external entities, uh, in, in, in other countries, but that is to a much lesser extent at this point in the process.

Interviewer: Perfect. Um, so in your personal me, please tell me, uh, your knowledge around, or your, your thoughts around, um, African integration and cooperation.

Interviewee: Yeah. So, you know, you, you asked me my personal thoughts, but I must also indicate that my personal thoughts are largely shaped by my professional affiliation and then obviously in professional work. So I do speak, uh, from, uh, a private sector perspective simply because that's, that's the perspective I, uh, I work with and have clearly been influenced by. Um, so I think in the, in the private sector in South Africa, there's a consensus that African integration is critical to the economic prospects of South Africa. And that's across sectors really. In as much as there are sensitivities in particular sectors. Um, I wouldn't say that's a blanket sensitivity. There are, there are sensitivities around particular concessions that that might be made, uh, in particular aspects of the agreements, but there is absolutely broad consensus in the South African private sector that South Africa's economic future and its, uh, economic prospects are tied very much to regional integration and continental integration. So there's enormous supports for the African continental free trade agreements, um, and, uh, and a commitment to working with all stakeholders to make it succeed. And that's why, for example, I touched on in one of my earlier comments, the successful input implementation thereof. So it's not at this point, it's only about the, the agreements and getting the best possible agreements, uh, not only for South Africa, but for the continent more broadly. Uh, but it's also around making sure that some of the implementation aspects that have, uh, bedeviled, uh, other regional, uh, agreements are avoided in the AFTFCA, uh, so broad consensus that this is where our economic future must lie.

Interviewer: Okay. And what would you say it's crucial for government, for government for this African integration and cooperation to succeed?

Interviewee: Well, yeah, that's a, that's a, that's a complicated one. Look, I think first and foremost, it's, it's about getting the agreement right, uh, at this stage. And I'll mention, for example, some of the contentious issues around, uh, rules of origin, for example, which are still being, uh, negotiated, not, not yet finalized and there that, that is an area where there is understandably, uh, sensitivity across, uh, the private sector, but not any of the private sector. Uh, if, uh, my understanding of the organized labor position, uh, is anything to go by there also very concerned around, uh, ensuring that the rules of origin, uh, that are agreed are supportive of continental, but also South African industrialization. Um, so it's, at this point, the message we would give to, to governments is to get the agreements right, uh, to ensure that it is workable to ensure that it supports the objectives, uh, of, uh, continental, but also, uh, regional and South Africa and industrialization and, and, uh, uh, manufacturing. Uh, I think that would be a key focus at this point and thereafter it's about, um, ensuring the successful implementation. So we, we know that's the nuts and bolts, uh, the successful, uh, the nuts and bolts of, of any successful implementation of any agreements revolve often around the, the practical aspects of, of trade facilitation, uh, logistics infrastructure, uh, delays at the borders, uh, efficiency and customs authorities, for example. Um, so, so that would be a critical aspect that can't be overlooked in as much as the agreements is, uh, always a starting points. Uh, the work doesn't end once the agreement is signed and concluded, uh, the work is ongoing and I think that would be a key message for government. So there's a need for, for South Africa to invest in upgrading its logistics infrastructure, uh, ensuring an efficient, uh, customs authority and so on. Uh, but also, uh, work in ensuring that, for example, non-tariff barriers, don't become a feature of continental trade, uh, going forward. Uh, and that requires diplomatic efforts, political efforts, uh, but also, uh, constant vigilance on the parts of, of governments, uh, but not only governments, also other stakeholders, including labor and the private sector, uh, insofar as bringing these, uh, impediments to trade to the attention of, of governments is concerned.

Interviewer: Okay. And do you feel as private that you are consulted enough, um, towards the buildup of the AFCFTA?

Interviewee: That's an interesting question and yeah, it depends. Uh, it depends, I suppose it depends on how, when interpreters, but if, when refers to the buildup of the AFCFTA, the point we should make is often, uh, the in fact, uh, the adventure suffice to say always the original impetus behind any agreements is the political dimension. So, so decisions are taken at a political level and the, the practical details of the agreements are then left to the technical officials, uh, much, much later in the process. Um, in this particular instance, there would have been broad support for the African, uh, integration process, uh, broad support from the private sector, at least. Um, and so it wasn't a particularly problematic or contentious, uh, political decision. There are other, uh, trade agreements where it is a lot more contentious, uh, in, uh, where the, the economic, uh, uh, rationale for entering into negotiations is not as clearly present as, uh, as it is in the, the, the African continental free trade agreements. So were we consulted adequately in the buildup? Um, there were always discussions around, uh, the, uh, the, the potential benefits of regional integration. Uh, but of course there were prior, um, moves towards regional integration. I could mention, for example, the tripartite free trade agreements, so I could mention SADC and so on, uh, which was the focus, uh, for, uh, the African continental free trade agreements and indeed much progress had been made, uh, in, in, in, in for example, the uh, TFTA uh, before the AFCFTA really, uh, got going. Uh, so yeah, I suppose the answer would be these decisions are political and, uh, thereafter the consultation revolves around, uh, the nature of the technical aspects of the agreements and the practical implementation thereof.

Interviewer: Yeah. So, um, so you've mentioned other agreements. Um, so with your exposure to other agreements, what are you seeing that's different to this, to the way things are going with this specific agreement?

Interviewee: Well, the first point that springs to mind is the, uh, very ambitious, uh, timeframes, uh, that have been accorded to this process. And related to that first point is the second point around the absolute commitments of, uh, our governments, but also, uh, governments across the continent to finalizing the negotiations and, uh, beginning trading and, uh, the AFCFTA as soon as possible, of course, the timeframes have been, uh, impacted by the current pandemic, uh, and, uh, the difficulty of, uh, in-person, uh, negotiations continuing, uh, but they are continuing all be it in, in a curtailed and, and slow manner. Uh, and of course we, we hear that 2021 is the new target dates, uh, for, uh, trading to, to commence. So, uh, absolute commitments on the side of, I think, all parties to making this succeed. And that's not something that one sees in all trade negotiations, as you know, many of the others take years to, to conclude, uh, this has a very ambitious work program. Uh, I mean, I can tell you, uh, we we've heard directly from the DTIC that's, uh, over the next few weeks that they're essentially meeting every day, which is, uh, a very rare, occurrence as far as trade agreements are concerned. So, so that's the, the, the, the stark difference, I would say between this agreement and, uh, many of the others that's, I've had some kind of exposure to.

Interviewer: Perfect, um, this leads us to our last question, which involves national interests. So we've seen with this, uh, with the contract it's made up of different member States who have different national interests. Um, some are dominant economies, some are small economies when it comes to business, how do you usually handle conflict? So noting that in the agreement, there are dispute resolutions, which are more political, but what has been your experience in the past, um, with, with dealing with conflict in, with different, um, national interests?

Interviewee: Yeah, that's an interesting question Precious, you know, the....let me say this, insofar as the conflicts at a national interest level are concerned, we as business and particularly South African business, because that's, that's who we represent, we don't have the same exposure to that, that's our government would. So they're at the coalface, uh, so to speak as far as managing those national interests are concerned, and that's not to say that it doesn't impact on our positions, but, you know, when, when one talks about conflict, one has to bear in mind that there are there's conflicts at different levels throughout the process, uh, from the internal, uh, business position. And I can say a few words about that because it will give context. Where business puts forward a perspective or

a position, uh, on the AFCFTA, we have to manage enormous diversity, uh, and in some cases, uh, I'll try the contradictory positions, uh, amongst our members. Uh, you know, the classic example of course, is the inevitable, uh, differences of opinion between, uh, local manufacturers, uh, those that have operations in South Africa that are producing in South Africa, um, and importers, retailers for example, uh, there's often a clear conflict between the two, uh, that is very difficult to resolve because they both have rationale. They both have justifications, uh, for, for the positions they take. Um, and it's not always easy, even from a pure economic perspective to determine, uh, which sector should gain precedence. So we as business generally speaking, uh, it's not to say that we don't often try to resolve these internal difficulties. Uh, but generally the approach we've taken, um, is to leave that decision in the hands of the government. So, so we would allow different sectors to put their perspectives forward. So this becomes very important when, for example, when one, again, talks about rules of origin, absolutely critical issue for, for business. Uh, but there are different perspectives on that and, uh, different perspectives on, uh, the kinds of tariffs that's, uh, that we should end up agreeing on. Um, so, so the reason I'm mentioning all of those is because the, the national interest perspective does come into a certain extent, but it's not a clear-cut case that, uh, the South African private sector will have a clear position as to what our national interest is. So the, the, that we leave it often to governments who make the determination, the government does have the democratic mandates of making those very difficult calls between, uh, what's, uh, should be in the national interest, ultimately, because in any trade agreement process, there are winners and losers. And of course, one tries to balance, uh, the, you know, the, the various perspectives to arrive at what we call the national interest, but even so, uh, you know, not all stakeholders with, within any country will be satisfied, uh, with the end product. So the national interest is articulated first and foremost by government. We don't presume, uh, as business to, uh, you know, be in a position to dictate what that national interest is. We, we put forward various perspectives in some cases, and government does, uh, and this is a factual statement, does make the call as to what the national interest is ultimately going to be. Um, so as far as different national interests are concerned, we do take those into consideration. Of course, we understand that our negotiating negotiating partners have their own mandates. We understand that, uh, particular countries might be very strong in certain products, which may be a threat to, uh, the products that South Africa is very competitive in. Um, and you know, we do take all of that into consideration in putting forward our perspectives to governments. Um, you know, we've had many cases, even in this process where we have to be very careful around the agreements we reach, uh, with governments on tariffs, for example, because those will have a material impact on, on, uh, taxes in South Africa. It will have a material impact on employment in South Africa and so on. Uh, so we do certainly put forward all the facts and figures and justifications that, that we have, uh, uh, available, uh, but ultimately the national interest as so defined is represented, uh, by, by governments. It's a very roundabout way of answering your question, but it's is a complicated [inaudible]. I hope I've covered it sufficiently.

Interviewer: No you have, thank you very much. Um, on the last one, um, do you have any advice, so, um, tomorrow, or during this week, I'll be meeting the, the, your H E Wamkele, uh, the secretariat. Do you have any words or advice that the government could do to improve, to involve business more?

Interviewee: Yeah, that's, that's a, uh, an interesting and difficult one. Um, you know, look, let me say this because obviously, you know, very well that's, I will say certainly we should be consulted more. Of course, there's no stakeholder from any side of the political spectrum in, in, especially our country that will say they don't want to be consulted more. Uh, but, but having said that, I think government is doing a very good job at the consultation process on the AFCFTA I must say, I mean, I do take my hats off, uh, to, to government broadly speaking at a, at a high level, but also at a, uh, you know, at the, at the level of officials, uh, you know, they do take the time to consult. They do, uh, consider our inputs, uh, where there are disagreements. They do take the time to as far as possible explain the, the reason for their decisions and so on. So I think on the whole, the consultation process is fairly good. I mean, uh, compared to, to many other countries where, you know, it's clearly suboptimal, uh, given the time constraints that our officials are operating under. I think they're doing a great job at consulting business, uh, but, but also other stakeholders. Uh, having said that I think the, the, the ambitious timeframes sometimes do work against more effects of, uh, uh, consultation, um, and, and you know, there are always other means and other ways of

consulting more effectively with the private sector and one way, and it's, it's a sort of a longer term process would be through investing in more innovative and flexible, uh, mechanisms, uh, to ascertain the various perspectives of the private sector. Uh, and, and I'll mention it, for example, hearing the voices of, uh, the SMME sector, for example, uh, you know, which in as much as we do represent them as BUSA, uh, given the capacity constraints, time constraints. And so their voice is often not as loud as the voice of, of some other sectors, um, within business. So investing perhaps in more innovative, uh, mechanisms, uh, to, to consult business, uh, you know, through using IT, uh, uh, uh, you know, uh, uh, for example, um, sort of online consultations to the extent possible. Some of these might be interesting and innovative ways of consulting in a, in a deeper manner with, with business, uh, which by the way, we are exploring, um, as, as BUSA, uh, but going forward, these might be ways of improving and enriching the consultation process, but on the whole, given what I've just said, I think government is doing a very good job so far. And, uh, even, you know, for example, Wamkele and his previous incarnation has visited us at, BUSA spoken to us engaged with us, uh, so on the whole, we, we, we enjoy that, uh, that relationship and benefits greatly from, from our government's, uh, devotion to consultation.

Interviewer: Thank you very much, sir. Um, I think you've answered everything. Great. And again, like to thank you for your time, I don't know if you have any questions for me.

Interviewee: Well, I don't, not really. I think it's been pretty clear, thanks very much for the email, which I think covered all, all the bases and, and gave me a good idea of what the meeting was about and the kind of questions you'd ask, and I just want to wish you all the best for your, uh, follow-up consultations and of course, for the research and, and, uh, the study all the best we'll, uh, yeah going forward and thanks for reaching out.

Interviewer: Thank you. And I will make sure once, um, once it's done, I will do, I will share a copy with you. Um, I think they said, end of Jan, I should be able to send through a copy to your office

Interviewee: Right now. Thanks. Precious. It's been an absolute pleasure meeting you, and I'm sure we'll be in touch at some point.

Interviewer: Yes, will do. Thank you. Bye-bye.

[25:56]

Interviewer: Thank you very much. So please feel free to interject at any point. The aim of my research is to investigate the role of government, um, in regional integration and cooperation for which the AFCFTA is the case study. So I will start by asking you may you, for the purposes of this call, may you kindly state your name, your role, the organization that you work for and your relation to the AFCFTA?

Interviewee: Okay. Um, my name is David Luke. I'm a coordinator that is director of the, um, uh, Africa trade policy center at the UN economic commission for Africa. Center is a think tank, uh, we also do a lot of research, um, uh, training capacity building and, uh, we're mainly responsible preparing the protocols that, uh, became the AFCFTA agreement.

Interviewer: Great, thank you very much. So I hear you, uh, part of, uh, formulation, I know formulating the protocols, et cetera of the agreement. May you please tell me more about the stakeholders that were involved that can be government private experts that are involved in this process?

Interviewee: Um, well, uh, I think we need to, we need to break this down into probably several components. Um, as far as our work is concerned, you know, uh, keep in mind we're a UN agency. Um, the AFCFTA is, um, uh, I mean, initiative off the African union and we supported the African union on this initiative. Um, so that's one level. So I, I think, uh, perhaps you need to, we need to look at, um, at the level of the African union. At the level of own work. At the level of the member States, uh, that were involved in the negotiations. So there are a whole range of stakeholders. Um, so just to give you, uh, a broader picture, um, so that you could have a much more complete, uh, view of, um, how stakeholders were involved. Anyway at own level, um, yes, indeed, we, um, uh, put together a number of experts, um, uh, from around Africa. Um, and, uh, we, um, uh, what could the experts to do, uh, uh, to come up with a draft, which were only drafts, uh, I should emphasize. Uh, um, and then, um, uh, handed this process over to the African union. Now, the advantage of that, uh, of this process was that, uh, uh, can you hear me? Are you there? Can you hear me okay, good. Okay. Look like the screen froze for a moment. No, the advantage of that process was that we really could pick the best, uh, pick on the best brains on the continent, the continent, uh, to make an input to this process. Um, so, uh, that was the kind of consultation that was carried out in, in relation to own work. Now, the African union has its own processes and, um, uh, as part of, um, uh, taking on an inclusive approach, the African union, um, has, uh, what it called continental AFCFTA taskforce. Now this taskforce, uh, was made up of, uh, all the, uh, uh, the eight representatives of the eight regional economic communities the eight tracks that are recognized by the African. It was made up of the representatives from the African development bank, the African export import bank the, um, uh, of course, ourselves, UN economic commission for Africa and, um, [inaudible], the UN conference on trade and development. Now, this task force, um, also had a technical role in the AFCFTA process. The task force, uh, reviewed the protocols that were prepared and made for the draft protocols, I should say, are made for the inputs to them, uh, taking

into account gain, um, experience at the different levels of directs. You know, for example, SADC, what is that practice? What is the East African community practice? What is, um, uh, ECOWAS, practice, et cetera, et cetera. So, um, and all of these, um, inputs were made, uh, by the task force. And then the draft protocols then went to the negotiators, the negotiators of course, coming from, um, the member States, uh, meeting on that the, uh, umbrella of the African union since the AFCFTA is an African union initiative and the negotiators of course, um, in coming to, uh, negotiate the protocols, they, um, were bringing with them, uh, um, mandates that we're given to them by their government and behind these mandates were also, um, in many cases, uh, the interest of the private sector, the interests of their civil society, the interest of their stakeholders. Uh, so all of that now was brought to bear in the negotiation of the protocols. So you can see that overall, um, this was, uh, a multi-layered process. If I could put it that way, starting with some experts that looked at some issues and by the, these experts did not look at these issues in a narrow way. They were also looking at, uh, questions of gender equality, how to reflect that in the AFCFTA agreement or, uh, issues of industrialization, um, issues of sustainable development, how to reflect all these aspects of the AFCFTA agreement. So all that expert, excuse me, all that expertise was funneled into the way that the AFCFTA protocol was, uh, was prepared. And then it was filtered to the taskforce and it went to the negotiators. And even with the negotiators, sometimes they used, um, what they call technical working groups, uh, that is the negotiators would meet in a smaller configuration to look at some specific technical, uh, issue, uh, of the negotiation. And then that smaller group will then come back and report to the wider group. And then of course, the negotiators reported to senior officials, senior officials reported to trade ministers, trade ministers reported to the heads of States. Um, you know, so you can see a whole, uh, chain, so to say a whole conveyor belt, uh, starting from experts all the way up to then finally adopted, uh, the AFCFTA agreement. If you don't mind, let me just get some water. Yeah. I didn't have, I didn't have to go too far. Right.

Interviewer: Not a problem. Thank you very much. Um, so you've mentioned that you worked on a certain protocols specifically, which ones did you work on?

Interviewee: Uh, um, you know, the AFCFTA agreement is made of, um, has four parts if you like currently you have what is called the framework agreement. Now the framework agreement is what sets out.....and if you look at the, um, you know, the agreement is available online, the AU website, so the framework agreement is what sets out the objectives, um, definitions, all the sort of legal aspects, but very interestingly under the objectives, that's where you have, um, issues like gender equality, being referenced as an explicit objective, industrial development, um, sustainable development, uh, uh, all being referenced as part of the objective. And I think this is important that in the framework agreement you have these included in the objectives because what it means is that when the agreement is being reviewed every five years, then you're reviewing the agreement in

relation to its objectives. I suppose we becoming more industrialized in relation to industrial development. Are we, um, pursuing Ted policies in a way that is sustainable is a very important question now, in relation to climate change. Are we, um, are we seeing, uh, women, um, businesses flourishing on that AFCFTA, uh, this whole question when economic empowerment and gender equality, so it will be in relation to that objective as well. So, so the framework agreement has all these objectives. It has, as I said, uh, um, it lays out also that the AFCFTA is expected to, um, evolve into a customs union into a single market, in a sense, um, uh, pulling the market on the African continent together, um, in a deeper way, with a deeper level of integration, that's all part of the ambition of the AFCFTA. You find all this in the framework agreement. Then you have the protocol of goods because this, uh, AFCFTA is also an agreement on trade in goods. So you have a protocol on trading goods and that's protocol spells out what, how trade in goods to be conducted under the AFCFTA. Then you have a protocol on trading services, and, um, that protocol spells out how the services, uh, [??Terri] will be conducted. Then the fourth protocol is the protocol of dispute settlement, and that protocol spells out, um, how, when the conflict that arises in the implementation of the agreement will be handled. So basically that the four components of the AFCFTA agreement, as you know, there will be a phase two, um, of which, uh, workers, uh, started, uh, at that will cover investments, uh, competition policy, um, uh, intellectual property rights. And, uh, e-commerce um, so, uh, but you know, at the moment we don't yet have, uh, protocols that have been adopted on them they are drafts. The same process that are going through the LDC you know, the same process that we talked about earlier.

Interviewer: Perfect. Thank you very much. So, would you kindly please tell me about your personal thoughts on role of government in regional integration or cooperation?

Interviewee: Yeah, my personal thought is that, um, governments should facilitate regional integration, but it's the African people themselves who should integrate, um, a single trade, uh, through travel through cultural exchanges, um, through education studying in each other's countries. Um, you know, I mean, governments can only facilitate. It's the African people who have to drive the process. And of course I have to drive the process, um, in terms of, um, uh, self-interest, uh, that is in the interest to do so, uh, is in interest to have a bigger market than the small market in their own country and so on. And sometimes, um, um, uh, it has to be said that generally Africans, uh, um, have this mindset, uh, that integrating the continent is a good thing. Um, there was a Rockefeller foundation, uh, survey, uh, I believe of 42 African countries. You can Google it, uh, Google, Rockefeller, uh, foundation, um, AFCFTA, I'm sure you'll find it somewhere in internet. And, uh, about 77% of those interviewed about 2000 Africans were interviewed from 42 countries. 77% percent said integration was a good thing. Uh, so generally Africans, uh, do believe in integrating the continent. Um, sometimes of course there is evidence that, uh, because of short-term issues, uh, they tend to

go in the other direction there tends to be some reversals, but, um, all the evidence points to Africans, um, uh, having a strong belief in integration process. Does that answer your question?

Interviewer: Oh, sorry, I'm mute. I'm talking to myself, yes, it does answer my question. Thank you very much. And I'll definitely cut for the referral to the Roger fella. I'll definitely have a look at it. Um, so moving to the next one, um, we've seen that there are, what crucial steps do you think that the government must do in negotiating within Africa? The steps that you think.....

Interviewee: ...I think, um, it's always important to consult the national stakeholders. Um, I know that some countries do this very well, South Africa does it well, Nigeria does it well at number Ghana, a number of countries do it well, Ethiopia etcetera but other countries don't Rather they bring the agreement after it's done to the stakeholders, uh, to take a look at it. Myself, I think the best practice is to consult your stakeholders before you go to the negotiating table.

Interviewer: Okay, perfect. So given the nature of the AFCFTA we've picked up this different national interests, so every country has their own national interest. How do you think this will work about in the AFCFTA? Uh, looking at, uh, because I understand it's broad, maybe looking at dominant countries and smaller countries.

Interviewee: Okay. There are different ways of looking at this. One of the ways you look at it is you undertake some economic modeling, which is analysis to tell you, um, if the AFCFTA is implemented, given the structure of the African economies currently, how will they do, how will the different economies do? We have done that kind of work at the economic commission for Africa, that modeling work and to, uh, amazement all countries benefit all countries, um, benefit. Um, and what is more, we found that the poorest countries benefit the most and that's counter-intuitive. You would have thought that is the big economies benefit, but now it's the poorest that benefit the most. And you know why? The poorest countries don't have to make everything themselves, you know, they don't need to make a Mercedes or big machinery, et cetera. They need to find a niche, uh, in the value chain of production and enter into that niche and be suppliers as part of that process. And so that's a good way for them to get into the value chains, to begin to upgrade their production capacities, uh, to create jobs, uh, et cetera. So, um, uh, it's somewhat counter-intuitive, but, uh, poor countries benefit. Um, of course, uh, bigger countries, more diversified economies also, um, uh, benefit. And that benefit is what the world does, what everybody sees. Everybody sees South African, for example, South African products, uh, in the Africa markets. But what they don't see is, um, the value chains, the intermediate products that also contribute to this production. And that's why sometimes you see xenophobia, you see, um, uh, you know, uh, myopic, uh, people protesting against these, but, you know, they're not really taking into account the underlying dynamics. And then also keep in mind that these things evolve. You know, it's not a once and for all benefit, you know, it's a dynamic process. Um, as you make these reforms, as you undertake these reforms and

as your businesses, uh, take advantage of the opportunities, um, you know, it's a dynamic process, which is leading to, um, uh, uh, greater, um, possibilities, uh, in production, uh, leading to, um, use of better technology, uh, leading to basically what we call development. So there are all these processes that are taking place, which, uh, not necessarily what hits the newspaper headlines, uh, uh, but you know, this is what integration really is about. So I think it's good to focus on what is the underlying evidence, not the impression that is created just by looking at things, um, uh, as they are out there. Uh, let me, let me also add that, uh, of course we have different types of economies on this continent and that sort of diversity makes for specialization as well. Um, it's not a bad thing. Not every country is going to be, uh, industrialized. Some countries are going to be more specialized in services and we seeing this happening. You take an economy like Mauritius a very successful economy, and you see that more and more and more. It is specializing in services as opposed to industrial production, which makes sense, because a small Island, small population, you know, for industrialization, you need a bigger market. You need, um, a bigger population for the labour force and all that. Uh, so you know, the, the diversity of African economies is not a bad thing. It's a, it's a good thing. What we need to do on this continent is how to work together as different economies.

Interviewer: Perfect. I think you already even touched on my next question about conflict, uh, conflict and different national interests. Um, with that said, Mr. David, I would like I'm, I don't know if you have any questions for me.

Interviewee: No, no, no. This is fine. I think, uh, this is great. Um, yeah. Do look for the Rockefeller foundation study. As I said, if you Google it, you should find it. It's, um, just gives you data, basically what Africans are thinking, but it's interesting. Um, you know, that, um, that kind of survey yielded, that kind of result.

Interviewer: Thank you very much. I will look into it.

Interviewee: Okay Precious

Interviewer: It's the good day. And I will make sure that you see, uh, the report, uh, in December. So let's say, end of Jan, I will definitely send you my report.

Interviewee: Okay. Now I'd love to see it. Good luck with it. And you guys are the future of a continent, and I'm glad you're doing this kind of work.

Interviewer: Thank you sir, have a good day

Interviewee: Okay. Bye. Bye.

Interviewer: Okay. Um, so, um, just not to take much of your time, cause I'm sure you're a busy man. Um, my name is Precious Mathibe I'm doing my last year at Gibbs for my Master's in international business. I'm currently employed by the competition commission in the commissioner's office. Um, the aim of this research is just to investigate the government's role, um, in regional integration and cooperation in which the agreement AFCFTA is the case study and also the role that private sector plays in, in, in formulation of these agreements. So part of, uh, just the, some of the things I would like you to know is that this interview will be conducted in a social space. So your views will not be, you will not be quoted as BUSA. Um, it's, it's, it's, it's easier that way. Um, can you please feel free to interject at any point and I will be recording the meeting. Are you comfortable with that? It's just for my transcripts. If I miss something, then I'm able to go back to the recording.

Interviewee: Yeah. Precious. I'm comfortable with that. That's fine. Um, may I just ask for a favor. Sorry to do this. My bandwidth for some reason is, uh, is a bit variable this morning. I'm not sure what it says. Would it be possible for you to perhaps turn off your camera? It might somewhat. I'm not sure why that is. I'm sorry about that.

Interviewer: Not a problem, not a problem. I hope it'll be better, but you can hear me. Everything is fine.

Interviewee: Perfect. In fact, it's already a bit better. Yeah, that's great. Thank you for that. And I'm comfortable with being recorded.

Interviewer: Okay, perfect. Thank you very much. So, um, for the purposes of the meeting, um, may you kindly state your name, your designation and the organization that you work for

Interviewee: Sure. Uh, Olivia Serrao, uh, I'm executive director of economic policy at, uh, business unity, South Africa. That's BUSA

Interviewer: Perfect. Thank you very much. And, um, you please just let me know about your, your knowledge around the AFCFTA or in your relation to the AFCFTA.

Interviewee: Yeah, so we, as BUSA clearly have, uh, an interest in, uh, the successful, uh, African continental free trade agreements. And our primary means of influencing A, the contents of the agreements, uh, the benefits accrued to, uh, the South African private sector, uh, but also the successful implementation of the agreement once concluded, uh, is through, uh, the NEDLAC forum. And that is the national economic development and labor council, um, which has as one of its focal areas, a trade policy. Uh, there's at NEDLAC a trade and industry chamber, which is one of four, uh, chambers at NEDLAC. And there's a specialist subcommittee of their chamber, uh, called Teselico that's the Technical Sectoral Liaison Committee. And that has as it's a special focus area, uh, all things to do with trade policy and the AFCFTA, as you would imagine, has been a key and prominent feature of that subcommittees agenda for the past few years. Uh, so, so that's our primary means of interacting with governments, uh, the DCIC, but also organized labor on the AFCFTA. And it's, that's part of our internal work program as well, of course.

Interviewer: Okay. Um, so you've mentioned a couple of stakeholders. Um, do you want to maybe just go deeply? Who would you really work with, uh, when you talk agreements at the BUSA level?

Interviewee: Yeah, yeah. So there's, there's obviously the, the internal stakeholders within the private sector and there, it covers really the full ambits of, uh, the private sector, uh, from exporters, uh, to, uh, the agricultural sector to, uh, uh, the services sectors and so on. And we consult internally with, uh, as I said, the full ambits of, uh, BUSAs membership in terms of putting forward, uh, perspectives, uh, to governments. Our primary stakeholder externally, of course, would be the departments of trade industry and competition, uh, that are leading, uh, the negotiations with, uh, the negotiating partners, uh, on the continent. Uh, and of course, two it to a lesser extent, uh, the problems of agriculture land reform and rural developments on some of the agricultural issues, but, but our primary interface is with, uh, with the DTIC. Um, and, and of course to a lesser extent, other

government departments, uh, and agencies, for example, SARS, we have, uh, engaged SARS on, uh, the implementation aspects of, of the AFCFTA. Um, and then of course, another critical stakeholder is, um, is, uh, organized labor and that's primarily through the NEDLAC forum. Um, and then of course, if you wish to go further a field, uh, but to a much lesser extent, um, external entities, uh, in, in, in other countries, but that is to a much lesser extent at this point in the process.

Interviewer: Perfect. Um, so in your personal me, please tell me, uh, your knowledge around, or your, your thoughts around, um, African integration and cooperation.

Interviewee: Yeah. So, you know, you, you asked me my personal thoughts, but I must also indicate that my personal thoughts are largely shaped by my professional affiliation and then obviously in professional work. So I do speak, uh, from, uh, a private sector perspective simply because that's, that's the perspective I, uh, I work with and have clearly been influenced by. Um, so I think in the, in the private sector in South Africa, there's a consensus that African integration is critical to the economic prospects of South Africa. And that's across sectors really. In as much as there are sensitivities in particular sectors. Um, I wouldn't say that's a blanket sensitivity. There are, there are sensitivities around particular concessions that that might be made, uh, in particular aspects of the agreements, but there is absolutely broad consensus in the South African private sector that South Africa's economic future and its, uh, economic prospects are tied very much to regional integration and continental integration. So there's enormous supports for the African continental free trade agreements, um, and, uh, and a commitment to working with all stakeholders to make it succeed. And that's why, for example, I touched on in one of my earlier comments, the successful input implementation thereof. So it's not at this point, it's only about the, the agreements and getting the best possible agreements, uh, not only for South Africa, but for the continent more broadly. Uh, but it's also around making sure that some of the implementation aspects that have, uh, bedeviled, uh, other regional, uh, agreements are avoided in the AFTFCA, uh, so broad consensus that this is where our economic future must lie.

Interviewer: Okay. And what would you say it's crucial for government, for government for this African integration and cooperation to succeed?

Interviewee: Well, yeah, that's a, that's a, that's a complicated one. Look, I think first and foremost, it's, it's about getting the agreement right, uh, at this stage. And I'll mention, for example, some of the contentious issues around, uh, rules of origin, for example, which are still being, uh, negotiated, not, not yet finalized and there that, that is an area where there is understandably, uh, sensitivity across, uh, the private sector, but not any of the private sector. Uh, if, uh, my understanding of the organized labor position, uh, is anything to go by there also very concerned around, uh, ensuring that the rules of origin, uh, that are agreed are supportive of continental, but also South African industrialization. Um, so it's, at this point, the message we would give to, to governments is to get the agreements right, uh, to ensure that it is workable to ensure that it supports the objectives, uh, of, uh, continental, but also, uh, regional and South Africa and industrialization and, and, uh, uh, manufacturing. Uh, I think that would be a key focus at this point and thereafter it's about, um, ensuring the successful implementation. So we, we know that's the nuts and bolts, uh, the successful, uh, the nuts and bolts of, of any successful implementation of any agreements revolve often around the, the practical aspects of, of trade facilitation, uh, logistics infrastructure, uh, delays at the borders, uh, efficiency and customs authorities, for example. Um, so, so that would be a critical aspect that can't be overlooked in as much as the agreements is, uh, always a starting points. Uh, the work doesn't end once the agreement is signed and concluded, uh, the work is ongoing and I think that would be a key message for government. So there's a need for, for South Africa to invest in upgrading its logistics infrastructure, uh, ensuring an efficient, uh, customs authority and so on. Uh, but also, uh, work in ensuring that, for example, non-tariff barriers, don't become a feature of continental trade, uh, going forward. Uh, and that requires diplomatic efforts, political efforts, uh, but also, uh, constant vigilance on the parts of, of governments, uh, but not only governments, also other stakeholders, including labor and the private sector, uh, insofar as bringing these, uh, impediments to trade to the attention of, of governments is concerned.

Interviewer: Okay. And do you feel as private that you are consulted enough, um, towards the buildup of the AFCFTA?

Interviewee: That's an interesting question and yeah, it depends. Uh, it depends, I suppose it depends on how, when interpreters, but if, when refers to the buildup of the AFCFTA, the point we should make is often, uh, the in fact, uh, the adventure suffice to say always the original impetus behind any agreements is the political dimension. So, so decisions are taken at a political level and the, the practical details of the agreements are then left to the technical officials, uh, much, much later in the process. Um, in this particular instance, there would have been broad support for the African, uh, integration process, uh, broad support from the private sector, at least. Um, and so it wasn't a particularly problematic or contentious, uh, political decision. There are other, uh, trade agreements where it is a lot more contentious, uh, in, uh, where the, the economic, uh, uh, rationale for entering into negotiations is not as clearly present as, uh, as it is in the, the, the African continental free trade agreements. So were we consulted adequately in the buildup? Um, there were always discussions around, uh, the, uh, the, the potential benefits of regional integration. Uh, but of course there were prior, um, moves towards regional integration. I could mention, for example, the tripartite free trade agreements, so I could mention SADC and so on, uh, which was the focus, uh, for, uh, the African continental free trade agreements and indeed much progress had been made, uh, in, in, in, in for example, the uh, TFTA uh, before the AFCFTA really, uh, got going. Uh, so yeah, I suppose the answer would be these decisions are political and, uh, thereafter the consultation revolves around, uh, the nature of the technical aspects of the agreements and the practical implementation thereof.

Interviewer: Yeah. So, um, so you've mentioned other agreements. Um, so with your exposure to other agreements, what are you seeing that's different to this, to the way things are going with this specific agreement?

Interviewee: Well, the first point that springs to mind is the, uh, very ambitious, uh, timeframes, uh, that have been accorded to this process. And related to that first point is the second point around the absolute commitments of, uh, our governments, but also, uh, governments across the continent to finalizing the negotiations and, uh, beginning trading and, uh, the AFCFTA as soon as possible, of course, the timeframes have been, uh, impacted by the current pandemic, uh, and, uh, the difficulty of, uh, in-person, uh, negotiations continuing, uh, but they are continuing all be it in, in a curtailed and, and slow manner. Uh, and of course we, we hear that 2021 is the new target dates, uh, for, uh, trading to, to commence. So, uh, absolute commitments on the side of, I think, all parties to making this succeed. And that's not something that one sees in all trade negotiations, as you know, many of the others take years to, to conclude, uh, this has a very ambitious work program. Uh, I mean, I can tell you, uh, we we've heard directly from the DTIC that's, uh, over the next few weeks that they're essentially meeting every day, which is, uh, a very rare, occurrence as far as trade agreements are concerned. So, so that's the, the, the, the stark difference, I would say between this agreement and, uh, many of the others that's, I've had some kind of exposure to.

Interviewer: Perfect, um, this leads us to our last question, which involves national interests. So we've seen with this, uh, with the contract it's made up of different member States who have different national interests. Um, some are dominant economies, some are small economies when it comes to business, how do you usually handle conflict? So noting that in the agreement, there are dispute resolutions, which are more political, but what has been your experience in the past, um, with, with dealing with conflict in, with different, um, national interests?

Interviewee: Yeah, that's an interesting question Precious, you know, the....let me say this, insofar as the conflicts at a national interest level are concerned, we as business and particularly South African business, because that's, that's who we represent, we don't have the same exposure to that, that's our government would. So they're at the coalface, uh, so to speak as far as managing those national interests are concerned, and that's not to say that it doesn't impact on our positions, but, you know, when, when one talks about conflict, one has to bear in mind that there are there's conflicts at different levels throughout the process, uh, from the internal, uh, business position. And I can say a few words about that because it will give context. Where business puts forward a perspective or

a position, uh, on the AFCFTA, we have to manage enormous diversity, uh, and in some cases, uh, I'll try the contradictory positions, uh, amongst our members. Uh, you know, the classic example of course, is the inevitable, uh, differences of opinion between, uh, local manufacturers, uh, those that have operations in South Africa that are producing in South Africa, um, and importers, retailers for example, uh, there's often a clear conflict between the two, uh, that is very difficult to resolve because they both have rationale. They both have justifications, uh, for, for the positions they take. Um, and it's not always easy, even from a pure economic perspective to determine, uh, which sector should gain precedence. So we as business generally speaking, uh, it's not to say that we don't often try to resolve these internal difficulties. Uh, but generally the approach we've taken, um, is to leave that decision in the hands of the government. So, so we would allow different sectors to put their perspectives forward. So this becomes very important when, for example, when one, again, talks about rules of origin, absolutely critical issue for, for business. Uh, but there are different perspectives on that and, uh, different perspectives on, uh, the kinds of tariffs that's, uh, that we should end up agreeing on. Um, so, so the reason I'm mentioning all of those is because the, the national interest perspective does come into a certain extent, but it's not a clear-cut case that, uh, the South African private sector will have a clear position as to what our national interest is. So the, the, that we leave it often to governments who make the determination, the government does have the democratic mandates of making those very difficult calls between, uh, what's, uh, should be in the national interest, ultimately, because in any trade agreement process, there are winners and losers. And of course, one tries to balance, uh, the, you know, the, the various perspectives to arrive at what we call the national interest, but even so, uh, you know, not all stakeholders with, within any country will be satisfied, uh, with the end product. So the national interest is articulated first and foremost by government. We don't presume, uh, as business to, uh, you know, be in a position to dictate what that national interest is. We, we put forward various perspectives in some cases, and government does, uh, and this is a factual statement, does make the call as to what the national interest is ultimately going to be. Um, so as far as different national interests are concerned, we do take those into consideration. Of course, we understand that our negotiating negotiating partners have their own mandates. We understand that, uh, particular countries might be very strong in certain products, which may be a threat to, uh, the products that South Africa is very competitive in. Um, and you know, we do take all of that into consideration in putting forward our perspectives to governments. Um, you know, we've had many cases, even in this process where we have to be very careful around the agreements we reach, uh, with governments on tariffs, for example, because those will have a material impact on, on, uh, taxes in South Africa. It will have a material impact on employment in South Africa and so on. Uh, so we do certainly put forward all the facts and figures and justifications that, that we have, uh, uh, available, uh, but ultimately the national interest as so defined is represented, uh, by, by governments. It's a very roundabout way of answering your question, but it's is a complicated [inaudible]. I hope I've covered it sufficiently.

Interviewer: No you have, thank you very much. Um, on the last one, um, do you have any advice, so, um, tomorrow, or during this week, I'll be meeting the, the, your H E Wamkele, uh, the secretariat. Do you have any words or advice that the government could do to improve, to involve business more?

Interviewee: Yeah, that's, that's a, uh, an interesting and difficult one. Um, you know, look, let me say this because obviously, you know, very well that's, I will say certainly we should be consulted more. Of course, there's no stakeholder from any side of the political spectrum in, in, especially our country that will say they don't want to be consulted more. Uh, but, but having said that, I think government is doing a very good job at the consultation process on the AFCFTA I must say, I mean, I do take my hats off, uh, to, to government broadly speaking at a, at a high level, but also at a, uh, you know, at the, at the level of officials, uh, you know, they do take the time to consult. They do, uh, consider our inputs, uh, where there are disagreements. They do take the time to as far as possible explain the, the reason for their decisions and so on. So I think on the whole, the consultation process is fairly good. I mean, uh, compared to, to many other countries where, you know, it's clearly suboptimal, uh, given the time constraints that our officials are operating under. I think they're doing a great job at consulting business, uh, but, but also other stakeholders. Uh, having said that I think the, the, the ambitious timeframes sometimes do work against more effects of, uh, uh, consultation, um, and, and you know, there are always other means and other ways of

consulting more effectively with the private sector and one way, and it's, it's a sort of a longer term process would be through investing in more innovative and flexible, uh, mechanisms, uh, to ascertain the various perspectives of the private sector. Uh, and, and I'll mention it, for example, hearing the voices of, uh, the SMME sector, for example, uh, you know, which in as much as we do represent them as BUSA, uh, given the capacity constraints, time constraints. And so their voice is often not as loud as the voice of, of some other sectors, um, within business. So investing perhaps in more innovative, uh, mechanisms, uh, to, to consult business, uh, you know, through using IT, uh, uh, uh, you know, uh, uh, for example, um, sort of online consultations to the extent possible. Some of these might be interesting and innovative ways of consulting in a, in a deeper manner with, with business, uh, which by the way, we are exploring, um, as, as BUSA, uh, but going forward, these might be ways of improving and enriching the consultation process, but on the whole, given what I've just said, I think government is doing a very good job so far. And, uh, even, you know, for example, Wamkele and his previous incarnation has visited us at, BUSA spoken to us engaged with us, uh, so on the whole, we, we, we enjoy that, uh, that relationship and benefits greatly from, from our government's, uh, devotion to consultation.

Interviewer: Thank you very much, sir. Um, I think you've answered everything. Great. And again, like to thank you for your time, I don't know if you have any questions for me.

Interviewee: Well, I don't, not really. I think it's been pretty clear, thanks very much for the email, which I think covered all, all the bases and, and gave me a good idea of what the meeting was about and the kind of questions you'd ask, and I just want to wish you all the best for your, uh, follow-up consultations and of course, for the research and, and, uh, the study all the best we'll, uh, yeah going forward and thanks for reaching out.

Interviewer: Thank you. And I will make sure once, um, once it's done, I will do, I will share a copy with you. Um, I think they said, end of Jan, I should be able to send through a copy to your office

Interviewee: Right now. Thanks. Precious. It's been an absolute pleasure meeting you, and I'm sure we'll be in touch at some point.

Interviewer: Yes, will do. Thank you. Bye-bye.

[25:56]

Interviewer: All, Um, and, uh, firstly, I would like to just thank you for making time to, to help me with my master's research. Um, as you know I'm in my last year and I need to do all these interviews. I'm doing a triangulation method where as much as I collected data, I still need to interview parties that might know about the EFCFTA. So just to give you a bit of background, the aim of my research is to investigate the role of government in regional integration and cooperation for which the AFCFTA is, the case study. Um, again the interviews conducted on the social space and you will not be speaking on behalf of SADC, um, that the interview will be approximately 14 minutes. Please feel free to interject at any time. Um, also the last thing is that I'm recording the meeting for me to always go back and check if I have everything covered. And is that okay with you?

Interviewee: No, that's fine, Precious.

Interviewer: Ntate Gladmore just to get to it, the first question is for the purposes of the meeting, may you please state your name, your role, the organization that you work for and the role that you had played or any meeting that you had attended regarding the AFCFTA?

Interviewee: Okay. Thank you very much. My name is Gladmore [inaudible]. I am Zimbabwean, I'm an economist by profession. I'm quite an old man now, 55 years. I have a family, four kids. Uh, I have worked in government for about 10 years. I've also worked in the parastatal for close to nine years, the competition commission of Zimbabwe, then I am currently working at SADC secretariat and I have been working at the SADC secretariat for about 13 years now, but I am not speaking on behalf of SADC in this interview, I want to make that disclaimer. I will be participating in my own personal capacity. So in a brief that's the background about me and if you need me to elaborate or say more, please just indicated where you want me to say more.

Interviewer: No, that's actually perfect because my next question now would be, um, can you maybe, please tell me more about your knowledge around the free trade agreements and stakeholders that are involved? Who are they, how do they relate to each other?

Interviewee: Uh, we have, there are quite a number of free trade agreements the world over, uh, but I will just focus on those that close at home in Africa. We even have a free trade agreement in SADC where member States, if I believe to phase down tariffs or to completely eliminate them where possible as well as eliminating monetary barriers so that there is a free movement of goods and services across borders. That one is a, is a sub regional free trade agreement. We also have the, the bigger one, the mega one on the African continental free trade agreement, uh, piecing together about 55 or so member countries. And in terms of the objective is basically not the same to make sure that member States trade with each other without impediments to ensure that the base free free movement of goods and services across borders. But basically what member States, if I agreed to do is to integrate their economies, to cooperate in a number of areas, the areas of transport, trade

energy, just to mention a few. Um, the most important key stakeholders in the free trade agreements are the member States themselves. They're the ones who are involved in the negotiations, in the formulation of the relevant instruments, which are necessary to facilitate free trade agreements. There are also what we call cooperative partners. You know, they are some, these are the technical institutions, which specialize in specific areas for instance, the world trade organization. Eh, when you talk about free trade area, those are technical guys will come in also with expertise to assist in the, in the negotiations and also to highlight the requisite principles to guide, you know, eh, operations of free trade agreements. Uh, I have not been personally involved in African continental free trade agreement in other words, in some direct discussions. But of course it's, it's the, an agreement which I know about, eh, I know its objectives. I know about its existence. Eh, of course I have an idea of the challenges that can be encountered, eh, based on the experience of other free trade agreements that we have around the world. I submit.

Interviewer: Great. Thank you. Well answered. Um, just also to follow up on that, what would be your take on the role of government when it comes to regional integration and cooperation?

Interviewee: Uh, the role of government is to represent the interests of the private sector and other stakeholders. It, of course it's its government own interest cause when these things are being negotiated. The key stakeholders will take part are government officials, because these are usually government-government agreements, but the ultimate beneficiary of these trade agreements is the private sector because what we want to promote is the trade, no movement of goods and services. It is the private sector, which is producing whatever a country will be exporting. So the role of government is basically to facilitate by, by undertaking the necessary negotiations in ensuring that the interest of the country are taken on board and also to provide the policy guidance where it use, where it is needed. That's what I can say on that question, but I can still elaborate if there are some areas.

Interviewer: Thank you. So noting everything, uh, what you've said so far, you've mentioned negotiators and member States, government, et cetera, in your own personal space, who do you feel has the most power when it comes to decision-making in regional agreements?

Interviewee: Uh, as a matter of principle member States or a partner States, they've got equal power. There is no state which will be considered more powerful than others because in most cases, in fact, one of the guiding principles is that the decisions have to be taken by consensus. And whenever member States negotiate, they negotiate as equal partners. So irrespective of the size, in terms of the geographic extent, in terms of the size of the economy, in terms of the population size that is immaterial, whether you are talking about the large economy like Nigeria versus Lesotho, when they are on the negotiating table they are equal partners. You can't really say this country is more powerful. This one because of its size is lesser important or has less power. So basically that's what I can tell you on that question.

Interviewer: Great. Um, so also just to wrap it up, what would you say would be, so, you know, national interests, all governments and country, uh, member States have their own national interests and then comes this agreement where everybody needs to, to be on the same page with different national interests. What is your take with that? And what do you think would be crucial for government to be able to negotiate in this space with different national interests?

Interviewee: Yes. That's a very interesting question. Uh, you know, countries, particularly in Africa, they are at different stages in their development processes and they face different challenges. And as a result of that kind of a situation, the private is, uh, obviously different because if a country is hardest hit by drought in a particular year, obviously the issue of food security will be the priority, but that does not necessarily mean that that is going to be a priority for the next country maybe, which has realized the bumper harvest. So I'm just trying to illustrate the [inaudible] that being at a different development stages and being prophesying different challenges it means your priorities and interests are going to be different. But when it comes to these agreements, uh, member States try to come up with what I can call maybe common goals or common developmental agendas, where you will have a win-win situation at the end of the day. And in fact, when they, they do these negotiations, there is a principle which usually guides them. I'm not very sure with, I just called the variable geometry or something like that. I'm not really sure, but there is a term that we use to explain, eh, those situations. Eh, if member States agree say to a Tariff phase down or, or Tariff liberalization, it does not necessarily mean that they all have to do it at the same time or within the same period. Countries may agree to phase down Tariffs say over a period of 10 years, okay. Those that are able to do so as fast as they can, they will probably do it in two years and did the other ones maybe in three in five and so on and so there's that flexibility you see, but outwardly you then ensure that you achieve the objective of the, of the agreement. In other words, I'm saying there is an element of differential treatment, flexibility, you see, eh, so that the member States undertake or implement whatever they are obliged to implement in terms of the agreement at their own pace. You see, which is you like, you know, commensurate with their unique circumstances, eh, the challenges they may be facing at any particular time. So there's that element of flexibility, which I want to emphasize despite the fact that the interests and priorities will be different. That's what I can say.

Interviewer: Thank you very much nstate Gladmore. I really appreciate your time. Um, I don't know if you have any questions for me.

Interviewee: Well, I just want to congratulate you for the projects that you have done so far and to congratulate you. After this program you even do the higher one, is it the Doctorate after this one? What is next other one?

Interviewer: Let's finish this one first

Interviewee: You are still young and energetic. You must be pursue further studies but I would be happy to share with you [inaudible]

Interviewer: I will definitely say that [inaudible] came in ECOWAS came in, everybody has a very different points and views to this. So I will definitely share the report with you.

Interviewee: Yeah. Not me. I'm not interested in the report you gave what you have recorded is it? Yeah. You can give me the link so that I can listen to the discussion.

Interviewer: Okay. Thank you bye

Interviewee: Are you in your office. I can see behind you some tall buildings

Interviewer: No, I mean, it's the background, I'm in London

Interviewee: Are you in London?

Interviewer: No, I'm not in London. No. In the picture. I'm in London.

Interviewee: Oh I see, Okay. Thank you very much

Interviewer: Thank you, sir. Thank you bye.

Interviewee: Okay.

[17:05]

Interviewee: Oh, no. If you told me before, I may have made an effort but right now I'm not in a situation to come on camera,

Interviewer: Not a problem then, um, without taking much of your time, my name is Precious Mathibe and I would firstly, like to thank you for, uh, taking time to do the interview with me. I'm a second year master student at the Gibbs Institute in Sandton, Johannesburg. And, uh, part of my work is I have to interview both, um, the government private sector and the, uh, like embassies and, um, NGOs. So just to give you a background, um, the aim of my research is to investigate the role of government that, um, in regional integration and cooperation with the case study, being the AFCFTA, um, just a few things. Um, I am, are you comfortable with me recording the meeting I'm using, I'm going to be using this, uh, recording to do my, if I didn't pick up something, I can always go back and just double check.

Interviewee: Ok, that's ok

Interviewee: Please note that you are doing this interview in your personal capacity, in your social space and your views will not be of, uh, your organization.

Interviewee: that's even better

Interviewer: Great. Please feel free to interject at any point, if you don't understand anything. Um, if you want to question anything, please do let me know. Um, if you're comfortable, we can start.

Interviewee: Sure. Go ahead,

Interviewer: please. Um, for the purposes of the research, may you, can you please state your name, your role, the organization that you work for and your relation to the AFCFTA?

Interviewer: So I believe, you know, my name [inaudible], uh, you know, my organization, Procter and Gamble, even though this has been recorded in my personal capacity. Um, my title here is I'm a seniordirector for government relations for Africa. Uh, what else did you ask?

Interviewer: Um, so if you've ever been to any, if your knowledge of the AFCFTA.

Interviewee: I would say, um, I I've reached, uh, I mean, I don't participate in the negotiations, but I have been, uh, possible advocating very strongly for Africa's integration for many years now, uh, written several, um, advocacy documents on the benefits of the AFCFTA. It was as the private sector. Engaged in several speaking platforms, uh, on advancing the agenda will be EFCFTA. I'm also a member or, um, Pan African manufacturers association, which is, uh, aimed at driving the private

sector objectives of the AFCFTA. And I regularly give imputes, uh, to government, uh, on, um, the impact of the AFCFTA or what would like to see as members of private sector.

Interviewer: Great, thank you very much. So, um, as I understand during those meetings where you are advising government or consulting with government who are usually the stakeholders in those meetings,

Interviewee: Usually the ministries of trade and investment in several countries.

Interviewer: Perfect. Um, have you ever heard of the AFCFTA, have you ever worked or try to influence any regional framework?

Interviewee: Was with all of them ECOWAS, EAC, SADC.

Interviewer: Perfect. Um, please tell me more about your knowledge of in, well, I like to say the importance of the African regional integration or cooperation. How do you personally feel about it?

Interviewee: I think it's a great initiative. I was quite happy the day it was finally passed. Like I told you, after several years of advocacy with them, various governments, both local and international, uh, to advance the objectives of the Africa, um, integration, as you know, uh, prior to now, um, Africa has several trading blocks and however, um, the level of, um, intra Africa trade was around 12 to 16 and for years compared to the level of, um, trade between Africa and other countries like Europe and the US. So I believe very strongly that Africa cannot progress, if we don't treat among, uh, ourselves. And trading in itself can lead to some of the other changes or improvements or advancements in infrastructure. That would be a fundamental, um, enabler even for regional integration, uh, to be fast tracked. Now we have several examples of the success of, um, African integration. If we see as an example, uh, there is evidence to show the growth, uh, in the size of the economies of the member States, uh, from the time over a period of 10 years, I think it was measured, uh, before integration. And since the formation of the EAC, it's grown like, you know, in hundreds of, uh, funds, uh, the, I use the EAC, which is a very good example of working, uh, regional integration in Africa and because of the data that we have seen in the growth in the economies of the member States. So we can expand this, um, benefits or this growth across a much wider number of countries within Africa with EFCFTA. Now we have several, um, regional blocks, uh, some working well, some not working as well, uh, COMESA is another very good example, uh, which actually integrates, you know, from North Africa all the way to Eastern central, another good example of, um, a, uh, an economic block that is working, you also have ECOWAS, which also works very well to a very large extent there's, you know, despite its, um, other challenges, um, as well, and then you have others that are there that exist in, but they're not really working.....there's ECOS, which is the, that for the central Africa. There is also have a number in North Africa that also not working, um, North Africa as you know, um, historically have related more with the middle

East. And so you have a number of, um, free trade agreements between North Africa and the middle East, which is working [inaudible] for instance, I'll get another one. Well, you also have some within North Africa, which were formed but never really worked. Um, very well. I can't even remember their names. Well, we have tons of this free trade agreements. So I think, um, AFCFTA is a great initiative to bring all this together. It's not going to do away with the systems that are working, but it's expansive opportunities for more countries to be able to partake in the benefits of, uh, free trade, uh, within, within Africa. Often I get asked the question that for free trade, uh, in Africa to work effectively, there needs to be certain supporting structures, uh, to enable this. So infrastructure is one of them. And by infrastructure, we mean, you know, um, uh, transport infrastructure, communication infrastructure, regulatory infrastructure and the like, um, these, we know are quite challenged at this stage, but I always say, you know, it's the chicken and egg story, which comes first, the chicken or the egg. Um, we can wait forever for African governments to develop infrastructure and transport and enable us to move goods from Rwanda to Côte d'Ivoire, or we can create, um, a concept that gives us the ability to trade across those regions there by forcing the development of infrastructure. Because I strongly believe that, you know, when, if the, if the business is there, the money will follow. And, uh, we have several, um, several examples in the supply chain. I'll give you an example in West Africa. So I used to be the supply chain leader for West Africa, and we wanted to ship goods from within the West African cities, let's say from Nigeria to Ghana, for instance, now because of the limited trade between Nigeria and Ghana, we could only find, um, ships going from Nigeria, Ghana maybe once a month or once in two weeks. So I would have to ship my goods from Legos through the port of Spain or Al Jazeera and back down to Ghana. Ghana is the six hour drive from me, but it was much more, it was much faster and it was much more efficient because there are several goods going from Africa to Europe and from Europe to Africa. So those lanes are created, but for as long as we do not develop those trade relations among ourselves, those lanes will also not develop. So as the trade between the African countries grow the, um, the infrastructure to support it will also follow. So what is great to have Chris at the infrastructure, but I don't think that should be, that should stop us. I think one can also, they can both compliment each other. That one can be a precursor to the next.

Interviewer: Great. Uh, also just touching from your viewpoints of regional integration and cooperation, what then do you think is the government's role, the crucial government's role to play in this regional cooperation and integration?

Interviewee: Yeah, well, the first thing is, uh, the right political will. So the agenda for Africa integration has been long coming. Um, it took, uh, deliberate and intentional leadership, uh, to actualize it in 2019. I think the actual framework was signed, you know, it's more than 10 years ago, um, to unify Africa trade. So that, that, um, that needs to continue. So there is no agreement that is not without challenges but once the political will is there to sustain it, we can find way to resolve all those

challenges and stick with the objective of one Africa. Uh, so that's the first and sustained political will of all member States. Uh, today you have, um, while many members States....actually all member States, um, signed up, why is it lots of member States that have not ratified the agreements or without ratification, you cannot, um, utilize the agreement. An example is Nigeria. Um, you know, they are party to the agreement actually led the agreement, but also this moment, uh, with implementation three months away, they have not yet ratified. However, I understand the process, the plan to ratify is already on the way, and we should see that soon. So that kind of political will and political pressure from other members must be sustained throughout the execution phase AFCFTA is bound to have issues. What would be will be come a common goal, I think that can, that can be sustained. The second thing that I see you have a question.

Interviewer: No, no, no, no. Sorry.

Interviewee: The second thing that I see is also, um, working together to create, um, solutions, or should I say regulations that helped to enable the actualization of AFCFTA? One example I can give is the regulatory harmonization. So today you have 54 countries it depends on who you're counting, uh, in, in Africa and all with different regulations on similar sectors. Now with AFCFTA, you can't have a smooth operation with this wide variation of regulations across the continent, some of which are conflicting. So I cannot move a certain product from Ghana to Kenya because the regulations in Kenya stipulate that I must have one small Mark on the, on the product whereas Ghana has a different Mark. How many Marks am I going to put on the product to send it to 54 countries? So we need to have a convergence of all of these regulations and ensure that we are taking the best practices for the each, each sector. And, you know, even if we don't have one at this stage for all of Africa, maybe we can start with the existing regional blocks EAC, by the way, has already done that EAC has has harmonized most of their regulations. So even if we do it in blocks for now, ECOWAS, um, COMESA countries, SADC countries, you know, and just have one, uh, regulation and they can figure out how to manage that among member States so that, uh, members don't feel disenfranchised from what they feel is peculiar to them locally. Or in some cases it's a fiscal consideration because in many countries that are regulated, there is a, um, there's a fiscal aspect to it. So they need to work that out to ensure that people don't feel countries don't feel disenfranchised, uh, one way or the other, but having, um, harmonized regulations, is going to be a sure way to enable the expansion particularly of SMEs across, um, across Africa. You can imagine, uh, companies like ourselves, you know, you have issues with various regulations, how much more, uh, an SME who has, you know, very well, some niche products, which we all need, what is the regulations to expand from, from Congo to Zimbabwe, for instance? So that is another role that governments shape. So, so shaping policies and regulations that enable the free flow or, uh, goods and services within the FTA. So that is that, that is important I first talked about political will, the second one is, uh, policy and, um, uh, regulations that minimized, um, you know, disruptions and

enable a better, an easier movement [inaudible]. There are several other things, you know, even within the, uh, the negotiation phase, as well as the execution phase to ensure it clearly articulated, Uh, process for issue resolution, uh, ensure that things like rules of origin are very clear and are not detrimental, uh, to, um, even smaller countries need to ensure that, you know that rules of origin also takes into consideration the stage of development of the various countries we are at different stages of development. You have the least developed countries and you have some of the more advanced economies in Africa, so that it needs to take that into consideration to ensure that the least developed countries are given the opportunity to catch up and not be disenfranchised at the, at the early stages, um, as well. So, um, so, so all those need need to be considered cause in a number of, um, countries we're still import dependent on a number of things, especially things like machinery to advance, uh, manufacturing on the continent. We need to factor that in so that, you know, we don't get so insular that we think, Oh, everything a hundred percent must be made in Africa for you to qualify. We need to assess our competencies, uh, as an African nation, what is available locally? What is not available locally and how we can, you know, um, use the negotiation or the tools that we have within the negotiation or the AFCFTA to enable ourselves reach the point of industrialization that we need while leaving room for regular reviews. So as you knock off a certain milestone in your industrialization, you know, then it lets you have like sufficient supply on the continent that you can look at reviewing, um, the, the policy to ensure that, okay, we are maximizing the capacity that we have on the continent. We need to recognize that in the discussion. So those are just some of the ways that I think government can play a role to make this implementation effective.

Interviewer: Thank you. Um, and so far with all the engagements that you've had, um, on, on, on, on these regional agreements do you think private sector is consulted enough or more can be done by the government? Or do you think they are consulted later on when, you know, it comes implementation and things are not going right? Um, what are your thoughts?

Interviewee: I think, um, I think there's always room to improve. Um, I'd been, I feel that the government has consulted the private sector. Uh, there are platforms where the private sector is able to provide imputes, uh, into the, um, formation of the AFCFTA. Uh, it wasn't done early enough. It actually took a climb-off from the private sector, but we hear you are doing this, you know, do you really understand what we need? So the other thing again, is on the other hand, the private sector must also be proactive with these things. Uh, we all know that I'm sorry, government.....is not, government has a way of working, which usually is different from the way the private sector sees things. So when you hear this thing, like I said, I've been advocating for regional integration for several years. When you hear these things, you kind of slush yourself into the middle of it because you know, it's going to affect you, or you help them ship this in the way that, you know, it works for the private sector. So for me, I'll, I'll look at it from both sides. Okay. AFCFTA, the intent of

AFCFTA wasn't hidden. Okay. Yes, it's true. We expect the government to call us as a private sector to listen and, you know, um, hear what we have to say, but at the same time, nothing stops the private sector from requesting for such a dialogue or from offering their ideas to government. I mean, um, policies like, um, AGOA, which was between the US and, and, um, Africa. Well, I don't participate and I don't benefit in any way I have access to the policymakers. And I also have access to, you know, um, SMEs, women groups who are working on some of these projects who I know will benefit from, you know, being able to access the AGOA, for instance, I get into this and I offer solutions to the ministries I worked very closely with [inaudible], during the, um, issue, ALGOA between South Africa and the US government offering, you know, even before the last, uh, ALGOA was passed offering also ideas on how it can be expanded, you know, to be a bit more encompassing just beyond just the, you know, um, the agricultural products cause we're thinking long-term, we're thinking, okay, we don't want to just always export our raw materials to the US you know, we need to look at it a bit more expansively. So there's nothing nobody called me to say, Oh, we need impute on ALGOA. I know ALGOA is there, the materials aren't there yet it seems and say what you can input. So it works both sides. Um, I wouldn't just lay the blame at the, at the [inaudible]. We both need to collectively see this as something that we own and that it affects us and, you know, work together. But I see that happen more and more these days, even on AFCFTA, uh, government has reached out to businesses to provide imputes and to tell them, you know, what they would like to see. We could also have done this earlier no there's nothing I think we tend to assume government knows a lot. They don't know, they don't know a lot. They rely on.....we are the ones who actually do this, we are the ones who, who are impacted by the policies that government, uh, design. So it's in our best interest to get there in the first instance I told them, look, this is my experience. I was like, I just told you my experience about shipping from, uh, Nigeria to Al Jazeera and back. Government doesn't know that if I don't tell them,

Interviewer:

Uh, thank you very much. So, um, when we look at the AFCFTA, we have different countries, member States forming part of this agreement. Um, this takes me now to national interests. Every country has their own national interest. Uh, they differ, you have dominant countries, you have smaller countries. What are your views on, on this of the different interests?

Interviewee:

I think overall that's what we need to look at the big picture. Okay. There's enough data to show that overall. Um, AFCFTA stands to benefit all countries. Now will all countries benefit at the same rate? especially not, um, you know, all fingers are not made equal, even in the same family when you have quadruplets, they don't develop into the same, um, at the same pace. So it's not, that's not gonna happen. I think we need to stick with a big picture of where we are going with this. Now it's just like I talked about the public and private sector. It then be who's the, um, I would say the, the potential for, um, being disadvantaged lies with the smaller countries. Okay. It's very easy for the dominant countries, South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, you know, to, you know, they'll swallow up all

the benefits of the industrial industrialization because they're already halfway there. You know? So that's why I mentioned earlier on that the design must take into consideration the levels of development of the different countries, and design it in such a way that the least developed countries have room to play catch up. Of course, each country is going to fight for its own advantages and yes, you are supposed to do that, but keep the big picture, uh, in mind. Now, what I would advise the smaller countries to do is to look internally and define what is the comparative and competitive advantage and how can you maximize those? There are, so let's be take a country like Rwanda, Rwanda is one of the smallest countries in Africa? Okay. But it's doing some things to, um, create a niche for itself and make itself its service center for Africa. You know, it's unlikely that one country of 6 million people will drive industrialization for Africa. It's unlikely because, uh, you know, there are so many things starting from their location, their size and all that. Why I may not put a plant in Rwanda for instance, but Rwanda is chasing technology. Rwanda is fast becoming technology center of Africa, they are creating a service center. So that way they can also maximize the benefits of integrated Africa. So each country needs to look at that. We need to look at, okay, so what are the things that are best sourced in Namibia? And then how can Namibia capitalize on those natural resources to ensure that it can then serve more countries because you are the best source for that particular item. We need to diversify, you know, the things that we, um, put our energies towards within Africa. And I think that way you can spread the prosperity, um, around it's been done in other mature climate. So there's a lot of examples for us to learn from. So a lot, also a lot, a lot still needs to be done by the individual countries. And it should not be a competition. It is more about finding your own best, your own niche. Um, uh, should I say your gifts okay. And how best you can use those

Interviewer:

Well, answered, um, this was our last question, um, which touches on your, like maybe your experience in the past, uh, given that you in the private sector where there has been conflicts. So as you understand, in this agreements, there's disputes resolutions, um, that it's put with the aim of resolving conflict, but what has been your personal experiences where you are not, things are not going well for you in, in Ghana and you're in Nigeria. Do you consult government? What has been the, do you go straight to law firms? What worked, what has worked for you?

Interviewee:

In our case, across the continents, we tend to just, um, work with government. Like I said, you know, we often think all government is making policy. They know what they're doing. No, they don't because they don't leave it on. I mean, I don't want to say that, um, you know, to, um, discredit them, but it's a fact we live this day-to-day, you know, I'm a manufacturer. I know the inputs that go into my products. I know where to source my imputes at the best value so that I can create the best value for the consumer. The government doesn't do these things and that's not their role as well. So that's why I said, we need to work very closely together. So whenever there is an issue, there's a dispute [inaudible] we prefer solutions. We see ourselves as part of the solution, not just

through a problem out there, there's a problem. And then we'll tell you, this is the problem. And this is what we think you should do about it based on our experience. You can also call us together so that we can get input from different sectors as well, to find, you know, the most common solution to the issue. It's unlikely that, you know, maybe we get lawyers. No, no, no, we don't. We don't work that way. Um, it's also not the most efficient lawyers will just take their money and, you know keep all of us in cost for the next five years. And at the end of the day, we have a business to run. So rather we see ourselves as a part of the solution and profess, and, you know, you know, um, also another thing we do is try to help the governments build their, um, capabilities in some of these areas. Uh, oftentimes we have offered our own experts to help we work with them on, you know, uh, on some of the best practices that we have from other parts of the world. And for me, this has worked very, very well. I have several examples where we've done this in South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, you know, UK, you name it. This is, this is just how this is just how, um, your [inaudible]. One thing that tends to be sticky, uh, with the trade agreements is the rules of origin defining, uh, determining the rules of origin. So, like I mentioned earlier, uh, we need to be conversant of what is available locally. What's not available locally and ensure that we don't shoot ourselves in the foot by, um, listing the on stuff that either doesn't occur naturally, or that we have not yet acquired the expertise to develop ourselves, but put in place a mechanism to develop this skill, uh, to, to, um, produce or to have those mechanisms or machineries in place. I think, um, you know, people talk about China. China was probably in the same position we are in 25 years ago, you know, poor communist country and look at them today. They are a world superpower. It's an intentional effort. And I have to say also just why AFCFTA is the way forward. There's benefits in that size. Uh, that benefits enables us to leverage skill and also enables us to have a much bigger market for even our products, without relying on, you know, outsiders. Once we can produce it, there's stuff here that the world needs by the way. But once we create the skill, but enables us to produce these things competitively in Africa, then the doors open for us to the rest of the day.

Interviewer: Perfect. Thank you very much Mam that was, Ooh, an insight, a beautiful insight into the private sector. I don't know if you have any questions for me.

Interviewee: Um, how long is this program you're running?

Interviewer: Um, it is, uh, full-time sorry, the interview on the whole pro

Interviewee: No your program in Gibbs.

Interviewer: Oh, it is a two year part-time program.

Interviewee: Okay.

Interviewer: So I'm in my last year. Um, and I'm only left with three months.

Interviewee: Oh, okay. All right. So I can only wish you all the very best with that. I hope I've been able to share a few insights into, you know, both how we work with the government, as well as challenges within the private sector. I hope that we find some things helpful conversation.

Interviewer: Definitely. It was very beautifully informative. Um, also once I'm done, I think by early Jan or late Jan, I will also share the report with you. Um, because I, I had an opportunity to interview government AU DTI and the private sector. Tomorrow I think it's, BUSA I don't know if you're familiar with

Interviewee: Oh yeah. I know BUSA. BUSA is the platform through which we, um, advocate for some of the needs for the private sector in South Africa. Yes. I'm quite familiar with

Interviewer: Yes. Then later this week, it's the Secretariat Mr. Wamkele.

Interviewee: Oh, you are meeting with Mene

Interviewer: Yes. Yes. So, I will make sure that you will get a copy of the report once it's done, just to get an idea on what everybody thinks around the situation.

Interviewee: I think that will be very good. Precious. Thank you.

Interviewer: Thank you very much. Ma'am and you enjoy the rest of your day. Thank you. And have a great week.

Interviewer: All right. Next time, I'll be able to come on camera today was just not the day

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewee: Yes, definitely. I do come to a once, um, things, uh, um, you know, better. I do come to South Africa often.

Interviewer: Oh, you are, are you based in Lagos or Abuja?

Interviewee: No, I'm based in Lagos, but I oversee all of Africa.

Interviewer: Oh, okay. The last, I think my last trip before the COVID madness was in Abuja in March. Personally, I work for the competition commission.

Interviewee: Oh Really?

Interviewer: Yes. I'm in the commissioner's office for international relations.

Interviewee: Oh, okay. That's nice. That's really nice. I know the competition commission has been very active since the COVID, uh, you know, trying to ensure that there are no abuses or, um, uh, pricing and things like that.

Interviewer: Yeah. We fined a lot of companies, but yeah,

Interviewee: Yeah, yeah. Yeah. I sold that. Um, every time we have to take a price increase, I actually writes to the commissioner and inform him even the rationale. So ours is not related to Covid. These are just business and normal ones. Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. No, definitely. When you come through South Africa, when I come to Nigeria, I'll let you know then we can have some.

Interviewee: please do

[32:25]

Interviewer: This is, this is part of the research part that I need to do. Uh, the aim of the research is to investigate the role of government in regional integration and cooperation for which the AFCFTA is the case study. So the interview is conducted on a social space between me and you. So your views will not be representing those of UNCTAD. Um, the interview will be approximately 10 minutes and please feel free to interject at any point. And the last thing I wanted to find out is, um, I am recording our meeting so that I'm able to transcript between what you've sent in this meeting, et cetera. So is that fine with you?

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: So to jump right into it, um, mme Elizabeth, uh, for the purposes of the meeting, may you please state your name, your role at the organization that you work for and also your interactions or the part that you've played in the AFCFTA?

Interviewee: Okay. So my name is Elizabeth Guchiri. I work for the United nations conference on trade and development in Geneva and I'm a Kenyan. So my involvement in the, the, the African continental free trade area agreement is based on my expertise on competition and consumer policy. So I represent UNCTAD in the competition protocol, drafting and discussions as prescribed in the agreement of the African continental free trade area. And, uh, the, the basically phase two of the negotiations on competition, investment and intellectual property and, um, e-commerce is added as a phase three. So competition is in that basket or phase two negotiations. And that's how I'm in it and, uh, so on this, uh, we've been discussing through expert group meetings.

Interviewer: Oh, okay. Thank you very much, um, for the introduction. So my light just went off. Um, so, uh, you've mentioned stake, a couple of stakeholders already experts. Um, so what may you please tell me more about the stakeholders that you do work with, um, in relation to this AFCFTA and who are they, how do they, how do you relate to them as UNCTAD et cetera?

Interviewee: Okay. So the, the, the convener of the experts meetings to do with the AFCFTA is based, um, in Addis Ababa where we have our UN body, the, the UN economic commission for Africa. And as you know, UNCTAD is based here in Geneva and UNCTAD has the mandate for competition and customer protection within the UN system. So within that framework in Addis, there is the African union officials who are kind of like the.....this thing....the whole thing is under the African union. The continental free trade agreement issues are discussed there, they are originated there, but you all have to do to know that, um, these institutions like AU are driven by member States. So the experts, whom we have worked with a representative from government, from [inaudible], like competition authorities, because when we work in the expert group meetings, we work as not as just on competition, but those who deal with intellectual property, those who deal with investment. And we also have the academia. We have, we have some experts from the university, and there's a

lady from university of Johannesburg. And also, we also had, uh, a professor from the US who is Kenyan by birth, but he's a trade expert. So then we have the regional economic communities you worked with COMESA East African community and ECOWAS, and also NGOs, the Non-governmental organizations such as [inaudible], we also of course, worked in UNECA and, uh, African development bank being funding, the process. So they, they appear in our discussions. And, um, I think within that framework, um, I have to say that in that basket we had, uh, South Africa representing the African competition forum the forum, as you know, that coordinates African competition authorities, as they do their work together, trying to form a corporation and also where they do research together and to understand the markets that they are working with and how they can exchange information. So, South Africa representing [inaudible] and also South African competition commission. And, um, I can say that, uh, it is, that was a group of experts. So the relationship was mutual and, um, there were no negotiations. We are developing texts and you also writing publication. So the one situation where we are member States with member States trying to negotiate. We're trying to bring together the, the documents and the information that is needed by the negotiators for phase two.

Interviewer: Okay. Um, thank you very much, Elizabeth, um, so given the stakeholders which are involved, may you please just, uh, elaborate on where were you involved in the formulation of the agreement? So that could be meetings....when did you start working on this? How far was the negotiations, et cetera?

Interviewee: I started, uh, in 2016, that's when we did our first meeting, where I was invited for the mass meeting in Nairobi. And that meeting was like phase two, phase one was already on, and people were negotiating and writing texts and all that. But phase two was foreseen to be the one coming in. So that's where we started in 2016. And then after that, um, there was the, what do you call the area report, there's a publication from the economic commission for Africa that they called African regional integration report. So in report number eight I was invited to draft the chapter on competition, which I did alone. And then we went for an expert meeting to discuss all kinds of things that were in that report, including, uh, areas of the other areas of equal investments, intellectual property and all that. So I went, we had a couple of experts meeting to discuss and validate that report with other stakeholders that were invited by Uneca and the African union. And then in 2018, we drafted the other comprehensive chapter [inaudible] report number nine. And I was one of the drafters. I was the lead drafter for the competition chapter, but we worked with South Africa presenting the African competition forum. And also South Africa worked with Kenya competition authority we worked with COMESA, we worked with [inaudible]. And that was 2019. The other report was in 2018, also involved. It was running concurrently with the drafting of the competition [inaudible] with the, with the competition experts, of course. So we worked with South Africa, we worked with Kenya, EAC, the East African community came in a bit and [inaudible]

came in a bit, but for, for the [inaudible] report, um, ACF gave, um, did have an input on the report. Then Kenya had an input, um, COMESA and [inaudible] and then UNCTAD. And then I, I put it together and became chapter five of the 2019 Uneca report or on the chapter on competition policy. So we, we, we did draft the competition protocol together with those experts. And this work is related to my work in UNCTAD on competition law and policy. And it is also within the mandate of UNCTAD to assist developing countries in general, and specifically in Africa, in policy formulation, drafting capacity building, and many other areas. So that was the link between my work and this work.

Interviewer: Okay. Thank you very much. And in your personal space, what would you say? What is the role of government in enhancing African integration and cooperation?

Interviewee: I would say that, um, that the governments are actually the cornerstone of any integration and cooperation, because it's, it's actually governments that come together to say, we are going to cooperate in this area in trade, in investment, in movements of persons. It all revolves around government. And you, um, ask the question again, here I'm going off tandem.

Interviewer: No, you're still on the right track. Now let's just ask you though. What do you think the role of government is in regional integration and enhancing more cooperation in the region?

Interviewee: It's, it's it central without, without the government, there is no integration. There is no cooperation. There is no discussion because the governments are the ones, the ones who make the policies and they are the ones who implement policies. They're the ones who coordinate with anybody outside of their borders. So without the government, we, we can't say much. We going to have other people come in, we're going to have the, the private sector, the NGO world, the academia, and everybody else. But without government, there'll be no agreements. There'll be no integration.

Interviewer: Well said. Um, the next question then leads us to the next question. Given your role that you are not in government, right? Who do you feel, um, usually has the most power during, for decision-making during these negotiations and drafting of free trade agreements?

Interviewee: Okay. Let's talk about drafting. Let's say drafting the competition policy, drafting the competition policy protocol, was done by experts with the guidance of the African union, because they have what they call their key, their rules how things happen and how things are managed under the umbrella of the AU. So for the drafting, it is, it is the experts who did the, who did the drafting, but when it comes now to negotiations, and that is what matters, then, then it is trade negotiators who come on the table to negotiate the text of the protocol, but because they are not experts in everything, the experts had to do the competition protocol, with the wording and the language of competition matters, but the negotiations it's, it's a government thing. It's the ministry of trade. So

they have the power to make the text work or not work because they can remove and they can add. And mostly the experts, are not usually in the room when those negotiations are taking place. So it's the government. Okay.

Interviewer: Noted. Um, so given the different, when we now get to governments, if you look at the AFCFTA agreement it's made up of member States, member States individually have national interests, which differ from each, which differ from country to country, how do you think, um, governments can, um, make the AFCFTA move more or progress more given the national interests, different national interests?

Interviewee: Yeah, it is. It is given that, um, there are differences between States in Africa and, and elsewhere in terms of economics, in terms of even languages, in terms of even, uh, alliances where like in Africa, we have the issue of all these, um, regional blocks, but, and also some countries are advanced technology, others are advanced in other issues, sectors, manufacturing, e-commerce and others. I export us of raw materials. So when, when everybody is coming to the table, they come with their national interests at the back of their minds. They are the ones who are, who are more advanced. They are already looking at the other countries as they are the market, where they are going to take their goods and their produce. Others are looking at how they are going to take a foreign direct investment to those countries and establish themselves in big companies. They take, for example, the Kenya equity banks want to go to South Sudan, want to go to whoever else. And, and there's more countries are looking at, how can we come from? How can, what can we get from our smallness? I'm thinking of, of a small country like Swaziland. And I'm thinking about how they produce very good sugar, and the small countries are looking at how can we get this, this big market of Africa to sell our sugar and, and become stronger. So everybody will come with that with a bucket on the table. So the CFTA should critically look at all these angles from member States from different strata and find a common ground through the protocols, the annexes and the implementation processes and structures that will be put in place to ensure that everyone big and small is included, but we always have to remember each and everyone of them have got their national interests at the back of the mind, and that is why there are negotiations so that they can negotiate and come to a consensus and make sure that everybody is taken care of even the smallest ones. And that the big ones will also be able to be, to give big because they have the muscle to do so.

Interviewer: Well, thank you very much. Uh, Elizabeth, uh, that was my last question. I don't know if you have any questions for me.

Interviewee: I, I don't have any questions. You, I was thinking you would ask about the conflict.

Interviewer: Are you ready for that? Everyone. I need them around because if I wait to go into all of you all, and now I see you've studied for the exam. So I tried to keep the same structure brief. Okay.

Interviewee: I found it very interesting.....

Interviewer: Can I ask you about conflicts. Please tell me about conflicts national interest conflicts.

Interviewee: Okay. We, we, if you talk about national interests conflict, I can say that we know that internal conflicts are usually occur in our countries, especially when there are elections or when there are resources. And I know I'm talking this in my personal capacity, that most of these conflicts are made worse by outsiders who come to influence what is happening for whatever reason, sale of arms or even political gain, or even resources. And what I know about Africa is internally people could could fight, could have conflict but the are systems that used to resolve those conflicts, I, I remember that when, when I was growing up, I was being told the stories about the massages, the Kenya Maasai's, and the Kikuyus, where I come from. They used to take cattle from each other. And when the Maasai's come, they believe they owned the cattle in this world. They would come and they would pick the cattle and they would pick wives and they would pick the girls and go with them and make them their wives and when the Kikuyus do, they would do the same. So it was not a non conflict. They lived with it and it was part of what made these communities be like one, there was a lot of intermarriages and all that, but when there are external forces, and most of the times there are external forces it makes the situation very difficult, because there are external factors that are not really about the conflict, but what about the resources that African [inaudible]. So I find this, the African coordinator featured area to be one thing that can, can ship that to African negotiates, as one block and not as small little countries, which are going to be influenced. And, um, yes. And how conflicts are always resolved through dialogue between parties or mediated by third parties. Political conflicts in Africa come before and during national elections, but they cool off after. And in some countries, there are break-away political groups who are usually funded from outside to add the core skills because if they are not funded, and there were no guns and weapons then it would die a natural death. So there is the issue of the arms trade, which is also a key catalyst to conflict in Africa.

Interviewer: Yes. I'm muted. Sorry. I was, I muted myself there for a second. I think Elizabeth you must write my masters.

Interviewee:hey you know you gave me an exam...

Interviewer: That is well answered and well prepared for. Thank you very much. I appreciate that.

Interviewee: You're welcome. I had to work very hard because I don't let my daughters down.

Interviewer: Yes, please, mother. You know, I thought, but I do appreciate it. I know you're busy. You could be doing many other things, but.

Interviewee: Yes, yes. We have our conference coming, you know.

Interviewer: But thank you. Thank you. Thank you. And let me know if you need anything, any assistance, any with your upcoming work.

Interviewee: All right.

Interviewer: Have a good afternoon.

Interviewee: Thank you very much and wish you the best. I want you to graduate top student. Okay.

Interviewer: Yes. I, I need to acknowledge you. You should read my thesis when I'm done.

Interviewee: I should.

Interviewer: Thank you. Ma'am.

Interviewee: Thank you. Please take the text and make corrections. I wrote in hurry.

Interviewer: not a problem. This is going to help me. I'm going to look at the text again and the recording. Yes, please. Yes, please. [inaudible] not a problem. I appreciate that. Thank you. Okay. Thanks. Bye.

Interviewer: Okay, so Marumo for the purposes of the meeting. May you please, can you state your name, your designation, the company that you work for and the role that you've had in the AFCFTA?

Interviewee: So, um, Marumo Nkomo um, I worked for the department of trade industry and competition. Um, my designation in the institution is director legal, international trade and investment. And in terms of the AFCFTA my role hasn't, uh, hasn't, um, commenced in full as yet, because mine is, uh, working on, um, two aspects of the phase, two aspect to the negotiations in particular intellectual property rights and competition policy. Uh, those negotiations have yet to commence, but some preparatory work has been taken place. So from that perspective, the work has begun. And, uh, of course, um, the TFTA, uh, is, is, is, is underway and phase two is underway under the TFTA. So there we've been working on, uh, competition policy and had several rounds of negotiations.

Interviewer: Great. Thank you very much. Um, just a follow up question. Have you ever worked on other regional agreements?

Interviewee: Yes, I've worked, uh, on SADC agreements. Uh, that's the Southern African development community, uh, in particular, uh, agreements that dealt with, um, um, technology Sean's fund intellectual property, and as well as, um, the, um, SADC partnership agreement with the EU in particular, um, protocol three that deals with trade in, um, geographical indications and wine and spirits.

Interviewer: Great. Um, so I take it, then you formed part of the meetings and the formulation stages of those agreements. Would you tell me more about the stakeholders which were involved, who are they. How did they relate to each other?

Interviewee: Well, uh, the original, uh, negotiations tends to be, um, government representatives from the respect of, uh, bodies. In some instances you have, uh, some industry stakeholders for specific issues, but in general, it's, uh, government representatives on either side.

Interviewer: Okay. Um, so now I'm just going to jump into more government, uh, like the inter-governmentalism approach. What is your take on the government's role in regional integration and cooperation in Africa?

Interviewee: Sorry, can you be a bit more specific?

Interviewer: So for example, um, what do you think the government does to enhance the regional integration or cooperation just normally every day,

Interviewee: When you say regional, you mean, you mean, um, continentwise or, um, or even at bilateral level, but within the continent, I'm just trying to get a bit more specific.

Interviewer: So, so it could be broad, you can touch on the bilateral, um, and you can also touch on the multilateral, like what are the efforts that the governments are doing, um, to making sure that the region becomes integrated and the region cooperates with each other. So this could be signing more RECs or, you know, so it's a buildup to what's the AFCFTA.

Interviewee: Okay. All right. Well maybe let me look at it from the continental perspective. So you'll be aware that, um, you know, since independence there's, since, since since many African countries, uh, got independence, uh, you know, late fifties and sixties, um, it's been, uh, a drive towards the ideal of Pan-Africanism, uh, led by the likes of Kwame Nkrumah and other luminaries on the continent. And an important aspect of Pan-Africanism is regional economic integration. Um, and of course there's been, uh, through the African union, a number of instruments that have been developed to, um, ensure that African countries cooperate more closely, uh, particularly, um, in terms of, uh, boosting in traffic and trade. Uh, and so I would say that the main role of government is to, uh, ensure that there is, um, well conceptualization, uh, as well as, um, uh, um, develop conceptualization of, uh, agreements that would, uh, reduce barriers to trade between the countries and help the countries to integrate. Um, and then of course, to, uh, ensure that those, um, agreements once conceptualized and concluded would be implemented.

Interviewer: Thank you, Marumo. Um, so in your, with also going back to the agreements, um, who do you feel usually has the most power when it comes to decision-making in regional agreements? Is it the government, the experts coming in the funders or the private sector, or, I mean, this is just a small list you can, if you know, other people you could touch on them.

Interviewee: No, I would say definitely government because the agreements are government to government level. Um, you know, an international agreement is an agreement among, among governments. Of course, the governments would have to take into consideration, uh, the national interest, and that would entail, um, getting the perspective of the various stakeholders, uh, including industry and civil society, uh, et cetera. But, um, the decisions are made by government and, uh, and implemented by government.

Interviewer: Great. So you've touched on national interests me. So looking at the AFCFTA, it has different member States, right? So meaning it's different national interests coming together. Can you please tell me more about your feelings around that?

Interviewee: Can you elaborate?

Interviewer: So in terms of, so conflict management, um, given that there'll be different national interests and how you see government, um, what do you say, uh, move forward in terms of trying to accommodate each other? Um, another point could be dominant members, States national interests. So,

Interviewee: Yeah. Okay. But look, I think, um, that, uh, when you talk about regional economic integration, uh, there was an, an economist by the name of Jacob Viner and in the forties, he came up with what they call the customs union theory. And that is the idea that more industrialized countries within a regional trading block would benefit more and then there would be trade diversion, which would have adverse impacts on weaker members of the trading blocks. Um, that's of course the reality we've seen that, um, you know, for instance, in the context of SACU, we've seen it, uh, in the EU, um, et cetera. So to address that reality, uh, the African continental model of regional integration is based on what we call a developmental regionalism model. Um, so rather than being purely based on, um, what's called linear integration or market integration, where you move from a free trade area progressively to a common market, um, there are two other pillars being, um, uh, infrastructure development, uh, as, as well as, um, so, so the three pillars would be markets integration, um, infrastructure development, um, as well as, um, would, uh, uh, uh, corporation. Um, so all of those three pillars would form part of the developmental regionalism model. And as part of that, there is the idea of

compensating, uh, the weaker members for the, uh, losses that doing would incur in terms of revenue from, uh, tariffs, et cetera. So, so it's a model that, um, is mutually beneficial. And, uh, I think, uh, the adoption of this model, uh, reduces the, uh, conflicts that would occur, um, uh, in terms of the, uh, national interests of the respective countries.

Interviewer: Great. Well, I'm so modern with you on to do my masters for me.... the way you referencing but, um, but thank you very much that as well answered. Um, I don't know if you have any questions from that, from your side.

Interviewee: No, no questions

Interviewer: With this. Thank you very much for your time. Um, just one, one more thing I would like to ask you to please send me back the consent form. If you are unable to sign it, you can just put your initials on that.

Interviewee: I'll do that. Yeah. I should have sent it

Interviewer: The completed interview. You did send it to me, right?

Interviewee: No...when you say the completed interview, what do you mean? Is it, I thought this was the interview.

Interviewer: Yes. So this is the semi-structured I'm doing something called the triangulation. Maybe I should have, um, mentioned that at the beginning. So I have this data that I collected. This is a semi-structured, so it didn't go like from one to 13 on the questions. So semi-structured can be, yeah. So it's like overall, then I would need to still submit your interview, um, answers on the template. Yes.

Interviewee: All right. Fine. I'll I'll um, I'll see to that.

Interviewer: Thank you. Thank you, Marumo.

Interviewee: Have a nice weekend.

Interviewer: Same to you. Thanks.

Interviewee:

Bye. Bye.

[10:51]

Interviewee: Since we've been doing much research on e-commerce and what provisions might be helpful for that, and for cross-border e-commerce in Africa competition, policy and intellectual property rights, things like that. And, and that enters into some of our knowledge products that then in turn, uh, can be cited or, or influence at different, uh, negotiators in those negotiations.

Interviewer: Great. Thank you very much, Jamie. Um, please tell me more about the stakeholders who were involved in this agreement with you. Um, who were they, how did you relate to each other and what, what did you pick up?

Interviewee: Um, so yeah, for me that the stakeholders are, um, principally you have the, uh, the trade negotiators, uh, and the secretariat for the negotiations, African union commission and regional economic communities who are observers to those negotiations. And in addition to that, you have two official, um, call it a technical, uh, uh, not advisors, but, uh, assistance, uh, coming in, which was ourselves Uneca and [inaudible] So I think those are probably about the four or so, um, kind of categories of stakeholders in the negotiations. Uh, in terms of like the, the international institutions, which providing technical advice like us, and we also have the African development bank there as well. Um, and, but then there are other stakeholders beyond those who are in the negotiating room. So obviously many, um, negotiation teams, they source, um, uh, their positions from liaising with elsewhere in government and with their business sectors. Sometimes you'd see representatives of elsewhere in government and, uh, you know, business association or something like that in the negotiations. Uh, although usually only that would be the case for some of the bigger, um, countries who can afford to bring them along. Um, or if it's hosted in say Kenya, then you might see more Kenyan representation. So that'd be a description of the, uh, the kind of stakeholders there.

Interviewer: Okay. So usually, um, in your own viewpoint who usually, uh, dominant, uh, who's usually dominant, is it the government, is it consultants? Is it your international networks who usually comes across as very dominant in these meetings?

Interviewee: Uh, definitely the negotiators they have, um, the, uh, for instance, international organizations only really speak when they are invited to by negotiators or, um, uh, ministers or anything like that. Um, make other than maybe little bit of protocol, the start with the negotiations where they might have, uh, five, 10 minutes to give opening remarks. Um, same with the RECs. They don't really speak unless they're asked to, um, but they have a kind of background role in, you know, um, helping to caucus at different groups of negotiators together to find common positions. Like we'd often see a common ECOWAS position kind of being coordinated maybe by the, uh, ECOWAS experts, but really it's the country negotiators. And that is by construction in the design of the negotiating guiding principles. Um, it's, uh, it's very much emphasized as member States driven process, um,

and, uh, all the decisions are made by member States because, uh, ultimately it's agreement between, um, countries. So it's there the country representatives that have, uh, the influence there.

Interviewer: Okay, great. Thank you. And may you please tell me, because I get a sense that you are also involved in the, in the formulation and the meetings building up to the agreement. May please tell me more about the formulation and just briefly on the, on the main steps, which, which were highlights for you.

Interviewee: Uh, I think you can actually go back quite far here too. You'll probably start with, um, there'd be a little bit, uh, Fairmont, first of all, analytical work, maybe from around 2004 or five, I think there's one report assessing regional integration in Africa, I think edition four or so, that really tries to make the case for the African continent free trade area or something like it. Maybe it start with some of those analytical foundations, then they gradually filter into add more advocacy. So you start seeing, um, uh, push for continental trade agreements, uh, arising more frequently in speeches and the African union. And it's by, you know, the heads of Uneca, UNCTAD. I remember, um, what's his name, the Kenyan head of UNCTAD, um, making, uh, the case for the AFCFTA, um, you know, a long time before the negotiations started, um, then a third kind of step would be, um, before the negotiations actually started with member States, there were quite a few meetings between the African union commission. Um, what they had was a continental task force, which involved the RECs and us. And that was trying to, you know, just put in place the prerequisites to trying to find like funding and kind of structure what they thought the negotiations would look like. And then after that, you'd have the start, I believe in negotiations, which themselves started the first, I think maybe three of them were just negotiations around the procedures, um, because, uh, negotiators understand very well that the procedure is really, uh, so important for balancing, you know, who has the decision-making power, how decisions are made. Um, and, uh, a lot of emphasis was put into that. And then after that last stage was the actual negotiating.

Interviewer: Great. Thank you very much, Jamie. Um, maybe, please just elaborate for me from your personal workspace, African integration and cooperation and these agreements. Um, and we've seen a couple of regional agreements come up before and what makes this agreement different?

Interviewee: I think one of the things that makes the AFCFTA a bit different is that it has an African union behind it. Um, which I think in my views is a bit stronger than, uh, some of the RECs Um, uh, I think it's got a bit more political kind of fire power, um, and international clouds. And I think that kind of helped bring a bit more power behind AFCFTA negotiations. Um, I think at the end though, um, whether this one will be a success, really, it gets up to its member States. If they take it seriously as oftentimes they do not, uh, they might have other interests, uh, um, but I think if they take it seriously and it's up to them, I think, um, uh, it can be successful.

Interviewer: Okay, great. Um, have you ever worked on at the original agreements?

Interviewee: Um, a little bit on, uh, uh, AGOA with the US, the EPA, uh, negotiations with the European union, um, and a couple of bilateral, uh, free-trade uh, area negotiations.

Interviewer: Okay. And what would be your understanding of inter-govern mentalism approach? So I get it, but it is, it's just the big word from academia, but yeah do you....or can I give it to you or would you like me to elaborate more on this inter-governmental ism approach?

Interviewee: Yeah. You can give me a definition. So I understand clearly what's in it, yeah.

Interviewer: So it, it, the approach just looks at how governments, the government's role. So in this instance of the government's role with the regional agreements. So, um, what I would like to get out of this is what extent do you think this approach suits regional cooperation?

Interviewee: the intergovernmental approach

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: So, uh, I think, I mean, at the end of the day, governments are responsible for the laws of the country and that extends to their participation in international laws as well. And so I think there will be no other body which could take that responsibility to can create those, uh, international, uh, legal, um, kind of, uh, positions. And, but I would caveat that by saying there is, uh, sometimes the voice of others missed out in that process because not all governments are very good at liaising closely with their business sectors and with their civil society organizations. Some are, some are very good, um, but others are not. So some, in some cases, those voices can be left behind and you can end up with an agreement perhaps that doesn't fully carry the, um, I don't know that their belief or desire to, of, of, uh, of everyone that government is sometimes supposed to represent.

Interviewer: Great. And just to follow that up, then, what do you think would be crucial for governments negotiating within Africa? So I've already noted that you've mentioned that maybe taking into account other, other voices that might be overlooked. Do you have any other advice or I don't know to how to put it, but that, that would be crucial for governments to, to improve with negotiating within Africa?

Interviewee: Uh, yeah, I think, um, first of all, in that, like the design phase of these international agreements and the negotiating, I think, um, and some governments are very good at this and some are less good at this, but this, the, the first part in which they, um, they need to identify their interests, uh, closely with, um, uh, other experts in government and the private sector and others. Uh, and, and I think there's some, you might call that the countries, negotiating institutions, how institutionally

they, um, are able to develop the negotiating positions. Uh, and I think, um, the better countries adapt like South Africa is pretty good at that. And then the better they are able to from the onset identify clearly what their objectives and goals are in those negotiations. So be far more likely to end up with negotiation that's, um, addresses what is in the interest of that country, but then a second point, it also comes to implementation. And so I think maybe the word used here is accountability. So the, the trade negotiators and the ministry of trade, uh, it has to after negotiations be accountable, um, uh, for them and for them working. So maybe they sign this agreement. It's well designed, but it's not implemented. And, uh, businesses, I think have to be able to speak to their minister trade and, and to make complaints about is the case, or, or to, um, uh, to be able to kind of follow up with the implementation where some of the things are working. Some things are not

Interviewer: Great. Um, just the last question, um, given the agreement, um, you know, the agreement has many countries in it, there'll be different interests of course national interest. Um, and of course, if they're different national interest, this then, you know, there's bound to be conflict. Maybe, please tell me something about yeah different, how you see the agreement going about different national interests, conflict and how potentially you think they could be resolved.

Interviewee: Yeah. I think, um, negotiators always have to make a certain concessions to come to an agreement and that can be very difficult when those positions are difficult for them. Um, I think, uh, like organically, uh, countries do end up, um, kind of, uh, conceding and coming to common agreement, but I think sometimes the risk there is that they can come to what is maybe easier positions that are less ambitious rather than really fighting and pushing for something that could be far more ambitious, just because it's an easier, less risky position to, to fall back on. Um, but, um, having said that, I think I've been quite impressed with the AFCFTA negotiations. For instance, the level of ambition for trading goods is, is really quite high. Um, and that's really reassuring to me, I think, uh, I was impressed by that.

Interviewer: Okay, great. Jamie, thank you very much. I don't know from your side, if you have any questions for me.

Interviewee: Yeah, no, that, that's great. I thank you very much Prec, so very, uh, good luck with your masters and, uh, uh, hopefully I'll catch you sometime.

Interviewer: Yes, soon. I'll see you soon, soon. I'm sure soon after Covid. Okay. Have a good day and thank you very much. Bye.

[13:17]

Interviewer: Thank you very much.

Interviewee: Okay.

Interviewer: Ntate Willies, you look so grown up

Interviewee: I'm saying there's too much work here.

Interviewer: Yeah. So, um, thank you very much for filling up the interview for me. Um, I'm just gonna jump right into it, but just a few things that I'm going to mention that this interview is on a social space. So your views are not of Bayer and they are your personal views. It will take roughly 15 minutes and, uh, I'm recording the meeting so that I'm able to transcribe the meeting. Is that fine with you?

Interviewee: Sorry. The last line you said is what?

Interviewer: So I'm recording the meeting between me and you so that I can go back to it if I'm not sure of anything.

Interviewee: Okay.

Interviewer: Okay. Okay. For the purposes of the meeting, may you please state your name, your role and your organization that you work for?

Interviewer: I need to see your mouth. Just tilt your laptop a little bit.

Interviewer: Is this fine?

Interviewee: Okay, perfect. Yeah.

Interviewer: For the purposes of the meeting, may you please state your name, your role, and the organization that you work for?

Interviewee: My name is Willie Sokuthu and, um, I worked for Bayer, Bayer pharmaceuticals, and, um, I work as a global health care programs and sustainability coordinator based in, uh, East and Southern African countries. And, uh, so primarily I work in, uh, around nine countries within this belt of Eastern Southern Africa. Yep.

Interviewer: Great. Thank you very much. Um, Willie, I hear you say that you work for different African countries. Do you know, can you please tell me your knowledge about the AFCFTA agreement?

Interviewee: Yup. I mean, um, generally speaking, uh, the way we operate, we operate in the health, uh, health sector space. So whatever trade that I do has to be confined within the health sector or the health

industry. So when I go to the different countries, uh, we deliver medicine, we supply medicine to the government and also private institutions. This includes hospitals, regional governments, and also the national government. So what happens is we, we, we work within a contractual framework, so it will be two years or three years contract framework. And during this contract frameworks, they're usually based on, uh, international trade trade, trade agreements, like incoterms, or they are based on regional trade kind of contracts. So they're usually standard UNFPA, world bank and IMF kind of standards that are adopted from the global trade trade agreements. So, generally speaking is that, uh, everything has been spelled out. The only time we engaged the government is when there are tax issues or the logistics or inspection kind of issues. Then now I deal with the specific line ministries, for example, the inspectorates of medicine and so on and so forth.

Interviewer: So I take it that the agreement will then be a great thing. If it's, it's, it's, it's, it's a success for you as the pharmaceutical company, because then I think it looks at, um, they will remove some of the tariffs, some of the taxes to, you know, like when they bring in goods and also on the roads, there's talks of opening up borders, et cetera. So I take it that it is, it would be great news for you as a private company.

Interviewee: Yeah. Look at it like this, I'm based Nairobi, the products are manufactured in Finland and, uh, I'm delivering them to Malawi. So already those are three countries involved, the Finland corporate within the European union. Then we have this African block agreements and protocols that, that only apply within inter trade between Africa itself. But to some extent, also Europe and Africa. Now, if we have some platform where we can operate as one block, so that I don't need to cater for laws in Malawi, laws in Kenya, and then.....because there's a lot of tedious agreements. Pre-shipment inspection, for example, has to be done in Europe. Paperwork has to be done in here. The payments to the banks have to be done in the US and then the goods have to be also, still inspected in Malawi. So there's a lot of things that need to be sorted out. I think with those, uh, trade agreements, they will smooth the process.

Interviewer: Great. So, um, in your personal views, what is the role of government when it comes to these trade agreements? And where does private come in?

Interviewee: The government has, the policy is a key issue. So, uh, through legislation, they have to harmonize the policies in those countries that we work within. Um, two, they have to have a coordination mechanism so that we are able to exactly know there is an office that I need to run to and address all my issues without running up and down. So that's smooth coordination of the, of the, the, the, the environment is key also. So that is done by the government. For the private sector, for the private sector. I think we, we simply need an environment. If we have a good environment we can operate. So those challenges are made because of the lack of the technical groups, for example, health is very unique. There are very unique laws and legislations that have to be passed through

the health technical working groups. So if they are not there, then we keep on struggling and running up and down,

Interviewer: Correct to say that as a private, uh, organization, you are not so consulted by government in these negotiations as implementation of these agreements

Interviewee: In the last five or six years, um, I've attended only one meeting. And, uh, that one specifically was for East Africa, community integration of the supply chain in regards to health systems. So procurement of health commodities through an integrated supplier system, supply chain system, we have such in West Africa, but in East Africa, we don't have one. I don't know whether we'll have in Southern Africa, but, uh, to me, I think it will, it will be a good, good, it will be a positive start, positive direction towards a harmonization of trade issues.

Interviewer: And, um, just touching on the last question, so it looks at national interests. As you know, that the agreement is made up of many countries and each country has their own national interest. How do you think as a private company, this will pan out when it comes to national interests, everybody looking out for their own and also conflict, potential conflict.

Interviewee: So when it comes to trade, the country's interest comes first. If the interest of the country is not taken care of, for sure people will put out, pull out of this trade agreements. Now, once the trade agreements are met and design, the policies are met. They have to go back to individual legislations in each country. They have to be ratified by each parliament. Once they're ratified, then they come back for harmonization. Some countries are not interested. Some countries feel should change because some of these trade agreements favor more developed countries than less developed countries. Of course, you know, tax income industrialization, if a country is well-developed, then they have an advantage. So, so that process is lengthy. I can tell you for sure, we have already up to now some legislations that have yet to be passed that involved, for example, the East Africa integration. And so Tanzania is uncomfortable with very simple clauses. They have to go to the top summit that is governed by the president to be ratified, then come back to technical groups. And then that will go to the legislation. It's a big process, it's tedious, but there has to be Goodwill that don't, I have to tell you for sure, if there's no Goodwill by the top of guns, then nothing will happen. We will just talk about some harmonization. We have this, this current project about integration of the single currency for Africa. It started almost four years ago. Nothing has changed. And that is important towards trade. Integration of this trade we are talking about the single currency mix, everything have sense, you know.

Interviewer: Great. Thank you very much. Uh, Willies, well answered. Um, do you have any questions for me?

Interviewee: Yeah. So, um, I just wanted to find out, uh, for your masters, this is a master's program, right? Is it executive or....

Interviewer: It's master's program at the it Gibbs in Joburg.

Interviewee: Okay. In Joburg Yeah. Yeah. So once you have the final findings, I mean, please share with us if it's something of interest, especially for the private sector, I'll be able to share with my colleagues. I happen to also be part of the chamber of commerce here in the country. So the lobby usually start from the local chamber.

Interviewer: what do you do at local chamber.

Interviewee: I represent because my department handles a lot of international trade. So we have a, we have a seat as to represent the, the, the company. Uh, it's not me as an individual, but it's a seat. And usually I attend. I represent the company.

Interviewer: Yeah, that's great. You're doing well. But again, thank you. I will make sure that I share the report with you. It should be available next year. We only ending it in now in December. So next year, Jan, I should be able to share the final findings because I've interviewed some government officials and also private.

Interviewee: Okay. So other than chamber of commerce, you're interviewing right? The local chamber of commerce, then the government officials, then the private sector, then who else do you have a secretariat?

Interviewer: Um, we have a secretary that, uh, I'm still reaching out at the AU, um, from our government, but I think most of the secretariat's team that's based in South Africa has already covered a lot. So they cause I've interviewed them on the ground. So I'm now also looking for academics.

Interviewee: It's very key academics, trade academics. It's very, it's very, it's very key this integration. Can you imagine when I go to a country, then I start negotiation in one currency, then I have to go through the laws of that country. And sometimes we miss a very minor clause and then you are penalized unnecessarily because of that harmonization. So your, your study is good. We'll use it also.

Interviewer: Thank you Willie. Okay. But you need to get back to work now, but thank you very much for making time.

Interviewee: Okay. Nice. You have a nice time.

Interviewer: Have a good one. Bye bye.

Interviewee: Um, our DDGs said we can continue as is.

Interviewer: Oh, nice. Nice, nice. No, we also working fully from home. Yeah. Not to take much of your time. Uh, thank you for allowing.....thank you for taking up the interview. Precious[inaudible] there I'm in my last year with Gibbs in international business. And my research is to investigate the role of government in regional integration and cooperation with the AFCFTA being the case study. Um, the interview is conducted in a social space, so your views will not be representing those of the DTIC. And it's your personal views. The interview will be approximately 12 minutes, um, and please feel free to interject. Um, if you have anything to say, um, the last thing is I will be recording the meeting because I would need to also transcribe it and see if it matches what you said in the interview guide. Great. Can I start?

Interviewee: Yes, sure

Interviewer: Okay. For the purposes of the meeting, may you please state your name, your role, the organization that you work for and your role in the AFCFTA?

Interviewee: My name is Tshifhiwa Phumudzo Mahodzi. Um, I work for the department of trade and industry and competition, uh, within the CIF, uh, within the division trade policy, negotiations, and cooperation. Um, and under that, uh, within the chief directorate trade negotiations, and more specifically within the market access unit, responsible for trade negotiations, uh, in goods in particular as opposed to services. Have I answered all of them?

Interviewer: Yeah. So the last one is your connection or your relations to the AFCFTA.

Interviewee: Well, yeah. Um, well, given of course, way, I just explained I'm located, um, our main, uh, tasks is actually trade negotiations. Um, so part of that would include the African continental free trade area. Um, and maybe I saw the way you formulated the question. It's actually the agreement establishing the African continental free trade area. That would be the former name. So the, A, uh, at the AFCFTA is actually area, um, and not agreement. Um, yeah, so that's how I would fit in, um, I'm the director of market access there. Um, and we have been involved in the process, uh, from the beginning, um, when the negotiations started, uh, right up where we are right now. Um, part of that, I don't want to answer them the questions that follow up that part of that a large part of that involves homework. Um, and that then is addressed by the questions that you're going to ask later, um, stakeholder consultations and so on. And so, yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. So the next one immediately, um, would be, I you've worked specifically. What other regional agreements have you worked on outside of the AFCFTA?

Interviewee: So the AFCFTA, um, that would be like Africa specific.

Interviewer: Yes. Africa specific. Oh, no, no, no, actually let's take it everything that's not even.

Interviewer: Yeah. Um, well, um, I've been fortunate enough to have taken in the negotiations that proceeded African continental free trade area negotiations, which is that tripartite free trade agreement, which involves the SADC, COMESA as well as the East African community group of countries. Uh, that would be one, um, other agreements that I have also been party to, or worked on, uh, would be the EU-SADC EPA. Um, the recently concluded, uh, although last year, uh, SACU, Mozambique and UK EPA, which is meant to be a rollover agreement as soon as the UK leaves the European Union formally, um, the SACUEFTA agreement. Um, the negotiations towards the SACU Mercosur preferential trade agreement, uh, PTA amongst others.

Interviewer: Yes. Okay, great. Well, you have a handful of agreements. Um, so just leading up to that would be who are the, please tell me more about stakeholders who are involved in these agreements in, in the AFC. We are back now to the AFCFTA who involved, how, like, how do they relate to each other? Can you tell me more about, so it can be from government negotiators experts, everyone, for the AFCFTA.

Interviewer: Yes. Well, um, the negotiation process involves a lot of, uh, parties as you've pointed out, both within government, uh, and external, um, with their external stakeholders. Um, we are lucky enough to have a formal consultative structure, legally established through NEDLAC. And so most of our consultations would take place there, where there are representatives from business, uh, in the form of Business Unity South Africa, who of course have their own constituencies and affiliates, as well as, uh, labor represented by COSATU and FEDUSA at NEDLAC currently, um, to underline, again, my observation is with regards COSATU given the internal ructions, a large part of the industrial union is not, of course now part of the consultative process that would be, what is it SAFTU, which is now outside, of COSATU. Um, internally, um, it would be all government departments and agencies that would be relevant to the particular subject matter at hand. Um, just to list a few, you would have in terms of agencies, I know, you know, yourself that also consulted the competition commission. Of course, the phase two issues have not started, uh, the SABS, um, uh, MISA, uh, um, um, uh, SANAS, um, SARS, uh, the revenue services, um, and so on and so forth. And then sister departments, uh, the main ones that would be involved in the AFCFTA process. Um, in fact, let me start with the most important one would be, um, the, that, that the DIRCO, um, and the AFCFTA really, uh, um, resides from a political point of view, uh, where the DTI of course comes in to now deal with the technical detailed related to their agreement and negotiations there off. Um, but ultimately this is an African union project falling under foreign affairs ministers as the ultimate authority, but of course, the line function being the ministers of trade on the continent. You would also have, um, uh, the department of agriculture, of course, given their expertise within the agriculture space. Um, you would also have, uh, uh, the department of health, um, um, the department of communication, um, and so on and so forth. It depends really on

what the issue that is being discussed at that particular point is so at certain points, uh, um, some departments would be more heavily involved than others, whereas others would be more from a consultation point of view. Then you have the department of environment, uh, forestry and fisheries. Um, um, and there our link to them is with regards, uh, fisheries. Um, they have the expertise with regard trade in fisheries, and they provide us with, uh, expert advice in that regard. Uh, the list is not exhaustive, but, um, it is a number of government departments that would have to consult sometimes on a case by case basis. But generally it would be those that will be involved in industrial policy work or international trade work, uh, in this case being, uh, the department of agriculture, uh, who are, uh, really tied to the hip to us in the process. Yeah.

Interviewer: Um, so let's just build up from that once you've identified the stakeholders, can you tell me more about the formulation? So when somebody says there's going to be an AFCFTA agreement, what then what are the steps towards building these agreements?

Interviewee: So that will be the formulation firstly, of our national approach and position, right. Or to the negotiations just today.

Interviewer: Um, we can have started from the national point to negotiations.

Interviewee: Okay. Well, from a national point of view, um, there would first and foremost of course be, um, um, um, internal consultations. Uh, but our ability to enter into negotiations with any party would of course, have to also have the blessings and approval of cabinet itself. Um, so cabinet would have had made a decision that South Africa is going to partake. For example, in the EU SADC EPA negotiations or in the African continental free trade area negotiations. And from that then flows, uh, the responsibility to the DTI to then identify stakeholders that should be part of the negotiating team so to speak whether it's on an ad hoc basis or whether it's permanently or semi-permanently. Um, as I had, uh, responded to my earlier question. Out of that process then is a consultative process that now includes, um, the external stakeholders. Um, and maybe I must also add, given agriculture is a specialized area uh, the department of agriculture also has a forum where they consult on a monthly basis, just like we do, uh, at NEDLAC, uh, with, uh, the agricultural sector. Uh, almost the entire agricultural sector, including the provincial authorities responsible, uh, for those, for that area in the, in the respective provinces, uh, which is called the agricultural agricultural trade forum. It is not legally legislated and so it is in a way umbrella'd by network because whatever comes out of that would also need to be endorsed through the formal NEDLAC process. It is that, that consultative stage with stakeholders where we would now then define what our interests, um, common interests, uh, uh, that is government, uh, business, uh, as well as labor, uh, including any concerns that these stakeholders might have, would be, would be, would be discussed and thrashed out. Um, and the mandate that we would now have, or positions that would have on the negotiations would have to have been signed off at NEDLAC. At the highest level, uh, uh, uh, which is called

the trade and industry chamber. Uh, the consultations themselves happen, uh, in a subcommittee called Teselico which is responsible for trade negotiation issues. Whereas as the trade and industry chamber is a higher level structure, uh, which the minister also, uh, convinced, um, at that level himself now, and then. Um, that would be how we would be able to formulate our position, moving to the negotiations. Now the broader part, uh, now when we go external to meet with other parties is You would of course, need to start somewhere. And now speaking specifically to the AFCFTA process, um, it benefited a lot from the tripartite free trade area because that process started a bit earlier than the AFCFTA and by the time the AFCFTA started or commenced the negotiations thereof uh, the TFTA already had established texts. And so in a large part, uh, the AFCFTA was able to borrow text and just simply replaced TFTA with FCFTA. Of course, fully aware that the context is also different. There was also involvement of consultants that were hired by the African union secretariat or the African union commission who developed a lot of paperwork, a lot of research, and a lot of texts, uh, that were also an input and an underline, an input to the process, uh, because, uh, for us, especially as South Africa, uh, we will have always emphasized that we did not want to be [inaudible]jacketed into texts, uh, that might, uh, at face value seem like they are innocuous and speak to our interests, but drafted and this is a real story drafted by academics in Canada and Europe. So the negotiations were in actual fact real intensive negotiations and the texts that we ultimately agreed to and were signed by heads of state would be a totally different picture from where we would have started on day one when we started the negotiations. So in summary, that would be the process of formulating.

Interviewer: Thank, um, I think well answered. And it leads me to the next question to say, and you've mentioned academics, funders, government, negotiators, NEDLAC, who do you feel has the most power when it comes to decision making in regional agreements? So it could be domestic and when now you're external?

Interviewee: Well, I mean, uh, domestically, um, I, I can, I can, I can say again personally that, um, um, I don't know if it's, I mean, actually it is a matter of the resources that they would have, but, um, also better organization that could also flow from them having the resources, uh, business would have a big voice. Um, um, because they are at the coalface of actual industry and trade, they would be more equipped to more effectively, uh, exploit the consultative process. Uh, that, excuse me for a second.... The joys of working from home. Um, hello?

Interviewer: Oh yeah. Sorry. I was saying that's normal.

Interviewee: Yeah, that was just getting a bit distracted. Yeah. So it's also domestically during our consultative process. One would, I think can confidently say business does actually have a, um, um, um, um, um, um, the ability to better exploit to the space for consultations than the other stakeholders, which is labor and community, which is also part of the NEDLAC configuration. Um, of course each one

has equal power theoretically, um, and, and all decisions reached during the consultative process would need consensus and approval sign off by all constituencies each with equal power. Um, um, and that is why I say here the difference is rather in their ability to exploit the space that is there for, for, for that consultations, the technical expertise that they would have to deal with very tech, what sometimes become very technical issues. Um, a business is able to, to, to if they couldn't do it directly employ the necessary, uh, consultancy services to assist, uh, uh, to assist them during the consultative process. With regards, uh, the external, um, um, just to point out again, the principle of the African union, as well as of course, uh, ingrained in the African continental free trade, uh, area negotiations process, um, as well as the agreement itself is one of consensus. So consensus simply define in this case, meaning as long as one party or one country does not disagree. So as soon as one country disagrees with something, it is taken, there is no consensus each with equal power, uh, deliberately shying away from voting, especially on issues of substance, um, and where voting would happen, it would be on very exceptional cases and that would be largely restricted to issues of process. Um, and so on. So you would say there is that balance of power, but then again, there, um, it is the resources that one has the expertise, uh, the human resources, financial muscle, to be able to, to partake in the negotiations, firstly, but also to have, uh, the technical acumen to deal with very technical issues, uh, that come up during the negotiations. Um, that would be my to, yeah.

Interviewer:

So thank you very much because you even covered my next question, which is going to touch on conflict and, um, national interest. But I would still like to ask you one question around the national interest that given the AFCFTA it's different member States, uh, with different national interests, how do you think, uh, the government's role should play about? So you've answered the conflict. So here, it's just you personally thinking if we need to make this work with different national interests, if I were the government, this is what I would do that, given that what you said, they are dominant countries and they're small, um, small economies and yeah. So what's your take on that?

Interviewee:

Well, I mean, I think, um, um, um, there's a saying, um, I don't know where it comes from that the negotiation is an art of the possible and, and, and, and really if we, and I'm gonna respond by way of example, if we, as South Africa were to enter into the AFCFTA negotiations with the mentality that we are the most developed and most powerful economy on the continent, the project, the project will just fall flat. It won't happen. That also includes, uh, whether or how the perceived benefits of the agreement would be shared. So during the negotiations process, it is in the interest of everyone that the interest of everyone, uh, accommodated, uh, to the extent possible, of course, uh, and it is also being the norm. Again, one would say borrowed, maybe from the world trade organization framework that the more developed countries on the, um, um, would be able to take or undertake, uh, more burden than the small economies. And this has given expression in the agreement. For example, if you talk about the liberalization process, Tariff liberalization process, you will notice

in the agreement, what are so-called developed countries that will be ourselves, uh, there, your Nigeria's, um, and a few others would have more stringent obligations. Uh, we would need to, for example, liberalize our Tariffs over a period of five years, whereas countries, uh, designated as least developed countries that will be your Djiboutis. Um, um, um, your Sudans and so on, would be given longer periods. So, so that is how really the differences and interests can be practically managed. Uh, there are instances of course, that are very difficult and, and, and, and, and sometimes, uh, these kind of divergences would require that they be resolved at the most highest level sometimes at ministers level or at States of, at heads of state level, because sometimes at our level, we get buried in the technical and want to be purists and not realists. Um, I don't know if that responds to your question.

Interviewer: It does. Thank you very much. Um, I think you've covered everything I should. I think now I should hand over my masters to you. I'm sure you could write great things there, but thank you.

Interviewee: I'm still struggling with mine. I'm actually for the past two weeks, so yeah. That's why I couldn't, I didn't see your email last week.

Interviewer: Oh, not a problem. Where are you doing your Masters?

Interviewee: It's with a university. There's a school of Oriental African studies, University of London. Yeah.

Interviewer: Wow. Okay. First year or second year.

Interviewee: Um, this is my second year now.

Interviewer: Okay. Okay. No good luck. Good luck at any point, but thank you very much for your time. Um, do you have any questions for me?

Interviewee: Not at all. Um, so this would be it, I don't need to be giving any return.

Interviewer: No. So I would still need the interview guide. Um, you can summarize as much as you can because it's, it needs to come in as, um, Annexures, so I'm doing a triangulation. They want to see the semi-structured video and they want to see your contribution, the interview guide. Um, and then they want to see signed consent.

Interviewee: Okay. Yeah. Okay. No, that's fine. Yeah, I should. Yeah. Maybe if you just give me until the end of the week. Yeah,

Interviewer: That's fine

Interviewee: ...cause I write next week, end of the week. Next week.

Interviewer: That's fine. I can put a reminder for next week, Friday.

Interviewee: Yeah. Yeah.

Interviewer: Is that okay?

Interviewee: Yeah, that's fine.

Interviewer: Thank you very much. Have a good weekend.

Interviewee: Okay, sharp

Interviewer: Sharp. Bye.

Interviewee: Yeah.

[24:16]

APPENDIX C: ETHICAL CLEARANCE

Dear Precious Mathibe,

Please be advised that your application for Ethical Clearance has been approved.

You are therefore allowed to continue collecting your data.

We wish you everything of the best for the rest of the project.

[Ethical Clearance Form](#)

Kind Regards

This email has been sent from an unmonitored email account. If you have any comments or concerns, please contact the GIBS Research Admin team.

APPENDIX D: COPYRIGHT DECLARATION

NAME:

EMAIL ADDRESS:

CONTACT NUMBER:

TYPE OF SERVICE:

NAME:

EMAIL ADDRESS:

CONTACT NUMBER:

TYPE OF SERVICE:

I hereby declare that all interpretations (statistical and/or thematic) arising from the analysis; and write-up of the results for my study was completed by myself without outside assistance

NAME OF STUDENT: THABANG PRECIUS MATHIBE

SIGNATURE: 

STUDENT NUMBER: 18377662

STUDENT EMAIL ADDRESS: 18377662@mygibs.co.za

APPENDIX E: ADDITIONAL SUPPORT CERTIFICATE

19. APPENDIX 5 CERTIFICATION OF ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

(Additional support retained or not - to be **completed by all students**)

Please note that failure to comply and report on this honestly will result in disciplinary action

I hereby certify that (please indicate which statement applies):

- **I DID NOT RECEIVE** any additional/outside assistance (i.e. statistical, transcriptional, thematic, coding, and/or editorial services) on my research report:
- **I RECEIVED** additional/outside assistance (i.e. statistical, transcriptional, thematic, coding, and/or editorial services) on my research report
Transcription of my interviews

If any additional services were retained— **please indicate below which:**

- Statistician**
- Coding (quantitative and qualitative)**
- Transcriber**
- Editor**

Please provide the name(s) and contact details of all retained:

NAME: *Jeni - Lee*

EMAIL ADDRESS: *jeni @ thesis swagons . co . za*

CONTACT NUMBER: *011 684 8115*

TYPE OF SERVICE: *Transcriber*

APPENDIX F: CONSISTENCY MATRIX

15. APPENDIX 1 CONSISTENCY MATRIX

TITLE _____

PROPOSITIONS/ QUESTIONS/ HYPOTHESES	LITERATURE REVIEW	DATA COLLECTION TOOL	ANALYSIS
1 RQ1: Who holds the most power amongst the actors in liberal intergovernmentalism?	Hoaghe & Marks, 2018 Reinhold, 2019 Zijoniz & Leysens, 2015	Question 2, 8	Semi-structured interview content analysis
2 RQ2: What are the steps in the negotiating process of liberal intergovernmentalism?	Schimmelfennig, 2019 Coskun, 2015 Mareike & Pollack, 2018	Question 3	Semi structured interview content analysis
3 RQ3: How are the conflicting collective and individual interests settled in African regional economic cooperation?	Moravcsik, 1993 Mareike & Pollack, 2018 Borzel & Risse, 2019	Question 10, 11, 12 & 13	Semi structured interview content analysis
4			

APPENDIX G: CONSENT LETTER

Informed consent letter:

Allow me to start by thanking you for agreeing to participate in this interview, my name is Precious Mathibe. The goal of this research is to investigate the intergovernmental approach to regional integration and cooperation for which AfCFTA is the case study. I am trying to find out more about the government's role in regional cooperation and integration. Our interview is expected to last about 10min and will help us understand how government role play in regional cooperation and integration agreements. The interview will be semi structured via telephone or virtual teleoconference in a convenient environment. **Your participation is voluntary, and you can withdraw at any time without penalty.** All data will be stored and reported without identifiers.

If you have any concerns, please contact my supervisor or me. Our details are provided below.

Researcher name: Precious Mathibe

Email: 18377662@mygibs.co.za

Phone: 076 451 3974

Research Supervisor: Dr Kerry Chipp

Email: chippk@gibs.co.za

Signature of participant: _____

Date: _____

Signature of researcher: _____

Date: _____