Regional integration in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS):

Effects on regional conflict transformation

By

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the link between regional cooperation and integration and the root causes of conflict in Africa. Specifically, it focuses on the experience of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which is arguably one of the most developed regional cooperation and integration experiments on the African continent. In particular, the study assesses the extent to which, and the conditions under which, the promotion of regional cooperation and integration in ECOWAS (in its multi-dimensional and multi-sectoral characters) contributes to tackling the root causes of conflict in West Africa. In doing so, it first evaluates the extent to which there has been regional cooperation/integration within ECOWAS, and then reviews whether this has had any detectable effect on the root causes of conflict.

ECOWAS is home to many cooperation/integration initiatives, including intra-regional trade; migration and the free movement of people; monetary integration and macroeconomic convergence; regional norm diffusion; and conflict management and resolution initiatives. To an extent, such a level of sophistication explains why the organisation is often portrayed as one of the most advanced regionalisation processes in Africa, if not the most advanced. Yet the research argues that while the region appears advanced in its approach to regional cooperation, especially when compared to other African regional organisations, this does not necessarily result in actual integration (e.g. shared sovereignty), let alone a successful effect on conflict transformation.

In reviewing the extent to which each of these sectors is factually integrated, the study argues that there is a gap between existing policies and their implementation. Of all sectors mentioned above, only two (regional norm diffusion and conflict management/resolution) can be considered as highly integrated, because of their ability to translate into practice some of the elements for which they have been designed. The remaining sectors either have low or medium levels of integration, mainly due to challenges of regulation and implementation along with the absence of political will and real commitment from most member states.

In assessing the security situation in West Africa, this dissertation argues that ECOWAS can be credited for reducing the level of violence in the region, which although still plagued by political and security tensions, appears less violent than it was just a decade ago. As regards the issue of

whether ECOWAS has had any effect on tackling the root causes of conflict in the region, the analysis reveals that the organisation has been quite successful at diffusing regional norms of good governance and democracy, also thanks to the commitment and political will of member states. On the other hand, it does not appear as if intra-regional trade as well as monetary and macroeconomic convergence have exerted any tangible effects on conflict transformation, mainly due to the reluctance to share sovereignty, the lack of political will and poor implementation. Moreover, this study contends that ECOWAS' effect on the root causes of conflict through its conflict management and resolution initiatives has been minimal, because initiatives within this domain focus mainly on containing existing tensions, with their capacity at preventing conflicts being hindered by a variety of factors, including inefficiencies and frictions, the ad-hoc modus operandi, the lack of capacity and financial means, and the reluctance by member states to adopt a coherent regional framework based on shared sovereignty. Finally, the study argues that migration and the free movement of people in ECOWAS may have a double-effect on conflicts in West Africa. On the one hand, it fosters a greater sense of common purpose and cultural sharing. On the other hand, the poor institutionalisation of this area of integration may actually contribute to triggering tensions (for instance, due to corruption and harassment at the borders), while the persistence of porous borders allows armed groups to move across the region.

The dissertation ends by raising questions as to whether regional cooperation and integration in Africa should be seen as a promising avenue to address the root causes of conflict, due to the mixed results of a rather 'good' case such as ECOWAS; and alternative approaches are contemplated.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AEC	African Economic Community
AFDB	African Development Bank
AFISMA	African-led International Support Mission to Mali
AHSG	Authority of the Heads of State and Government
AMU	Arab Maghreb Union
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
APSA	African Peace and Security Architecture
AQIM	Al-Qaeda in the Islamist Maghreb
ASF	African Standby Force
AU	African Union
BCEAO	Banque Centrale des Etats de l'Afrique de l'Ouest
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CDD	Centre for Democratic Development
CDD	Centre for Democracy and Development
CEAO	Communauté Economique de l'Afrique de l'Ouest
CEN-SAD	Community of Sahel-Saharan States
CET	Common External Tariff

CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
DOTS	Direction of Trade and Statistics
DRC	Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty (Migration DRC)
EAC	East African Community
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECDPM	European Centre for Development Policy
ECOMICI	ECOWAS Mission in Côte d'Ivoire
ECOMOG	Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ECPF	ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework
EMCP	ECOWAS Monetary Co-operation Programme
ETLS	ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme
EU	European Union
EVD	Ebola virus disease
FATF	Financial Action Task Force
FES	Friedrich Ebert Stiftung

FTA	Free Trade Area
FZ	Franc Zone
ICC	International Chamber of Commerce
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority for Development
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMB	International Maritime Bureau
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
ISS	Institute for Security Studies
KAIPTC	Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
LECIAD	Legon Centre for International Affairs and Diplomacy
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MNLA	National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad
MUJAO	Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NPLF	National Patriotic Liberian Front
OAU	Organisation of African Unity

OEC	Observatory of Economic Complexity
PAPS	Political Affairs, Peace and Security Department
PDGG	Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance
PMAD	Protocol Relating to Mutual Assistance on Defence
PNA	Protocol on Non-Aggression
PRMCR	Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security
PSC	Peace and Security Council
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SALW	Small Arms Light Weapons
UEMOA	Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest Africaine
UMOA	Union Monétaire Ouest Africaine
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNOCI	United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs
UNOMIL	United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia
UNOWA	United Nations Office in West Africa
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US	United States
USSR	Soviet Union
WACSI	West African Civil Society Institute
WACSOF	West African Civil Society Forum
WAEMU	West African Economic and Monetary Union
WAI	West African Institute
WAMI	West African Monetary Institute
WAMZ	West African Monetary Zone
WANEP	West African Network for Peacebuilding
ZEI	Centre for European Integration Studies

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCING THE RESEARCH

1.1 Overview

Conflict and peace are salient themes in international politics. They occupy a prime position in the United Nations (UN) Charter, where the prevention and limitation of war and the promotion of peace are not only the focus of the preamble but are also highlighted as the core purposes of all UN institutions, as set out in Article 1. Also the Millennium Project (2012: 8), which was endorsed by the UN Secretary General with the aim of generating a feasible strategy to help the world achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and eradicate "poverty, hunger and disease", identifies peace and conflict among the fifteen global challenges facing humanity.

In particular, regional conflicts occupy have risen to the forefront of the international agenda, especially during the past two decades. The end of the Cold War was supposedly meant to bring the 'end of history' (Fukuyama 1992) and usher us in a 'new world order' (Kanet 1998) based on principles such as the peaceful resolution of conflict, the expansion of human welfare and increased democratic participation. Having resolved the key areas of dispute between the two superpowers, notably the United States (US) and the Soviet Union (USSR), the emergence of a more peaceful and collaborative world order was expected. Yet, in this new global order, the security threat represented by nuclear warfare between the superpowers has been replaced by the outbreak of intra-state conflict, across much of the former Communist world and throughout Asia and Africa, many of which carry regional dimensions.

A possible strategy to tackle this challenge has been the promotion of regional integration, an institutional process championed on the European continent, which embarked on a supranational integration initiative after the Second World War with a view to achieving long-lasting peace. Not only has the European Union (EU) come to be viewed as an example of regional integration (and perhaps the most visible example of deep, multi-layered and multi-sectoral economic and

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political interdependence within a given geographical area), but it has also become a main promoter of regional cooperation/integration schemes in other regions of the world, which it views as a sustainable and long-term solution to regional conflicts. This is both how the EU sees itself and how it is viewed elsewhere in the world (Lucarelli & Fioramonti 2010).

Nevertheless, the effectiveness of such a conflict transformation strategy has not been properly analysed, at least not outside Europe and its immediate neighbourhood (Diez & Cooley 2011). In fact, the outcome of certain regional schemes on conflict transformation (as opposed to short-term conflict management) remains a matter of debate, especially in Africa.

Regionalism has experienced an important growth in Africa since the beginning of the new millennium. A significant aspect of its evolution on the continent has been a gradual involvement in conflict management practices. At the continental level, important steps have been the creation, in 2002, of the African Union (AU) and the launch of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). Similarly, several African regional organisations have also been established and have broadened their scope for action by developing measures to manage conflicts. These regional institutions include – among others – the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) and, of course, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

Yet, although the African continent appears to have become a hub of regional cooperation and integration experiments, some commentators have expressed scepticism about the capacity of African regional cooperation and integration schemes to overcome regional problems and thus tackle the root causes of regional conflicts. For instance, African regional organisations have been accused of being technically unprepared for the challenges of conflict management and resolution, undermined by internal rivalries and over-dependent on external support (Williams 2008). In the same line, Nathan (2010) has identified several flaws inherent to the AU and regional economic communities (RECs), which hinder their ability to achieve security within

their respective regions. Such flaws include "the prevalence of indirect hostilities between its member states, the high level of internal violence in these states, the acute insecurity that afflicts so many countries and people, and the consequent absence of dependable expectations of peaceful change" (Nathan 2010: 112).

1.2 Formulation and demarcation of the research questions and objectives

This study explores the strengths and weaknesses of regional cooperation and integration schemes in tackling the root causes of conflict in Africa. Specifically, the study focuses on the experience of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS); the latter which is arguably one of the most developed regional cooperation and integration experiments on the African continent. Such research aims to generate new information in a relatively under-analysed field with a view to tentatively respond to this overarching question:

'To what extent, and under which conditions, does the promotion of regional cooperation and integration (in their multi-dimensional and multi-sectoral characters) influence regional conflict transformation in Africa?'

The following sub-questions are also addressed in this study:

1) To what extent has there been regional cooperation/integration within ECOWAS?

2) Has it had any detectable effect on the root causes of conflict?

3) What have been the most visible successes and failures, if any?

Addressing these questions means analysing the effects of regional integration and cooperation in ECOWAS on conflict transformation. Such analysis entails identifying key sectors of integration and cooperation within ECOWAS, such as intra-regional trade; migration and free movement of people; monetary integration and macroeconomic convergence; regional norm diffusion; and conflict management and resolution initiatives.

Figure 1 below illustrates this study's framework of analysis.

Figure 1.1 - Framework for analysis: causal paths between regionalism and conflict transformation in West Africa through ECOWAS

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┌─────────────────────────────────┐                    ┌──────────────────────────┐
│ Sectors of Integration and      │                    │                          │
│ Cooperation in ECOWAS           │                    │  Root causes of conflict │
│                                 │      ───────▶      │  (conflict transformation)│
│ Intra-Regional Trade            │                    │                          │
│                                 │                    └──────────────────────────┘
│ Migration and Free Movement of  │
│ People                          │
│                                 │
│ Monetary Integration and        │
│ Macroeconomic Convergence       │
│                                 │
│ Regional Norm Diffusion         │
│                                 │
│ Conflict Management and         │
│ Resolution Initiatives          │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
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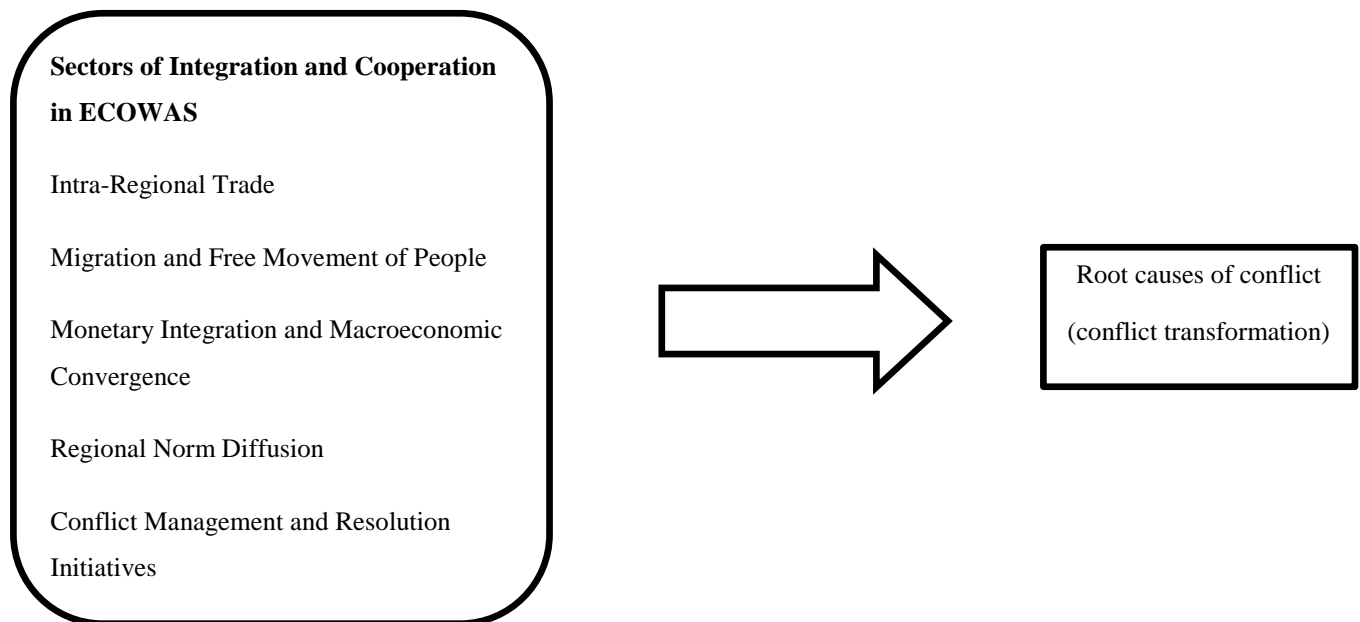
In line with this framework, the present research aims to understand if and how regional integration/cooperation in ECOWAS affects the transformation of regional conflicts in West Africa. The study will contribute to the debate on African regionalism by exploring an important, yet under-researched issue such as the relationship between regional integration/cooperation and the transformation of regional conflicts, especially in a continent where the effective impact of regional schemes has remained controversial (Williams 2008; Nathan 2010).

This study has been developed as an indirect result of the international project 'The EU, Regional Conflicts and the Promotion of Regional Cooperation: A successful strategy for a global challenge?' (REGIOCONF), which is being funded by the Volkswagen Foundation, Compagnia Di San Paolo and Riksbanken Jubileumsfond and carried out by an international consortium of universities including the University of Tubingen (Germany), the Italian Institute of International Affairs (Italy), the University of São Paulo (Brazil), the University of Pretoria (South Africa), the American University in Cairo (Egypt) and Myongji University (South Korea).

While this dissertation has been developed in complete autonomy from the REGIOCONF project (and its merit should be measured regardless of the work conducted for the project), it nevertheless shares the scientific aims of REGIOCONF. These aims are:

- Exploring the relationship between regional cooperation/integration and conflict;
- Describing how regional/integration is carried out in a specific regional context (in Africa);
- Assessing the extent to which there has been regional cooperation/integration and its general (positive or negative) effects on conflict.

1.3 Theoretical structure and methodology

1.3.1 Key concepts

In order to address the topic at hand, this study needs to draw upon the concepts of regionalism, regional integration, regional cooperation, regional conflict and conflict transformation. As these concepts are discussed in more depth in Chapter 2, this section only provides a general overview of their meaning and use.

Regional integration, in the words of a scholar such as Ernst Haas, refers to the process whereby

political actors in several distinct national settings are persuaded to shift their loyalties,

expectations and political activities toward a new center, whose institutions possess

or demand jurisdiction over the pre-existing national states (Haas 1958: 16).

Similarly Leon Lindberg, another leading scholar of regional integration, describes integration as "the process whereby nations forego the desire and ability to conduct foreign and key domestic policies independently of each other, seeking instead to make joint decisions or to delegate the decision-making process to new central organs" (Lindberg 1963: 149).

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This study therefore understands regional integration as a process of joint governance with a degree of shared sovereignty (Fioramonti 2012b; Lavergne 1997). Regional cooperation, on the other hand, describes a less fundamental shift, as far as sovereignty is not necessarily pooled, although participating countries may agree to collaborate through specific institutional mechanisms (Fioramonti 2012b). The difference between regional integration and cooperation is important in understanding the extent to which African countries, especially in West Africa, have embarked on a fully-fledged integration plan as opposed to a less demanding form of cooperation, and in which sectors. The concept and phenomenon of regionalism is addressed in this study as multi-level processes (i.e. both formal and informal) of regional integration/cooperation driven by a multiplicity of actors (i.e. both state and non-state) (Acharya 2012: 8-9; Fioramonti 2012b, 2014).

The concept of regional conflict is also approached at different levels. For the purpose of this research, a regional conflict is considered to be an inter-state conflict affecting a region or even an intra-state conflict embroiling regional actors and with regional spill-over effects (Pugh et al. 2004; Tavares 2010). This definition is particularly relevant in the case of the West African region, where the region has shown high degrees of sensitivity also to domestic tensions. Similarly, it is important to clarify how the concepts of conflict management/conflict resolution and conflict transformation are defined in this study. Whereas conflict management and resolution both focus on the limitation, mitigation and containment of conflict (Lederach 1995), conflict transformation indicates a more comprehensive phenomenon. It aims "to affect the basic issues", that is, "the incompatibilities" that drive a wedge between the conflicting parties (Wallensteen 2007: 5). In other words, conflict transformation refers to the process of altering the root causes of conflict, that is, the structural factors that fuel conflict in the region under scrutiny, be them political, social, economic or of any other nature (Wallensteen 2007). Therefore, conflict transformation has a more long-term focus, as it entails the elimination of the primary causes of a conflict in order to enable the development of a deeply rooted and sustainable peace. As Lederach (1997: 21) puts it, conflict transformation tackles "structural issues, social dynamics of relationship building, and the development of a supportive infrastructure for peace". While this research will also touch upon conflict management and

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resolution, its main focus is on the extent to which regionalism (through cooperation and integration, as well as via formal and informal processes) contributes to conflict transformation.

The key assumption on which this study rests is that regionalism leads to regular interaction among states in a variety of ways (for instance trade, migration), therefore enabling a "sense of community" (Adler & Barnett 1998: 6-7). Such a sense of community, in turn, would decrease the likelihood of violent inter-state conflict (e.g. war) due to increased interaction. According to Karl Deutsch, one of the founding fathers of regional studies, a 'security community' refers to a group of states sharing governance systems that allow them to prevent the occurrence of internal conflicts and to fight against common external threats (Deutsch 1957).

Following the above-discussion, this study argues that regional integration/cooperation may contribute to the transformation of conflicts by:

1) changing the rules of the game, through incentives that change the conflicting parties' behaviour (for example through prospective trade gains, security assurances, etc.);

2) providing different patterns of behaviour to be followed and emulated;

3) altering the normative setting, so that actors change their reference points for action;

4) socialising actors in the new setting, so that they transform their identities in a manner that makes them no longer incompatible (Coppieters et al. 2004; Diez et al. 2006, 2008; Tocci 2007).

It can therefore be argued that regionalisation processes can transform conflict through 'hard' measures, which include forms of coercion such as conditionalities on member states, sanctions and other types of economic and political incentives, but also through 'soft' measures, which include socialisation processes that help (re)shape cultures, expectations, and models of appropriateness. While the first logic of action tends to impact on behaviour directly and through specific policies, the second logic is more subtle, indirect and often more complex to trace.

Moreover, in practice, often different logics coexist and present various degrees of 'mixed' composition.

While the relationship between regionalism and conflict transformation has been studied at the EU level, there is a dearth of focused and systematic analysis about the effects of regionalisation processes in the African continent. The present research helps to fill such a gap.

1.3.2 Methodology

In analysing the promotion of regionalism and its effect on conflict, this study focuses on the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

As one of the most advanced regionalisation processes on the African continent and the most long-standing institutional setup in the field of regional security, ECOWAS represents the primary regional organisation in the region of West Africa. Not only is it described as "the most dominant [regional] organisation in sub-Saharan Africa", but ECOWAS is also considered "the most robust security mechanism" on the continent (Tavares 2010: 35-36). This study therefore explores the various ramifications of ECOWAS and its effects on regional conflict transformation in the West African region. Although West Africa is referred to in the literature either as a region or as a sub-region, this study frames it as a fully-fledged region, in line with Nye's definition of a region as a set of states insisting on a given geographical area (Nye 1968). Consequently, ECOWAS is regarded here as a regional organisation, with the African Union (AU) being considered the 'continental' organisation representing the larger African continent. In this regard, it can be argued that, given the prominence of ECOWAS as a primate regionalisation process, the findings of this research are likely to shed light not only on the link between regionalism and conflict in Africa, but also on this critical relationship over the world.

From a methodological point of view, this research is based on a systematic analysis of secondary sources (desktop reviews) as well as extensive fieldwork in the West African region. The desktop reviews (including the analysis of the relevant literatures) provide a background on regional conflicts by identifying their main characteristics, and a description of the promotion of regional cooperation/integration. Moreover, a review of the literature helps understand the

relationship between regional conflict transformation and regional integration, which in turn provides an entry point to analyse the effectiveness of ECOWAS in conflict transformation. At the same time, it must be noted that existing literature mostly focuses on conflict management and resolution, with a focus on short-term third party intervention in various forms of mediation, and peacekeeping and peace enforcement (Fisher 2011). Even two of the core reference books for conflict resolution (Bercovitch et al. 2009; Webel & Johansen 2012) have no entry on regional integration as a conflict transformation strategy.

Against this backdrop, an extensive fieldwork in the region was necessary to complement existing sources. Yet, before travelling to West Africa, the author administered five semi-structured interviews (three were conducted via Skype and two occurred face to face) in Pretoria (South Africa) to experts on West African integration in order to gauge preliminary views on the topic. The fieldwork in itself took place between September 29 and November 2, 2013. The author visited the headquarters of both ECOWAS in Abuja (Nigeria) and the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU, or UEMOA in French) in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) and visited the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC) in Accra (Ghana). During this period, she administered semi-structured interviews to 50 regional officials and experts. The author also spent ten days in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) (from April 22, 2014 – May 1, 2014), where she conducted semi-structured interviews with 13 officials of the African Union and of the European Union Delegation to the African Union.

Table 1 below reports the details of the interviews.

Table 1.1 - Organisations interviewed before (July 24-August 14, 2013) and during the fieldwork (September 29-November 2, 2013 and April 22, 2014 – May 1, 2014)

Locations and Dates	Organisations	Departments/Divisions (if available)
Pretoria (South Africa) July 24-August 14, 2013	African Development Bank (AFDB), based in Tunis (Tunisia)-Skype interview	N/A
	Centre for European Integration Studies (ZEI), based in Bonn (Germany)-Skype interview	
	Institute for Security Studies (ISS), based in Pretoria (South Africa)	N/A
	King's College London, based in London (United Kingdom (UK))	N/A
	West African Institute (WAI), based in Praia (Cape Verde)-Skype interview	N/A
Accra (Ghana) September 29-October 8, 2013	Centre for Democratic Development (CDD)	N/A
	Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC)	Faculty of Academic Affairs and Research
	Legon Centre for International Affairs and Diplomacy (LECIAD)	N/A
	West African Civil Society Institute (WACSI)	N/A
	West African Monetary Institute (WAMI)	N/A
	West African Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP)	N/A
Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) October 9-October 18, 2013	African Development Bank (AFDB)	N/A
	Embassy of France	N/A
	European Union (EU) Delegation in Burkina Faso	N/A
	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	N/A
	University of Ouagadougou	N/A
	West African Economic and Monetary Union Commission (WAEMU)	Territorial Planning Division
		Human Development Division
		Regional Market and Custom Union Division
		Department of High Education and Vocational Training

		Department of Cooperation and External Relations
		Monetary Policy and International Economic Relations Division
Nigeria (Abuja) October 19–November 2, 2013	Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD)	N/A
	Centre for International Studies and Research at the National Defence	N/A
	Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Commission	Electoral Assistance Unit
		Standby Force
		Early Warning
		Free Circulation of People and
		Migration
		Economic Affairs Department
		Democracy and Good Governance Unit
		Peace fund
		Research and Development Division
		Strategic Planning Division
		Investment Promotion Services
		Peacekeeping and Regional Security
	Embassy of France	N/A
	Embassy of the United States (US)	N/A
	Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES)	N/A
	EU Delegation in Nigeria	N/A
	UK High Commission	N/A
	West African Civil Society Forum (WACSOF)	N/A
Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) April 22-May 1, 2014	African Union Commission (AU)	Peace and Security Department
		Economic Affairs Department
	European Union Delegation to the AU	N/A

Unlike questionnaires, semi-structured interviews allowed for more flexibility and could be tailored to the different types of respondents' portfolios and expertise. Indeed, due to the exploratory nature of this study, it was important to obtain rich and comprehensive responses as well as allow the researcher to probe the various respondents and ask subsequent questions (Bryman 2004).

The results of the desktop reviews and the interviews were then analysed with a view to producing an in-depth analysis of the extent to which regionalism has progressed in the region, as well as identifying patterns of influence (not causation, which would require more systematic quantitative research and controls of variability) between the various forms of formal and informal regional integration/cooperation and conflict transformation.

1.4 Outline of the dissertation

This dissertation is organised into five chapters. Following this introduction, Chapter 2 lays the conceptual framework and provides an overview of concepts such as regionalism integration/cooperation and regional conflict transformation. The literature on regional conflicts is also reviewed to identify the main characteristics and features that render them a global challenge. Moreover, the chapter discusses regional integration as a strategy to transform regional conflicts. Specific references are made to the main features of this strategy, along with the driving forces behind it. Finally, an overview of regionalism in Africa, including a discussion of the genesis and evolution of regionalism on the continent (mainly Sub-Saharan), and on the critiques of African regional organisations as conflict management and resolution catalysts, is provided.

In Chapter 3, an overview of West Africa and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is provided. Here, a background on West Africa's conflicts is discussed, with particular attention paid to their dynamics and regional dimensions. Moreover, ECOWAS is empirically examined as the primary regional organisation in the area. The chapter also gives an account of how ECOWAS has developed regional conflict competencies.

Chapter 4 discusses the analysis of the fieldwork. It assesses the direct and indirect role of ECOWAS on conflict transformation in West Africa. The aim here is to understand if (and to what extent) regionalism in ECOWAS, (specifically through intra-regional trade, migration and free movement of people, monetary union and macroeconomic convergence, regional norm diffusion, and conflict management and resolution initiatives) has affected the transformation of regional conflicts.

The final chapter concludes by attempting an explanation of why certain sectors of regionalisation have been more successful than others at transforming conflict. It also highlights the fact that regionalisation may help tackle the root causes of conflict in some areas while generating new tensions in other areas, thus casting doubt on a simplistic and linear approach to regionalism and conflict transformation. This type of analysis is crucial if African scholars and policy makers are concerned with achieving "deep conflict prevention" (Miall 2000: 21). Based on these conclusions, future prospects and recommendations concerning the effect of regional integration on regional conflict transformation in Africa and elsewhere will be considered as opportunities for further research.

CHAPTER 2
REGIONAL CONFLICTS, REGIONAL INTEGRATION
AND REGIONALISM IN AFRICA

2.1 Introduction

Regionalism has become a significant phenomenon in global politics. There currently exists a proliferation of regional cooperation and integration arrangements around the world (Fioramonti 2012b). Recent research has also shown the intimate relationship between new forms of regionalism and crises, which are often transborder in nature (Fioramonti 2012a). The growing relevance of regionalism has been driven, amongst others, by the gradual understanding that many security threats and challenges are primarily regional in nature rather than national or global (Tavares 2010). Inter-state and intra-state armed conflicts as well as threats such as environmental degradation, deadly diseases and terrorism, generally have a regional (if not global) dimension. Whereas during the Cold War, regional institutions and regional conflicts were subordinated to the particular interest of the superpowers, the world has more recently witnessed a new trend, in which regions adopt mechanisms to tackle threats and challenges with a degree of autonomy, thus taking more direct control of their own geographical remits (Tavares 2010).

This chapter discusses the conceptual framework used to study regional conflicts and integration. It also looks at regionalism (integration/cooperation) as a strategy to transform regional conflicts. Specific references are made to the main features of this strategy, along with the driving forces behind it. Regionalism in Africa is also reviewed here, paying particular attention to factors that led to its genesis on the continent (mainly Sub-Saharan) and the way in which it has evolved over the years. The chapter ends by presenting the different critiques often directed at African regional organisations, regarding their role as conflict management and resolution catalysts.

2.2 The relevance of regional conflicts

Although regional conflicts have become a significant feature of international relations, they do not have a straightforward definition. Regional conflicts, in particular, increased on the global scene in the post-Cold War era, as the world witnessed an outburst of conflicts with strong regional dynamics and regional spill-over effects, some of which were inter-state in nature but most were intra-state (Pugh et al. 2004; Tavares 2010).

Regional conflicts are traditionally defined as inter-state conflicts with regional dimensions and regional spill-over effects (Tavares 2010). Yet a growing body of literature, drawing upon the work of Barnett Rubin on 'regional conflict formation' and Michael Pugh et al. on 'regional conflict complexes', also highlights the fact that most regional conflicts nowadays are intra-state conflicts driven by regional networks, embroiling regional actors and with direct and indirect regional spill-over effects (Pugh et al. 2004). As discussed in Chapter 3, this definition is particularly suitable for the type of conflicts prevailing in the West African region. Often, the positional differences at the heart of regional conflicts are tied to (ethno-) political identities and/or security and economic interests. Additionally, the behaviour by conflict parties does not follow traditional war protocols and is largely ad-hoc and unregulated (Diez & Cooley 2011).

Yet unlike other types of conflict, regional conflicts display two necessary features. Firstly, the conflict is regional in terms of the prime actors (or conflict parties) involved. For instance, an inter-state conflict is regional when it involves more than two states in a given region (Schulz 1989). In this line, the Arab-Israeli conflict is a clear case of a regional conflict. The conflict is also regional when it is intra-state but regional external actors are involved in the conflict (Zeleza 2008). An example would be the Cyprus conflict which was a regional conflict in view of the roles played by Turkey and Greece in the intra-island dynamics. Moreover, the conflict can be regional in terms of causes and impact. The link between the conflict and the region may be related to the main cause of dispute, or of the consequences it has on the region: for instance, border-related disruption of trade in the Maghreb, refugee flows from Bosnia or Libya, etc.

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Regional conflicts differ from global conflicts (such as the Second World War, the Cold War or even the Iranian nuclear question), as the latter are characterised by conflict parties and issues not confined to a single region, impacting upon global norms, interests and balances (Buzan 1989). This is not to say, however, that regional conflicts cannot have global ramifications. External (extra-regional) third parties, with specific norms and interests in the affected region, are often involved in regional conflicts (as is clearly evident in the Arab-Israeli conflict). Yet they remain regional in their constitutional features and are not part of a global 'overlay' structure (Buzan & Wæver 2005). On the opposite end of the spectrum, there are conflicts that remain confined to domestic politics or only involve two states, without any direct effect on other actors. The Northern Irish conflict, for instance, while no doubt an important and bloody conflict, never unfolded a regional dynamic beyond the conflict territory itself, the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom, the support of diaspora groups and the attempts by other actors to mediate.

At the same time, regional conflicts represent global challenges because of their inbuilt potential to spill over into the global arena (Fawcett & Hurrell 1995). This challenge has risen to the forefront of the international agenda particularly after 1989. In fact, whereas during the Cold War the on-going global conflict often had regional manifestations – i.e., proxy wars –, in the post-Cold War era, a bottom up dynamic has been at play, whereby regional conflicts have the potential of translating into global tensions and conflicts (Buzan & Wæver 2005). As such, regional conflicts are often dealt with at the global level through the involvement of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and/or of specific extra-regional third parties. The challenge is thus 'global' if and to the extent that extra-regional actors, including the European Union (EU) or the United States, have a stake in such conflicts. These roles may be normative and/or interest-based. They may be particularistic – i.e. pertain to the specific region and conflict in question – or general – i.e. related to the perceived link between the conflict and the goal of maintaining international peace. The intervention of extra-regional (global) actors may be diplomatic, economic, military, social or technical (Fisher 2011).

The persistence of regional conflicts presents a core challenge globally and for Africa in particular. Many current and past African wars, although conventionally seen as 'civil wars',

have in fact shown a notable regional dimension and have triggered violence well beyond the borders of a single nation-state (Williams 2008; Bereketeab 2013). The case of conflicts in the West African region again clearly illustrates this, as will be discussed in Chapter 3. But first, what is regionalism? What is meant by regional cooperation and integration? The next section provides a definition of these concepts.

2.3 Regionalism, regional cooperation and regional integration

2.3.1 Regionalism

The concept of regionalism means different things to different people, and has created intense debates among political scientists. According to Lavergne (1997), regionalism represents a regional approach to problem solving. In the same vein, Hettne (2005: 545) refers to regionalism as "a tendency and a political commitment to organise the world in terms of regions", rather than as a specific regional project. Whether states are the only or main actors behind this political commitment also remains the subject of many discussions. For instance, Gamble and Payne (1996: 2) argue that "regionalism is a state-led or states-led project designed to reorganise a particular regional space along defined economic and political lines". Other authors, however, refuse to confine the phenomenon of regionalism to states. In this vein, Hveem (2003: 83) refers to regionalism as pertaining to "an identifiable group of actors" which try to build regions beyond the state. Hurrell (1995: 39) in turn identifies five varieties of regionalism, namely: "informal integration (process of forming regions); identity; interstate cooperation; state-led integration and cohesion". Soderbaum and Shaw (2003) have unpacked the concept of regionalism, showing how multifaceted it can be and highlighting the crucial role of a variety of actors and drivers of regionalism. More recently, Fioramonti has provided a global analysis of how regionalism can also be promoted from below through the coordination of civil society activities across national borders (Fioramonti 2014). Taking stock of the varieties of regionalism, this study will use the term to refer to multi-level processes (i.e. both formal and informal) of regional cooperation as well as regional integration, driven by and happening among multi-actors (i.e. both state and non-state) (Acharya 2012; Fioramonti 2012b, 2014).

This approach is rooted in the belief that regionalism is not a process confined to states only or to a specific type of actors such as political elites, as traditionally conceived. In this traditional view, regionalism and its derivatives (for instance regional integration and cooperation) were perceived as "top-down processes, led by the few and imposed on the many" (Fioramonti 2014: 2), therefore excluding the role of non-state actors, for instance civil society, in such processes. Such a traditional conception also only recognised formal processes and excluded informal processes in describing regionalism (Acharya 2012). Yet an "intellectual movement" (Acharya 2012: 8) emerged in recent years, namely 'new regionalism', which sought to expand the scope of regionalism studies (Soderbaum & Shaw 2003). Different from what can be considered as 'old regionalism', which was traditionally confined to institutional forms of integration (and largely Eurocentric), the new regionalism approach sees regionalism as a kaleidoscope of processes, most of which are bottom-up in nature and driven informally by non-state actors (Acharya 2012; Fioramonti 2012b, 2014).

Such a conception is particularly relevant to the case of West Africa, where civil society organisations have, over the past two decades, gradually engaged with the main regional organisation (ECOWAS) (Iheduru 2014). This includes for instance the West African Civil Society Forum (WACSOF), which was created in December 2003 and whose mandate is, amongst others, to contribute to the 'West African integration', through members ranging from "worker and employer organisations, market women, retail traders, artisans and farmers, gender and human rights and environmental activists, to anti-corruption organisations" (Iheduru 2014: 142-143).

This research focuses primarily on institutional actors but against the backdrop of the new regionalism approach. Thus it regards regionalism as not being "the monopoly of states" but also as a process which "encompasses interactions among non-state actors, as well as between states and non-state actors within a given policy area" (Fioramonti 2012b: 152). Moreover, it identifies both formal and informal processes of regionalism.

2.3.2 Regional cooperation and regional integration

The concept of regional integration refers to a permanent involvement among neighbouring countries in collaborative ventures and is characterised by the establishment of joint institutional mechanisms and a degree of shared sovereignty (Fioramonti 2012b; Lavergne 1997). While regional integration thus requires a transition from full national sovereignty to a degree of supranationalisation, regional cooperation describes a less fundamental shift, as far as national sovereignty remains unchallenged, although participating countries may agree to collaborate through specific institutional mechanisms (Fioramonti 2012b). Highlighting the difference existing between these two concepts is important as it helps to understand the extent to which West African states are on the path of a fully-fledged integration as opposed to a less demanding form of cooperation.

Although there is a significant degree of debate within the relevant literature as to what drives regional integration (Mattli 1999), it is possible to isolate a number of key factors, most of which have played an important role in the process of integration in Europe and elsewhere. The first one pertains to the will to secure peace. According to this view, following the devastating horrors of the Second World War, there was a "natural drive" (Mattli 1999: 3-5) among politicians to devise a novel structure of European governance capable of eradicating the very roots of intra-European conflicts (Hettne 2005). A clear example was the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community, a "supranational authority created to provide common jurisdiction over the most fundamental natural resources of the continent and whose direct control had historically been the main source of conflict in the region" (Fioramonti 2012a: 3). A second set of explanations revolves around the notion of leadership. This view asserts that regional integration arose in Europe because of the ability of "insightful charismatic leaders" at transcending the narrow-mindedness and selfishness of domestic pressure groups hostile to European unity (Mattli 1999: 5).

According to neo-functionalists, the process of regional integration is driven by the quest for 'supranationality', which is viewed as the best way for states to carry out specific tasks (for instance providing more efficient decision-making), strengthen the flow of information across borders and also reduce transaction costs (Haas 1958). Through the concept of 'spill-over', neo-

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functionalists contend that an integrated policy sector pushes for more integration within that sector and well beyond it, therefore reinforcing functional integration (Haas & Schmitter 1964). Crises, for example, can be regarded as potential factors capable of generating such a 'spill-over' effect and, therefore, strengthening regional cooperation and possibly integration (Fioramonti 2012a).

For (liberal) intergovernmentalists, regional integration is the result of a series of bargains among the political leaders of the major states (Hoffman 1966; Moravcsik 1993). These bargains mainly reflect the convergence of preferences among the regional leaders, who often buy off small states with side-payments in return for their cooperation.

Other theories on regional integration, mainly elaborated by economists, focus on the welfare effects of integration. Primarily, they look at market relationships involving goods and factors of production within a region and assume away the relevance of institutional and political forces. In general, these theories focus on welfare gains and losses associated with regional integration, and do not cater for explanations of the political choices producing such effects (Mattli 1999). Jacob Viner (1950) and Bela Balassa (1962) have introduced customs union theory into the study of regionalism, by seeking to understand the welfare implications of integration in terms of trade creation and trade diversion. The traditional linear approach to integration, from customs union to political integration, is largely influenced by this strand of economic research.

2.4 Regional integration, regional conflicts and conflict transformation

The end of the Second World War has seen the growing recognition of regional schemes as important means to address the root causes of conflicts, mainly through the example set by the European countries to build common institutions. Throughout the world, from Europe to Asia and Africa, regional institutions have been created to pursue this strategy through the increasing cooperation of states via a set of common and shared rules.

According to supporters of regional integration, regional cooperation and integration schemes may constrain conflict parties in choosing their strategies and create opportunities for win-win

solutions. They may even help transform collective identities so that the underpinning incompatibility of subject positions that defines the conflict disappears (Efinger et al. 1988; Senghaas-Knobloch 1969).

This long-term strategy for conflict transformation owes a lot to liberal thinking in International Relations and Peace Studies, as exemplified in John Burton's cobweb model of world society (Burton 1972), David Mitrany's functionalist strategy to build international institutions and reduce state nationalism (Mitrany 1966), and Karl Deutsch's idea of security communities emerging out of greater degrees of transnational transactions (Deutsch 1957; Adler & Barnett 1998). Common to all these approaches is that they do not aim for short-term conflict management, but that they do transform fundamentally the societal bases on which conflicts are built. They seek to do so primarily by changing the structural and institutional environments of conflict parties (Mitchell 2011) and by creating regional security communities (Wallensteen 2007), which have the indirect effect of transforming the preferences, values and objectives of the involved parties. Regional integration can therefore be seen as a form of conflict transformation, that is, the long-term changing of structures to prevent or at least minimise violent conflict behaviour (Lederach 1997).

Although this strategy has worked effectively in Europe, it has never been assessed in Africa. An overview of African regional organisations rather projects a decidedly mixed picture (Acharya & Johnston 2007; Crocker et al. 2001; Fawcett & Hurrell 1995; Pugh & Sidhu 2003), with one of the most striking aspects of this picture being the considerable controversy around the effective impact of these institutions on conflict prevention, management and resolution (Nathan 2010).

There is a particular need for studies that attempt to understand how the day-to-day of regional integration and cooperation processes (which include also economic interdependence, trade, movement of people across borders, etc.) influences conflict transformation. For instance, Schoeman (1998: 268-271) identifies a number of requirements for the creation of a regional "secure community", that is, a "community combining broad security and multidimensional development". These include, among others, a commitment to positive peace and the building of confidence and capacity. She also identifies potential obstacles to building such a community,

namely weak civil societies, the ambivalent role of regional hegemons, and cultural/social/economic heterogeneity (Schoeman 1998). However, she does not look at the impact of such a 'secure community' on conflict prevention, management and transformation *per se*.

Some research, however, has provided important pointers for further work. For instance, after conducting a study on the peacemaking role and impact of regional organisations within their respective geographical domains between 2005 and 2010, Nathan and his team have come to the conclusion that the contribution of regional bodies to conflict prevention and resolution varies greatly from one case to another. This is due to historical, geographical, political and economic circumstances (Nathan 2010). In this vein, the effectiveness of an organisation's role appears to depend largely on its members' will, and on the political trust and cohesion needed to make it effective in the realm of peace and security. Nathan also stresses the importance of both internal and external logics: the former refers to the normative congruence among the participating states, which enables them to engage in close political co-operation in order to prevent and end a conflict, while the latter refers to the interests and objective conditions that make member states view communal peace-making as a beneficial venture (Nathan 2010). Whereas, the external logic provides the motivation for the peacemaking mandate, the internal logic is the glue that allows members states to reach agreement on the mandate and to implement it. As such, in the absence of common values, member states are unable to resolve or transcend their major disputes, build trust and cohesion, develop regional policies and act with common purpose in crisis situations.

Peck (1998, 2001) notes that regional organisations can help in conflict resolution by providing a forum for dialogue; the establishment, promotion and surveillance of norms and democratic institutions; diplomatic assistance to prevent violent conflict behaviour; and assistance in peace building and peacemaking. Like Diehl (2007), she identifies a number of reasons why regional organisations may be better placed to assist in the prevention and resolution of conflicts compared to, for instance, the UN, thanks to their greater local knowledge and support and the development of stronger regional consensus. But again, both Peck and Diehl are looking at regional conflict management, not at long-term effects of regional integration. Peck, for instance, only covers some of the pathways through which regional integration can transform conflicts,

and she does not provide a detailed empirical comparison of how and under which conditions the influence of regional integration may work.

More recently, there has been a substantial growth in the literature focusing on the EU and conflict transformation. However, this has so far focused either on the impact of European integration and the prospects for conflict resolution in the EU neighbourhood (Diez et al 2008; Coppieters et al 2004; Tocci 2007; Tocci 2004) or on the EU's intervention in on-going violent conflicts (Diez & Cooley 2011). In this field, it is generally assumed that the EU's comparative advantages are to be found in its capacity to bring about the long-term transformation of international relations through its 'normative power' (Manners 2008), rather than achieving its goals by brokering or forcing peace upon warring parties (Keukeleire & MacNaughton 2008). This is partly why the promotion of regional integration has been characterised as one of the core pillars of EU normative power (Adler & Crawford 2006; Santander 2005; Hanggi 2003). While this aspect of EU foreign policy has been analysed in respect of the EU's policies towards neighbouring geographical areas such as the Balkans and the Mediterranean, a systematic analysis in other areas of the world is still wanting. Studies exist on the genesis of the promotion of regional cooperation/integration (Smith 2008; Farrell 2005; Bicchi 2006), but its impact on regional conflicts remains under-explored.

It is therefore interesting to assess whether this relationship between regionalism and conflict holds in the African continent. The next section provides an overview of regionalism in Africa, focusing on the genesis and evolution of regionalism on the continent (mainly Sub-Saharan Africa) and the different critiques advanced towards African regional organisations as catalysts for conflict prevention, management and resolution.

2.5 Regionalism in Africa

2.5.1 Genesis and evolution of regionalism in Africa

Ever since decolonisation, Africa has seen the birth of a large number of regional cooperation and integration schemes. In fact, the high number of such regional arrangements means that all Sub-Saharan African countries are affiliated with more than one sub-regional organisation

(UNECA 2006). But what are some of the factors behind the beginning of regionalisation processes in Africa?

There is an agreement that Africa has experienced at least two great waves of regionalisation. While the first wave is associated with the decolonisation period, the second wave is linked to the end of the Cold War (Fioramonti 2013b; Franke 2007). During the first wave, the contrast between radical and pro-Western African countries dominated the debate on regionalism. The former, constituting the so-called Casablanca group, insisted on Pan-Africanism and on African unity, while the latter, first organised into the Brazzaville group but later into the broader Monrovia group of states, preferred a loose continental cooperation and defended national sovereignty and post-colonial boundaries (Franke 2007). This opposition was complemented by other cleavages, such as the divide between the former British and French colonies, particularly in West Africa (Franke 2007), and by personalised rivalries for regional leadership, which contributed to the fragmentation of African regionalism. Thus, post-colonial African regional arrangements were often created in opposition to one another and were based on very different practical, ideological, and political grounds.

However, the end of the Cold War saw the emergence of two trends. Firstly, there has been a considerable, although still insufficient, effort to institutionalise the African regional architecture. The most visible manifestation of this has been the conclusion of the Abuja Treaty in 1991 and the creation of the African Union (AU) in the early 2000s. The Abuja Treaty aimed at creating, in the long-term, an African Economic Community (AEC), consisting of a single market where people and capital will be able to circulate freely in a monetary union overseen by an African central bank and a Pan-African Parliament with supranational powers (Abuja Treaty 1991). In the short and mid-term, it aimed to strengthen economic integration within the existing regional economic communities (RECs) (Abuja Treaty 1991). It is important to note that there are currently eight RECs formally recognised by the AU as building blocks of the AEC. These include: Arab Maghreb Union (AMU); the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS); the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS); the Common Market for Eastern and Southern States (COMESA); the

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East African Community (EAC); the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD), and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) (AU 2007).

Moreover, the post-Cold War era has been characterised by the gradual involvement of African regional organisations in conflict management, despite most of them having been initially created with a focus on trade and economic cooperation. Such a trend is consequential to the wave of regional conflicts that Africa has experienced in the early 1990s, resulting from the fall of the international order shaped by the Cold War. Thus, following in the steps of ECOWAS, other regional organisations such as IGAD, ECCAS, SADC, EAC, AMU and COMESA have included peace and conflict within their mandates (AU 2004), with some even leading their own peace support operations (Moller 2009a).

At the continental level, the creation of the AU marked a decisive shift with respect to the involvement of African regional organisations in conflict management. Different from its predecessor, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), which had established in 1993 a Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (OAU 1993), the AU has a considerably broader mandate. Among its guiding principles, for instance, the AU Constitutive Act lists "the establishment of a common defence policy for the African continent" (AU 2000, Article 4.d) and "the right of the Union to intervene in a Member State pursuant to a decision of the Assembly in respect of grave circumstances, namely: war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity" (AU 2000, Article 4.h). Its Peace and Security Council, established by a separate protocol in 2002, has a mandate encompassing early warning and preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peace support operations, post-conflict reconstruction and humanitarian action and disaster management (AU 2002, Article 6). Similarly, through the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), which involves the creation of an African Standby Force (ASF) composed by a regional brigade provided by the RECs (AU 2004), the AU has tried to bring under a single framework the regional conflict management initiatives undertaken by the RECs.

The evolution of the AU's political and security culture is also worth noting (Williams 2007). Whereas the OAU did not address issues such as democratisation and respect for human rights, rather emphasising the principle of non-interference, the AU made significant changes in this

field. It has endorsed a policy of 'condemnation and rejection of unconstitutional changes of governments' (AU 2000, Article 4.p) and, through its aforementioned Article 4.h, it has supported the principle of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P), which authorises it to intervene in its member states, including through the use of force, in extreme circumstances (AU 2000). Furthermore, the AU brought under its cap the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which was initiated in 2001 by the OAU with the aim of promoting economic development and reinforcing good governance in Africa (NEPADa No Date). Notably, NEPAD does so through the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), a "voluntary self-monitoring exercise where countries are evaluated in the fields of democracy and political governance, economic governance, corporate governance and socio-economic development" (NEPADb No Date). In some respect, the AU seems to have shifted from a doctrine of regime security to one of human security and to have endorsed democracy both as an end in itself and as a means to promote peace and development. Yet, most members of the AU are not fully-fledged democracies and, while sanctioning unconstitutional changes of government, the AU has the same inclusive membership of the OAU, where states are not prevented from joining the organisation by the nature of their political regime. This represents a significant difference between the African and the EU's integration process (Fioramonti 2013b).

The development of regional conflict management in Africa has raised many expectations. In addition to the benefits that are supposed to stem from regional conflict management in general, including better knowledge of the region, and burden-sharing, some of these expectations stem from Africa's history of colonialism and marginalisation. Notably, the growth of regional organisations and the development of 'African solutions' have been seen as a way to prevent undue foreign interference and neo-colonialism and encourage African self-reliance (Gebrewold 2010; Moller 2009b; Soderbaum & Tavares 2009; Williams 2008). For some authors, the evolution of APSA and the growth of security cooperation are signs that Sub-Saharan Africa and its sub-regions are on track to becoming full-fledged security communities (Franke 2010). At the same time, African regionalism is often described as ineffective or inappropriate to deal with key challenges, notably addressing regional conflicts. The next sub-section provides an overview of the key critiques of African regional 'conflict management mechanisms'.

2.5.2 Critiques of African regional conflict management mechanisms

African regional organisations have been criticised with respect to their role as conflict management and resolution catalysts. Firstly, they have been accused of being under-resourced and over-dependent on external support, and technically unprepared for the huge tasks of conflict management and post-conflict reconstruction (Williams 2008). The uneven development of African RECs and the lack of a powerful (hegemonic) state to lead regional peace operations in, among others, Central and Eastern Africa are also cited as cause for concern (Moller 2009a). In addition, the rise of regional conflict management is seen as undermining the authority of the UN and its Security Council and to distract attention from supporting UN-led conflict management initiatives (Soderbaum & Tavares 2009; Williams 2008). Closely related to this argument is the assertion that 'African problems', including regional conflicts, are in reality 'global problems', which need to be addressed at the global level (Gebrewold 2010; Williams 2008).

Other critiques deal with the political implications of affording Africa's regional organisations the primary responsibility for continental security. The 'African solution' approach is said to be based on an idealised version of 'Africa' as a unitary actor, neglecting ideological and political differences and rivalries between African states (Soderbaum & Tavares 2009; Williams 2007). While being an asset, too much proximity may make regional conflict management actors unable to play a neutral role. Some examples include the failure of the AU to deal with Ethiopia's alleged involvement in regional conflicts in the horn of Africa (Williams 2008) and the intervention in Liberia by the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) led by Nigeria, which has been accused of engaging in war crimes and of having a stake in postponing the resolution of the crisis (Adebajo 2002; Ellis 1999).

A core theoretical debate focuses on whether a process of convergence of values, norms and identities on security issues is really taking place at the regional/continental level and if the AU or the RECs can truly be said to constitute 'security communities' in construction. Williams argues that the codification of new norms on the responsibility to protect and opposition to unconstitutional changes of government by the AU hides the fact that member states have internalised them unevenly (Williams 2007). He goes on by adding that many of them still privilege regime security over human security, and are interested in regional conflict

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management mostly in so far as it helps obtain foreign aid and military training, while not unsettling national leaders (Williams 2008). With reference to ECOWAS, some argue that West African leaders share a political culture based on neo-patrimonialism and clientelism: "future scenarios for ECOWAS living up to a security culture that promotes human security are doomed to be theoretical rather than practical as long as its members are primarily interested in preserving regime security and their exclusive access to the state's resources" (Taylor & Williams 2008: 145). Barriers to the diffusion of human security may in part stem from structural constraints, notably the persistence of internal instability in many African post-colonial states, which reinforces the preoccupation of their rulers for regime security. Looking at Southern Africa and the Great Lakes region and at Africa's history of proxy wars fought among neighbours, Nathan argues that structural domestic instability, indirect hostilities prevailing among member states and the severe level of insecurity affecting numerous countries and people, along with the "consequent absence of dependable expectations of peaceful change" prevent African regions from attaining the status of security communities, in spite of the intensification of security cooperation (Nathan 2006, 2010: 112).

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of the key concepts underpinning the study. These include: regional conflicts, regionalism (both generally and in Africa) as well as regional integration and regional cooperation. It also provided a description of regional integration as a means to transform regional conflicts, based primarily on the experience of the European continent. The assumption here is that regional integration (and cooperation) can transform conflicts by fostering interaction, shared rules of engagement and norm diffusion across states, thus (directly or indirectly) addressing factors that fuel or which are likely to fuel conflicts.

This chapter also highlighted some relevant considerations regarding regionalism in Africa, while discussing the literature dealing with the ability of African regional organisations to manage conflicts on the continent. Over the years, what was initially a sketchy framework for economic cooperation has gradually become also an institutional web for security management, mainly through the involvement of the continental body (the African Union) and the various

African regional organisations in managing and resolving conflicts. Yet their ability to carry out such tasks have been questioned and criticised for several reasons, including the lack of resources, political willingness and institutional systems required to do this.

It is important to note that, while the ability of African regional organisations to manage and resolve regional conflicts through their conflict management mechanisms has been subjected to significant scrutiny, their capacity to tackle the root causes of conflict through the multi-dimensional and multi-sectoral character of regional integration (i.e. trade relations, migration etc.) has been largely under-researched. This leaves an important gap, which the present research aims to contribute to filling.

To this end, the next chapter provides an overview of the West African region and, specifically, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which is regarded as one of the most advanced regional organisations on the African continent.

CHAPTER 3

REGIONALISM IN WEST AFRICA:
AN OVERVIEW OF ECOWAS

3.1 Introduction

The region of West Africa is bounded on the south and the west by the Atlantic Ocean, and by the Sahara Desert on the north. There is general agreement that it includes sixteen geographically proximate and contiguous states (see Figure 3.1 below). These are Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo.

Figure 3.1 - The West African Region

Available online: http://www.aaawhere.com/wo-map-capital-bt-afw.htm (accessed 12 April 2014).

It is worth pointing out here that, prior to the colonial period, West African states - as currently demarcated - did not really exist. There were different types of polities, including stateless societies, city-states and multi-ethnic empires, but no nation-states in the conventional (Westphalian) sense. As was the case with most of Africa, borders were drawn on a map by former colonial powers; a reality which, after colonialism, led to the formation of new countries with little correlation to pre-colonial societies.

According to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) World Factbook (2014), West Africa has an estimated population of 338,182,544 (as of July 2014), which is expected to exceed 400 million by 2020 and 500 million by 2035. Nigeria occupies a special place, as it is alone home to 50% of the West African population. French is the official language of most countries of the region, but English and, to a lesser extent, Portuguese are also adopted, reflecting the colonial history of West Africa. Yet, while European languages remain widely spoken in the region, Arabic as well as a significant number of 'local' languages are also present. This contributes to the diversity of the region, supplemented by differences along socio-cultural and ethnic aspects.

This chapter focuses on the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), empirically examined here as the primary regional organisation in West Africa. It begins by providing an overview of West Africa, looking specifically at the dynamics of conflict in the region along with their regional dimensions. Following this, the chapter gives an account of the origins of regional conflict management through ECOWAS. Particularly, it focuses on the different peace support operations of the organisation in West African conflicts. A more organic analysis of the various regional integration/cooperation initiatives is offered in Chapter 4.

3.2 Regionalism and conflict in West Africa

3.2.1 Background to the dynamics of conflict in West Africa

At the end of the Cold War, West Africa was portrayed as one of the most unstable regions in the world (Kaplan 1994), because of the numerous conflicts and security crises that plagued it for the

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past two decades. Yet, very few of these conflicts have been inter-state conflicts (Kacowicz 1997). Rather they have predominantly been intra-state conflicts.

West African conflicts vary in dimensions, durations, scales and intensities, while triggers and catalysts of these conflicts are also multi-dimensional, diverse and highly interlinked. This makes it problematic to come up with a simple classification of their causes. While Jackson (2006) argues that the occurrence of conflicts in West Africa is due to the accumulation of political, economic, structural, historical and cultural factors, Williams (2011) contends that there is not a single element to blame. There is nevertheless broad consensus that such tensions are mainly rooted in socio-cultural, political and economic causes, including weak governance structures and corruption, economic inequality and poverty, youth unemployment, and religious and ethnic marginalisation (Annan 2014; Bamfo 2013; Huntington 1996; Kuerschner 2013; Musah 2009; Olonisakin 2011).

After political independence, which took place in the late 1950s and early 1960s, West African states adopted various governance systems, varying "from multi-party democratic politics to single-party civilian authoritarian governments and military dictatorships" (Francis 2001: 11). As a matter of fact, the region was renowned for having the world's largest amount of military interference and coups in domestic politics (Francis 2001). While the post-Cold War era has seen many initiatives at democratisation in the region, it has been quite difficult for most states to consolidate democracy (Van de Walle 2002). The retraction of super-power support that accompanied this period also generated instability, which contributed to state failure and civil wars in several states, for instance: Liberia (1999), Sierra Leone (1991), Guinea Bissau (1998), Mali (2012) and Côte d'Ivoire (2002 and 2010) (Francis 2001). These have been compounded by the effects of a politics rooted in 'neo-patrimonialism', that is, a system "based on personalised structures of authority where patron-client relationships operate behind a facade of ostensibly rational state bureaucracy" (Taylor & Williams 2008: 137).

Like the rest of the African continent, West Africa has been severely plagued by "repressive, ineffective leadership" and "exclusionary policies" (N'Diaye 2011: 40), which in turn have played a dominant role in all conflicts occurring in the region. Looking at the main wars that took place in the early 1990s, (e.g. in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea Bissau), some have

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pointed to "institutional corruption and greed", very low "infrastructure development, hatred and discrimination along ethnic lines", skewed notions of citizenship (Côte d'Ivoire), as well as "the alienation and consequent disillusionment of the youth", as key causes and contributing factors (Musah 2009: 13-14).

Underlying economic problems have also featured prominently in all recent West African conflicts. Poverty and the 'resource curse' have been important factors in shaping conflicts. It is important to highlight that, though several West African countries are very well endowed with mineral resources (e.g. oil, gold, uranium, diamonds and titanium, just to mention a few) or agricultural resources (e.g. cocoa, coffee, cotton, palm oil), they have not succeeded in using such natural wealth for the human development of their people. According to the 2013 Least Developed Countries Report by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), eight out of a group of 49 countries among the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) in the world are from West Africa (UNCTAD 2013b). These are: Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania and Niger. Similarly, the populations of many West African states have very limited access to sanitation and health services. According to the African Development Bank (AFDB), Mali (20%), Niger (9%) and Sierra Leone (12%) scored at the bottom of the continent in terms of the percentage of the population with access to basic services (AFDB 2013). Also, in comparison with other African regions, West Africa featured at the bottom with regard to access to health services in the year 2010 with only 26% (AFDB 2013: 65). Its income distribution is regarded as "one of the most skewed of the continent with up to as much as twenty times of the national income controlled by the top 10% than the share controlled by the bottom 10% of their poorest" fellow citizens (AFDB 2013: 62). Added to these are unemployment (particularly high for the youth), infant and child mortality, which also favour the emergence of conflicts, in so far as they contribute to dissatisfaction and unrest among the population, which can be easily captured by separatists, rebel movements and militia groups.

West African conflicts also have important international dimensions. The United States (US) along with former colonial powers such as France and, to a lesser extent, Great Britain, have often had an influence on the character of numerous West African conflicts and the way in which they have evolved (N'Diaye 2011). Especially during the Cold War, they have done so by

supporting (through arms transfer and financial backing) non-democratic regimes, such as Samuel Doe of Liberia, Gnassingbe Eyadema of Togo and Houphouet-Boigny of Côte d'Ivoire. Such external power backing has created an illusion of short-term stability, as it helped authoritarian regimes in the region (especially French-speaking countries) repress potential challenges to their rule. Yet when it dwindled, notably since the end of the Cold War, these countries and their regimes have shown their inherent weaknesses, with injustices and inequalities triggering political unrest (N'Diaye 2011). In part, this explains why the end of the Cold War has coincided with an outburst of major conflicts in the region. This is not to say, of course, that some former colonial powers have not been (at times, successfully) involved in peace operations. The United Nations (UN) too has contributed to peacekeeping, that is, an action that helps "halt conflicts and preserve peace once it is attained" (UN 1992: 5), as well as peacebuilding, that is, efforts that "strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict" (UN 1992: 5). Particularly, it has a dedicated Office in West Africa (UNOWA), and has conducted peace operations in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire and Mali.

The level of violence in West Africa has also shown a significant degree of variability. Whereas some conflicts, including Liberia (1989 and 1999), Sierra Leone (1991), Guinea-Bissau (1998) and Côte d'Ivoire (2002 and 2010) have been particularly violent and resulted in massive casualties and deaths, others have been characterised by a lower intensity, including the Casamance conflict in Senegal, the Dagbon crisis in Ghana and the Niger Delta conflict in Nigeria (Olonisakin 2011).

Yet, today, the security situation of West Africa undoubtedly appears different from what it used to be in the 1990s, when it was described as the 'coming anarchy' (Kaplan 1994). Yet the region is not fully pacified either. For instance, since 2008, it has endured five military coups (Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger), two civil wars (Côte d'Ivoire and Mali), and two on-going major crises in Mali and Nigeria (Lindell & Mattsson 2014). In addition, there has been a rise in unconventional security challenges, such as terrorism, piracy, trafficking of arms, drugs and humans, food insecurity, the proliferation of deadly diseases such as HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis, climate change and most recently the outbreak of the Ebola virus disease (EVD), all of which represent serious threats to the whole region (Aning & Pokoo 2013; Le Sage 2010;

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Mangala 2010; UN Security Council (UNSC) 2011). Whether old or new, these conflicts, along with emerging threats, have strong regional dimensions, as discussed in the next sub-section.

3.2.2 The regional dimensions of conflict in West Africa

Although they are usually localised internally, West African conflicts in fact often embroil regional actors, are driven by regional networks and have regional spill-over effects (Afolabi 2009; Musah 2009; Pugh et al. 2004).

Starting with the embroilment of regional actors, there are several cases where governments have accused one another of interference or direct involvement in their respective conflicts. As some have noted, "neighbouring states back each other's rebels with arms transfers, rear bases, and occasional direct military support" (Le Sage 2010: 59). This has in turn resulted in threats of, or actual, retaliations. In Sierra Leone, the outbreak of the 1991 armed conflict arose from the incursion of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels, which were aided directly by Charles Taylor of Liberia. The Casamance conflict in Senegal is another example in which both neighbouring countries, Guinea-Bissau and the Gambia, were actively involved.

The proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and the cross-border movement of militia members and mercenaries throughout the region are examples of the regional spill-over effects of West African conflicts (Afolabi 2009; Aning & Pokoo 2013; Keili 2008; Pugh et al. 2004). Both these phenomena can be seen as "means of war" (Pugh et al. 2004: 30), as they can facilitate the outbreak of conflicts (Keili 2008; Pugh et al. 2004). Often, such mercenaries abuse and terrorise the population, as was seen in the west of Côte d'Ivoire with the large entry of mercenaries from the conflicts in Liberia. In addition, these fighters can use refugee camps situated close to borders as military bases and often offer their services in other conflicts that occur in the region for profit (Le Sage; Misol 2004). Fighters of the former Revolutionary United Front (RUF) from the conflict in Sierra Leone, for example, were later hired to fight in conflicts in Liberia and Guinea. A significant element in the proliferation of both arms and mercenaries in the region, it must be noted, is the porous nature of West Africa's borders which, coupled with corruption, allows for the movement of armed groups across the region (Keili 2008).

Smuggling also contributes to the regionalisation of West African conflicts (Pugh et al. 2004) and to the development of a transnational criminal network (UNODC 2013). The smuggling of otherwise legal goods, such as diamonds or cocoa, favours the development of war economies, which sustain violent conflicts and reinforce vested interests in their perpetuation. For instance, during the war that broke out in Sierra Leone in 1991, diamonds were exploited by all warring parties, not only to fund the war, but also to generate profit (Pugh et al. 2004). Similarly, in the various crises in Côte d'Ivoire, cocoa was smuggled from the rebel-controlled area to neighbouring countries and served to finance the conflict. In addition, cocoa trade revenues were also used by the government to fund armed conflicts in the country (Jadot 2013).

Similarly, emerging threats in West Africa have demonstrated a regional dimension. Drug trafficking, for instance, has increased significantly in the region (Aning & Pokoo 2013; Le Sage 2010). In 2008, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) referred to West Africa as having become a "hub for trafficking cocaine" between South America or even South Asia and Europe (UNODC 2008: 2). The emergence of this phenomenon in the region can be linked to the mounting surveillance and high rates of interdiction now prevailing on traditional routes from South America to Europe, especially through the Caribbean (Le Sage 2010; UNSC 2011). In addition to serving as a transit route (especially through the Sahel), certain West African countries (Guinea-Bissau) have also become significant drug consumers (Aning & Pokoo 2013; UNSC 2012).

Piracy has also become a growing concern in West Africa. In 2011, the UNSC portrayed West Africa's seas as among the most volatile and dangerous in Africa (UNSC 2011). In its 2013 Annual Report on Piracy, the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) recorded that 51 incidents of piracy had taken place off the coast of West Africa that year, with the Nigerian coast being the most hard-hit (31 in total) (IMB 2013). Similarly, earlier in 2014, the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) issued a warning to ships that transit by West African coasts because of increasing incidents of piracy in the region (ICC 2014). Contributing factors to the security challenges posed by piracy in West Africa include poverty, lack of good governance, youth

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unemployment, poor regulation of the regional industry and corruption (Pham 2011; UNSC 2011).

Both maritime piracy and illicit flows, such as drug trafficking, generate benefits which in turn allow non-state armed groups to acquire weapons, to hire more people to their groups and to encourage corruption (Francis 2013; UNODC 2013), therefore making it harder for rebels to explore the opportunities of peace. Benefits generated from these activities also enable rebels 'to buy' partnership with government officials (UNODC 2013).

The importance of the regional dimension of West African conflicts and the interaction between traditional and non-conventional threats can be illustrated with respect to two of the most recent crises in the region: the Tuareg insurgency in Mali and the terrorist attacks by Boko Haram in Nigeria.

Starting with Mali, the roots of its current political crisis are internal and stem from "decades of fundamental grievances" that the minority Tuareg group has endured since the country's independence in 1960 (Francis 2013: 4; Bergamaschi 2013). Though it might have been considered as an example of democracy in West Africa, it seems Mali was nothing more than a "superficial democracy and fragile state that was unable to address its fundamental political, governance, security and sociodevelopment challenges" (Francis 2013: 4). In Mali, discrimination, coupled with exclusion from the national agenda and the country's economic and political processes, have often figured among the grievances of Tuaregs. In an attempt to remediate this situation, they have frequently revolted against successive Malian governments, demanding "a separate state" and fighting for "the rights of the Tuareg minority" (Bergamaschi 2013: 2; Francis 2013: 4). The failure on the part of the Malian government to respond to these grievances, or deliver on promises already made, triggered the formation of the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) in 2012, whose objective is to continue the battle for independence (Bergamaschi 2013; Francis 2013).

The Tuareg rebellion against the Malian government in March 2012 highlights important regional dimensions of West African conflicts as discussed above. It was triggered by external

developments, particularly an influx of Malian Tuaregs who had returned to Mali after having fought along Gaddafi's army before the collapse of his regime in October 2011 (Francis 2013). This serves as an illustration of the cross-border military networks that are indicative of regionalised conflicts. The subsequent inefficiency of President Amadou Toumani Touré to effectively address the rebellion and contain their attacks, led discontented Malian soldiers to instigate a military coup against him on 22 March 2012 (Bergamaschi 2013; Francis 2013).

Additionally, the crisis in Mali is regional because of the "transnational solidarity within identity groups" (Pugh et al. 2004: 23). Tuaregs are transnational nomadic Berber people, who are minorities in the Sahel and Saharan countries of Niger, Algeria, Burkina Faso and Libya. During the 2012 crisis, Tuaregs living in Mali benefited from the assistance of Tuaregs from Niger (once again demonstrating the salience of regional social and military networks). Similarly, because of the transnational identity of Tuaregs, uprisings in Mali have the potential to inspire Tuaregs from Niger to rebel, as these are people with similar grievances. Such an event would deteriorate an already tense relationship between the Nigerien government and its own Tuareg society, and enable violent repercussions. This fear partly justifies the involvement of Niger in helping to contain the crisis in Mali (Francis 2013).

The Malian crisis also has its own regional spill-over effects, namely refugee flows. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reports that, in the past three years, the situation in Mali has generated 175 000 refugees in neighbouring countries Burkina Faso, Niger and Mauritania (UNHCR 2014). Undoubtedly, these refugee flows put an economic strain on already very poor neighbouring states, increasing governance challenges and, as a result, political instability.

Moreover, the situation in northern Mali has contributed to emerging regional threats, particularly terrorism. In general, the emergence of terrorism in West Africa can be attributed to challenges such as corruption, poverty, unemployment, political instability, porous borders, and poor governance (UNSC 2011). In Mali specifically, the political crisis has enabled the rise of local Islamist groups, such as Ansar Dine and the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), and has provided an additional base of operations for Al-Qaeda in the Islamist

Maghreb (AQIM). These groups have not only launched attacks against the Malian government but also carried out criminal activities such as "drug and human trafficking, arms and cigarette smuggling, and the kidnapping of Western nationals for ransom" (Francis 2013: 5). In turn, benefits generated from such activities have been used by jihadists and militants led by AQIM to "buy corrupt Malian government officials, state security agencies and local leaders" (Francis 2013: 5), therefore threatening national governance and regional security.

Islamist militants are also found in Nigeria, where the group Boko Haram has increasingly launched terrorist attacks in the northern regions, but also in other parts of the country (Ostebo 2012). Although it has received growing attention only in recent years (since 2009), there is agreement that Boko Haram has been around since 1995, yet operated under different names including 'Ahlusunna Wal' Jama'ah Hijra', 'the Nigerian Taliban' and 'the Yusufiyya' and through non-violent means (Adesoji 2010; Onuoha 2010). Often interpreted literally as 'Western education/civilisation is forbidden', Boko Haram is an Islamist sect that seeks to "overthrow the Nigerian state and impose strict Islamist Sharia law in the entire country" (Onuoha 2010: 57). Achieving such objectives would help the group suppress "Western education, Western culture and modern science", which it describes as "sinful, sacrilegious or ungodly", and must therefore be forbidden (Adesoji 2010: 100). While the sect draws its members from all ranks of society (including affluent and powerful people), it is mainly composed of alienated young people and jobless graduates (Adesoji 2010; Onuoha 2010).

Initial attacks by the group targeted "police, their stations and military barracks" (ICG 2014: 14). Yet they have now developed into a terrorist organisation using tactics such as suicide bombings and kidnappings, targeting innocent civilians as well (ICG 2014; Ostebo 2012). Overall, attacks by Boko Haram have resulted in numerous casualties. For instance, Human Rights Watch records that the sect has killed more than 5000 people in Nigeria since 2009 (Human Rights Watch 2014).

The on-going crisis in Nigeria has expanded beyond the country's borders, both through spill-over effects and through the regionalisation of the group. In the former case, the UNHCR states that since 2009, Boko Haram has led over 10 000 Nigerian refugees to seek asylum in

neighbouring countries Niger and Cameroon (UNHCR 2014). The second case is illustrated by the spread of Boko Haram's presence into Cameroon and Chad, both of which share borders with Nigeria. For example, McFall (2014: 27) states that "the mountainous region of Chad has become a foothold for [the sect]". On the other hand, the situation in Cameroon appears to be gradually worsening, with the northern region of the country "feeling the stain from village attacks on Cameroonian citizens" (McFall 2014: 27). Besides attacks, the presence of Boko Haram in Cameroon has also occurred in the form of kidnappings. In 2013, the sect abducted a French family in the country. More recently, the group is believed to have been responsible for the kidnapping of the wife of the Cameroon's Vice Prime Minister, which occurred on the 27th July 2014 (McFall 2014).

The threat of terrorism is further regionalised as connections are built between Islamist groups with similar aims and values, resulting in regional terrorist and rebel networks. There is already evidence of links between AQIM (which is also found in Mauritania and Niger, in addition to Mali), Boko Haram of Nigeria, the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) and Ansar Dine of Mali (FATF 2013; Onapajo et al. 2012). For instance, in January 2013, MUJAO allegedly received aid from Boko Haram, which reinforced their attack on a city of Mali (Kona) (McFall 2014). This highlights the transnational nature of terrorism.

Finally, the case of Boko Haram shows how crises that have long been considered 'low-level' conflicts and internal matters in fact pose a severe threat to the security and stability of the region, and undermine its development. This is coupled with the problems posed by other emerging (non-conventional security) threats, as discussed above (Gaasholt 2013; Lindell & Mattsson 2014).

3.3 Regional conflict and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

West African states are all members of the African Union (AU). In addition, the region has seen a proliferation of regional integration initiatives since decolonisation (Asante 1986). Several organisations now exist across the region, namely the Union Economique et Monétaire de

l'Afrique de l'Ouest (UEMOA), the Mano River Union, the Conseil de l'Entente or the Liptako Gourma authority. Yet, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) occupies a central role because of its extended membership, ambitions and broad mandate.

ECOWAS was born after several failed attempts at regional integration in West Africa in the immediate post-independence period, including efforts to create a union between Ghana, Mali and Guinea or between Senegal and Gambia, and a proposed free trade area between Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone. Founded in 1975, and thoroughly restructured in 1993 with the adoption of a revised treaty, ECOWAS is an organisation which consists of fifteen states, namely Benin; Burkina Faso; Cape Verde; Côte d'Ivoire; Gambia; Ghana; Guinea; Guinea-Bissau; Liberia; Mali; Niger; Nigeria; Senegal; Sierra Leone and Togo (see Figure 3.2 below). Mauritania is the only West African country that does not form part of ECOWAS, as it formally withdrew its membership in 2000. The organisation has a population estimated at 334,665,738 million as of July 2014 (CIA World Factbook 2014).

Figure 3.2 - Member states of ECOWAS

Available online:

http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/international_statistical_cooperation/africa_ca
ribbean_pacific/africa_sub_saharan/west_africa (accessed 12 April 2014).

Originally conceived and established to address economic development, ECOWAS' primary
objectives were:

> to promote co-operation and development in all fields of economic activity particularly in the fields
> of industry, transport, telecommunications, energy, agriculture, natural resources, commerce,
> monetary and financial questions and in social and cultural matters for the purpose of raising the
> standard of living of its peoples, of increasing and maintaining economic stability, of fostering closer
> relations among its members and of contributing to the progress and development of the African
> continent (ECOWAS 1975, Article 2.1).

These goals sought to address the difficulties in guaranteeing development and stability in the
post-colonial period. Like in the rest of African, countries in West Africa were challenged by
difficult economic conditions and a regional approach was deemed suitable to facilitate the
integration of these economies into the global scene.

In this vein, ECOWAS sought to achieve its major goals through: "the elimination of customs
duties between member states" (ECOWAS 1975, Article 2.a); "the abolition of quantitative and
administrative restrictions on trade" (ECOWAS 1975, Article 2.b); "the establishment of a
common customs tariff and a common commercial policy towards third countries" (ECOWAS
1975, Article 2.c); "the abolition of the obstacles to the free movement of persons, services and
capital" (ECOWAS 1975, Article 2.d); "the harmonisation of the agricultural policies and the
promotion of common projects in the member states" (ECOWAS 1975, Article 2.e); "the
implementation of schemes for the joint development of transport, communication; energy and
other infrastructural facilities" (ECOWAS 1975, Article 2.f); "the harmonisation of the economic
and industrial policies of the member states" (ECOWAS 1975, Article 2.g); "the harmonisation
of the monetary policies of the member states" (ECOWAS 1975, Article 2.h) and "the
establishment of a Fund for Co-operation, Compensation and Development" (ECOWAS 1975,
Article 2.i).

While economic aims such as the gradual creation of a common market, starting with the establishment of a free trade area and then a customs union, figured on the agenda of the organisation, there was no mentioning of particular governance or security dimensions. At the time, most states were either civilian or military dictatorships, including the regional leaders, Nigeria and Côte d'Ivoire. Senegal and Cape Verde were the exceptions, not having ever experienced a coup d'état, which makes both countries important reference points of good governance in the region (Interview No. 4 & No. 12). Moreover, the organisation had little interest in getting involved in security matters, mainly because most tensions were of a domestic nature (civil conflicts), which did not fall under the remit of the organisation due to the principle of non-interference.

Nevertheless, ECOWAS adopted in 1978 a Protocol on Non-Aggression (PNA) (ECOWAS 1978) and, in 1981, a Protocol Relating to Mutual Assistance on Defence (PMAD) (ECOWAS 1981). Both Protocols are worth mentioning in so far as they identified, for the first time, a strong link between security and economic development. In reality, though, both instruments displayed a rather traditional understanding of security threats, emphasising inter-state security and leaving largely unaddressed the issue of intra-state security (ECOWAS 1978, 1981). For the organisation's leaders, security was still viewed in "the traditional framework of military, national level-oriented, external security threats" and therefore "only focused on armed activities and the use, or threat of the use, of military force engineered and actively supported from outside the region, and with the potential to endanger regional peace and security" (Francis 2009: 92). On the other hand, other potential threats to peace likely to arise from "ethno-religious conflicts, bad governance, political repression and insecurity created by the states' military and security apparatus" did not appear as relevant and were therefore overlooked (Francis 2009: 92).

PMAD, adopted largely as a reaction to Libya's growing involvement in West Africa, was never implemented and remained "an instrument of declaratory policy" (Aning 1999: 27). According to Kwesi Aning (1999: 27), such a failure of implementation is attributable to "the latent distrust and doubts about Nigeria's intentions among its community partners, and the sub-regional hegemon's own domestic and international difficulties" along with "the institutional and financial weakness of the Executive Secretariat".

The turning point that led to the restructuring of ECOWAS' conflict management architecture is the bloody civil war that took place in Liberia in 1989, which compelled ECOWAS leaders to establish a regional mechanism for peace, security and conflict management. For the first time, the regional body launched a peace support operation, the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) (Adebajo 2002; Adeleke 1995; Olonisakin & Aning 1999). Several factors contributed to the decision to set up ECOMOG, including the ambition of Nigeria to assert itself as a regional leader (with a direct stake in the conflict itself) as well as the security concerns of neighbouring states of Liberia, such as Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone, who feared that the Liberian war could spill over (Adebajo 2002).

The ECOMOG operation in Liberia was an absolute novelty for an African regional organisation. According to Adebajo (2002: 111), ECOWAS was embarking on "a journey without maps". However, from its inception, the operation was highly controversial. This is due to the fact that its launch in August 1990 was not decided by the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government (AHSG), but by a Standing Mediation Committee composed of Nigeria, Ghana, Gambia, Mali and Togo. In addition, the possibility to launch a military operation in an on-going internal conflict was clearly not contemplated by the Protocol on Mutual Assistance and Defence (PMAD) (Adebajo 2002). ECOMOG reopened the old rift between English-speaking countries, particularly Nigeria and Ghana, which provided the bulk of the military contingent, and French-speaking countries, which, with the exception of Guinea, initially saw the operation as a Nigerian attempt at hegemony and refused to support it (Adeleke 1995). Other problems were posed by other countries, especially Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire, which had supported the insurgent leader and main initiator of the conflict, Charles Taylor (with Burkina Faso continuing its support throughout most of the conflict). The Anglophone-Francophone rift was partially overcome with the involvement of Côte d'Ivoire and other French-speaking countries in peacemaking efforts from 1991. This was further reinforced by the joining of a Senegalese contingent shortly thereafter in 1991. Yet, the Francophone involvement was seriously curtailed when Senegal withdrew at the beginning of 1993, after the killing of six Senegalese peacekeepers by the National Patriotic Liberian Front (NPLF) (Mortimer 1996).

Other problems concerned the lack of clarity around the operation's nature and mandate, the mission's technical unpreparedness and its alleged misconduct. The mission was plagued by a lack of logistical means and financial problems. It sought but never received substantial assistance from external donors. ECOMOG regularly shifted between traditional peacekeeping and peace enforcement, while entering into open confrontation on some occasions. It also at times fought the NPLF openly and backed anti-NPLF factions in the hope to coerce Taylor to agree on a peace accord. Ghana and Nigeria frequently disagreed on the role of the mission, with Nigeria taking a hard-line position, persuaded that Taylor was a stumbling block on the road to a political solution, and Ghana favouring a more consensual peacekeeping approach. Although it provided some degree of security to civilians in the Liberian capital and in other locations, ECOMOG's enforcement actions, especially its employment of air bombing, also resulted in a substantial number of civilian casualties (Adebajo 2002; Olonisakin & Aning 1999). The mission was also accused of looting, leading to jokes about its actual objective, with the acronym ECOMOG reinterpreted as standing for "Every Car or Moving Object Gone" (Tuck 2000: 9).

The ECOMOG mission in Liberia suffered a significant number of casualties as compared to other peace operations. According to reputable sources, the death toll stood at almost 100 soldiers during the first two years only (Adebajo 2002: 132). Much of the burden was sustained by Nigeria, which provided an estimated 80 per cent of ECOMOG's troops, 90 per cent of the funding, and ultimately suffered an estimated 1000 casualties (Adebajo 2004: 8-9).

After several attempts at negotiating a peace settlement, it was only in 1996-1997 that ECOWAS-sponsored efforts to solve the conflict achieved some success, with the disarmament of the warring factions and the organisation of multi-party elections, won by Charles Taylor. However, a new Liberian war was to restart in 1999, as a consequence of Taylor's misrule and his unwillingness/inability to work towards peacebuilding and reconciliation.

In many respects, the 1990 ECOWAS' operation in Liberia was not successful. It arguably prolonged the Liberian conflict and could not prevent warlord Charles Taylor from succeeding in its ambitious rule by the use of force. The mission was also not able to create the conditions for sustainable peace in Liberia. Moreover, the overall objective to avoid an extension of the

Liberian conflict failed when, in 1991, another disastrous civil war erupted in neighbouring Sierra Leone, following NPLF's incursions and Taylor's support for the Sierra Leonean Revolutionary United Front (RUF).

Despite its limitations, ECOMOG represented an opportunity to rethink the role of ECOWAS in regional security and conflict management. The Liberian civil war, particularly, attested to the fact that civil wars could not simply be considered an internal matter and that the security of the countries of the region was interlocked. ECOMOG also represented one of the very first cases of cooperation between regional organisations and the United Nations in meeting the challenges of a complex emergency in the post-Cold War world. Since 1993, the mission was reinforced by Tanzanian and Ugandan troops coming under the banner of the OAU and was complemented by the presence of an unarmed UN observer mission, the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL).

The ECOMOG experience did not remain a once-off experiment. In the course of the same decade, ECOWAS intervened again militarily on two other occasions (Adebajo 2002, 2004). While the 1990 ECOMOG operation in Liberia had already been marginally involved in Sierra Leone, ECOWAS undertook a new full-scale operation in 1997 in Sierra Leone following the overthrow of the democratically elected government of Tejan Kabbah. While in some respects the operation presented similarities with the Liberian one (e.g. in so far as Nigeria played a key role), the most crucial novelty was ECOWAS's explicit referral to promotion of democracy. Indeed, the 1997 operation "is particularly significant as it was the first time that an all-African force used military means to restore an elected, democratic government in power" (Gandois 2007: 9).

Similarly, ECOMOG intervention in Guinea-Bissau in 1998 started with the aim of backing a civilian government threatened by an attempted military coup d'état. Unlike previous interventions, however, the Guinea-Bissau operation was initiated and led by French-speaking countries. Senegal, which had security concerns stemming from the conflict in the border region of Casamance, sent a unilateral mission at the beginning, which was later replaced by an ECOMOG operation made up of troops from Benin, Mali, Niger, Togo, and Gambia.

The outcomes of these operations were mixed and reproduced some of the problems of the first ECOMOG. In Sierra Leone, the ECOMOG force was able to reinstate Kabbah to power by March 1998 (Obi 2009: 125) but could not create the conditions for lasting peace, which were attained only after the defeat of the RUF by British Operation Pallister in 2002. On the other hand, Guinea-Bissau was a complete failure, as president Joao Vieira was eventually toppled by his chief of staff Ansumane Mane in a coup d'état.

Notwithstanding the incredible volatility of the 1990s, the region has made significant progress in recent years. Currently, ECOWAS is routinely engaged in preventive diplomacy and has been involved in many initiatives of mediation. New ECOWAS peace support operations have been undertaken in Côte d'Ivoire (2002), in Liberia (2003) and in Mali (2013). These operations, especially the one in Mali (in which ECOWAS was involved through the African-led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA)), have highlighted some persistent problems in peacekeeping in West Africa. As discussed in Chapter 4, this includes their lack of logistical means and funds, lack of political will, limited institutional coherence, and the attachment to exclusive sovereignty. The crisis in Côte d'Ivoire, in particular, elicited particular attention on the part of ECOWAS, as the country is considered as one of the economic pillars of the region (UNECA 2010). ECOWAS led the first mediation effort in the autumn of 2002 and was able to broker a cease-fire (Zounmenou & Loua 2011). Although France subsequently took the lead in the negotiation process, ECOWAS continued to be involved in the aftermath, for instance by sponsoring new talks in Accra in 2004. The organisation also agreed to deploy a peace operations force, ECOWAS Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (ECOMICI), which would have policed the cease-fire and replaced French mission Licorne after the latter successfully brought an end to the conflict. ECOMICI was only deployed amongst delays in 2003 and was mainly made up of Francophone West African countries: Senegal, Ghana, Niger, Togo and Benin (Obi 2009). However, not only was the operation highly dependent on external donors, but it failed to replace Licorne due to the persistently unstable situation of the country. In mid-2004, ECOMICI was absorbed by the newly established United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI).

3.4. Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of the West African region. In particular, it has discussed the background of conflict in the region, by focusing on their dynamics and their regional dimensions. It results that while conflicts in West Africa are usually regarded as internal wars, they are in fact regional through the involvement of regional actors, regional spill-over effects and the fact they are driven by regional networks. Moreover, it appears that while full-scale civil wars remain prevalent, West Africa is being increasingly confronted by non-conventional security threats (including the outbreak of the Ebola virus disease (EVD), terrorism, drug trafficking and piracy, to list a few), which pose a severe threat to its stability and security, and undermine its development, especially due to their transnational nature. In fact, it is expected that the security in the region will, in future, be challenged by these phenomena rather than full-scale civil wars (UNSC 2011).

This chapter has also discussed the origins of the Economic Community of West African States and its initial involvement in direct conflict management. While ECOWAS initially focused only on economic integration, the outbreak of the Liberian and Sierra Leone civil wars in the 1990s triggered a rethinking of its approach and led the organisation to invest more resources in and increase commitment to security matters. In doing so, the organisation became the first African regional economic community to establish conflict management capabilities. Despite its mixed outcomes, there is agreement among analysts that no other region in Africa has done as much as ECOWAS in conflict resolution (Interview No. 5). Today, ECOWAS is led by a "very different approach, far more explicitly political, and dominated by the issue of regional security, both in the limited sense of maintaining a basic level of peace, and in the much broader and more ambitious sense of creating the structural conditions required for development within a globalised world economy" (Clapham 2001: 60).

While this chapter has focused exclusively on ECOWAS' peace operations, the next chapter will delve into the key sectors of regional integration/cooperation and will attempt to provide a framework to assess the extent to which (if any) ECOWAS's regionalism has been able to tackle the root causes of conflict, both directly and indirectly.

CHAPTER 4

TACKLING THE ROOT CAUSES OF CONFLICT IN WEST AFRICA:
THE EFFECTS OF REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN THE ECONOMIC COMMUNITY
OF WEST AFRICAN STATES (ECOWAS)

4.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on ECOWAS' direct and indirect effects on conflict in West Africa, that is, the capacity of regionalism (in its various forms) to enable lasting peace and stability. As mentioned in the introductory chapter, the overall aim of this study is precisely to provide a qualitative assessment of whether regionalism has supported economic interdependence and shared values in West Africa, thus eliminating or at least transforming the root causes of conflict.

The aim of this chapter is to provide a tentative assessment based on desktop analysis and a series of interviews with regional policy makers, experts and analysts conducted in Pretoria (South Africa) in July and August 2013, in West Africa (namely Nigeria, Ghana and Burkina Faso) for the whole of October 2013, and in Ethiopia for 10 days in April 2014. The chapter seeks to understand if and to what extent key regionalisation processes (in the form of intra-regional trade, monetary union and macroeconomic convergence, regional norm diffusion, migration and free circulation of people, and conflict management and resolution) have played a role in addressing the root causes of conflicts in West Africa. The following questions will be addressed: To what extent has there been regional cooperation/integration within ECOWAS? Has it had any detectable effect on the root causes of conflicts? What have been the most visible successes and failures, if any?

In order to do so, the chapter will present an overview of the different sectors of regional cooperation/integration existing among ECOWAS members. This will be followed by a discussion on the extent to which each sector is factually integrated. Finally, an assessment of the role of such sectors in tackling the root causes of conflicts in the region will be provided.

The conclusions reached will be tentative in nature, as the topic at hand is far too complex to be able to conduct a fully-fledged impact evaluation. At the same time, this study rests on a significant amount of data and information from the ground, which allows the researcher to

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identify areas of integration that are likely to have had a more or less significant effect on the root causes of conflict in West Africa. By doing so, this research aims to contribute to the analysis of regionalism and conflict transformation in a part of the world (Africa) that is generally under-analysed as well as to contribute to a better understanding of the various forms in which formal and informal regionalism may help resolve conflicts, whether directly or indirectly. The next section identifies the different sectors of regional cooperation and integration existing in ECOWAS.

4.2 Sectors of regional cooperation and integration in ECOWAS

Following the different methodological steps adopted by this study (desktop review and extensive fieldwork in West Africa), this study has identified the following key sectors of regional cooperation and integration in ECOWAS: intra-regional trade; migration and free movement of people; monetary integration; macroeconomic convergence; conflict management and resolution initiatives and regional norms diffusion. The next sub-sections will deal with each one in detail.

4.2.1 Intra-regional trade

Regional integration and cooperation among states take place through diverse means. According to Adler & Barnett (1998: 6-7), trade forms part of those means, and is believed to generate economic interdependence, which in turn decreases the probability of violent inter-state conflict (e.g. war). Similarly, according to the economic literature, trade creation and diversion as well as intra-regional trade, are welfare enhancing effects of regional integration (Mattli 1999). Such results, in turn, contribute significantly to the promotion of economic growth and development. This arises from the fact that intra-regional trade is viewed as creating new market opportunities for business and incentives for local enterprises to become more competitive also at the global level (Vickers & Yarrow 1991; UNECA 2010).

Ever since the inception of ECOWAS, the promotion of intra-regional trade has been a core preoccupation of the region. The organisation aimed to enhance intra-ECOWAS trade by

creating a Free Trade Area (FTA), as stipulated in the ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme (ETLS). The ETLS was introduced in 1983 with the aim of promoting free trade in the region. It advocates for the removal of tariff and non-tariff barriers on all goods "originating" from the ETLS region (ECOWAS 2003, Article 2). Such goods are defined as follows: 1) "agricultural, artisanal handicrafts and unprocessed products from the region" (ECOWAS 1993, Article 36.2); 2) "wholly produced goods whose raw materials completely originate from the region" (ECOWAS 2003, Article 3); 3) "goods which are not wholly produced but their production requires the exclusive use of materials which are to be classified under a different tariff sub-heading from that of the product (ECOWAS 2003, Article 4.1); and 4) "goods which are not wholly produced but their production requires the use of materials which have received a value added of at least 30% of the ex-factory price of the finished goods" (ECOWAS 2003, Article 4.2).

Following in the traditional stepwise approach devised by Jacob Viner (1950) and Bela Balassa (1962), ECOWAS established a free trade area with a view to creating a customs union and eventually establishing a common market. In line with this, ECOWAS has successfully created a free trade area and its custom union is scheduled to take effect on 1 January 2015, with member states having agreed on a Common External Tariff (CET) in October 2013, following 10 years of negotiations (ECDPM 2014). This also aligns with stage 3 of the Abuja Treaty, which requires all regional building blocks of the African Economic Community (AEC) to establish FTAs "for the gradual removal of tariff barriers and non-tariff barriers to intra-community trade" and customs unions "by means of adopting a common external tariff" (Abuja Treaty 1991, Article 6). Both are expected to be completed by 2017.

Of all eight African RECs, it must be noted that only the East African Community (EAC), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and ECOWAS have made considerable progress in terms of establishing both an FTA and a customs union, with EAC being the most advanced after having launched its common market in 2010 (AU Commission 2013) (see Table 4.1 below).

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Table 4.1 - African RECs process of establishing FTAs and customs unions

Regional building blocks of the AEC								
Stage 3 Abuja Treaty	AMU	CEN-SAD	ECOWAS	ECCAS	COMESA	EAC	IGAD	SADC
Free Trade Area	Slow progress	Slow progress	Established	Established	Established	Established	Slow progress	Established
Customs Union	No progress	No progress	Common external tariff agreed on; Custom union to take effect on 1 January, 2015	Slow progress	Established	Established; Common market launched in 2010	No progress	Slow progress (was scheduled to be launched in 2013already)

Source: AU Commission (2013)

Despite ECOWAS having adopted cross-border trading provisions, as mentioned above, the outcome of institutional efforts aimed at enhancing trade remains controversial. One problem is that the formal economies of most ECOWAS members continue to be oriented towards the production of similar primary goods and natural resources (Interview No. 16; Von Uexkull 2012). This type of economic structure limits the potential for intra-regional trade because countries have little complementary goods to exchange with each other. As a result, these commodities are primarily exported towards industrialised countries outside of the region and even outside of Africa. Table 4.2 shows the type of commodities exported by some ECOWAS members (Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Togo and Senegal), which are those dominating trade in the region.

Table 4.2 - Type of commodities exported by selected ECOWAS member states

Countries	Commodities
Benin	Manufactured goods, Beverages, and Tobacco (including cigarettes); construction materials (steel and cement)
Burkina Faso	Cotton; food and tobacco products (including cigarettes, sugar, vegetable oil)
Côte d'Ivoire	Refined petroleum products (oil and chemicals)
Ghana	Manufactured wood, plastic and textile products
Mali	Agricultural products (live animals)
Niger	Agricultural products (live animals)
Nigeria	Oil
Togo	Construction materials (steel and cement); packaging material and food products (cigarettes, vegetable oil, sugar)
Senegal	Refined petroleum products, construction materials (steel and cement) and food products

Source: Von Uexkull (2012)

It results from Table 4.2 that most exports among ECOWAS members states concern similar commodities, such as tobacco, construction materials (steel and cement), agricultural products (live animals), food products (vegetable oil and sugar), and refined petroleum. This in turn makes it difficult for them to trade with each other.

The lack of infrastructure is another major issue among ECOWAS member states. For instance, the road and transport network is generally underdeveloped (Goreti & Weisfeld 2008), an issue which not only limits connectivity, accessibility and trade within the region, but also raises transportation costs. A report by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) argues that high transport costs remain a challenge for many African countries, with landlocked countries facing the most excessive transport costs recorded on the continent (UNECA 2009). Such a dilemma is supplemented by delays at border checkpoints and roadblocks. In this regard, another report by UNECA shows that, as of December 2000, the following amount of checkpoints existed on significant highways of West Africa: 69 checkpoints in total on the highway connecting Lagos (Nigeria) and Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire), over a distance of only 992 kilometres; 34 checkpoints between Lomé (Togo) and Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso), over a distance of 989 kilometres and 20 checkpoints between Niamey (Niger) and Ouagadougou

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(Burkina Faso), over a distance of only 529 kilometres (UNECA 2004: 87). Corruption at border posts is also a problem, as it often imposes significant costs to traders (UNECA 2004, 2010).

ECOWAS is currently trying to address the issue of infrastructure through the establishment of a Regional Transport Facilitation Programme. The organisation is working on a project (cutting across Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin and Nigeria), which aims at eliminating all those obstacles impeding trade on the Abidjan-Lagos highway (UNECA 2010). ECOWAS is also developing an interconnection of National Railway Networks and has constructed Joint Border Posts.

Intra-West African formal trade is largely asymmetric, dominated by the strongest economies of the region, such as Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana (UNECA 2010), as is shown in Tables 4.3 and 4.4.

Table 4.3 - Intra-regional exports in ECOWAS (%), 1980-2009

Country	1980-84	1990-94	1995-99	2000-4	2000-4	2005-9
Benin	0.7	1	0.9	0.7	1.5	1.5
Burkina Faso	2.3	2.3	1.5	1.4	1	1
Cape Verde	0	0	0	0	0	0
Côte d'Ivoire	**34.5**	**41**	**38.9**	**38.8**	**35.4**	**32.2**
The Gambia	1.4	0.5	0.6	0.1	0	0
Ghana	3.2	2.3	7	4.6	3.1	3.3
Guinea	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.5	0.4
Guinea-Bissau	0.1	0.1	0.1	0	0.2	0.5
Liberia	1.1	0.4	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.2
Mali	4.5	3.3	0.6	0.3	0.2	0.1

Country	1980-84	1990-94	1995-99	2000-4	2000-4	2005-9
Niger	6.1	2.4	3.4	2.8	2.5	1.8
Nigeria	**31.4**	**35.4**	**39.1**	**43.3**	**41**	**44.7**
Senegal	10.2	9.1	5.1	6.4	8.9	8.9
Sierra Leone	0.1	0.1	0	0	0.2	0.1
Togo	4.1	1.9	2.4	1.2	5.2	5.1

Source: International Monetary Fund (IMF) Direction of Trade Statistics (DOTS). Available online: https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/cat/longres.cfm?sk=19305.0 (accessed 12 June 2014).

Table 4.3 shows figures of intra-regional exports in ECOWAS from 1980 to 2009. As can be seen, Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria are by far the biggest exporters in the region, with their shares having remained more or less the same over the years. Both countries mainly export refined petroleum products in the region, such as oil and chemicals (see also Table 4.2 above). While a few other members (namely Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Niger, Togo and Senegal) contribute minimally to exports in West Africa, the remaining countries' contributions (including Cape Verde, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia and Sierra Leone) range from 'negligible' to 'zero' as recorded over the period 1990-1999 in Table 4.3. Table 4.4 presents ECOWAS' figures of intra-regional imports from 1980 to 2009. Different from intra-regional exports, Ghana accounts for most imports taking place in the region, with Nigeria being the country from which it imports most (mainly oil), followed by Côte d'Ivoire (OEC) 2014).

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Table 4.4 - Intra-regional imports in ECOWAS (%), 1980-2009

Country	1980-84	1985-89	1990-94	1995-99	2000-4	2005-9
Benin	2.6	4	1.4	3.9	5	4.2
Burkina Faso	8.5	9.7	6.8	6.9	6.8	6.9
Cape Verde	0.1	0.2	0.5	0.2	0.2	0.2
Côte d'Ivoire	15	31.3	27.7	24.9	23.6	27
The Gambia	0.6	0.8	1.5	1	1.9	2
Ghana	**25.8**	**14**	**17**	**26.7**	**20.8**	**23.2**
Guinea	0.6	1.5	5.5	3.1	3.2	1.8
Guinea-Bissau	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.9	0.6
Liberia	1.7	0.8	0.9	1	1.3	1.1
Mali	12.1	9.2	9.6	10.9	9.7	9.1
Niger	10.8	8.8	4.7	3.5	3.9	2.9
Nigeria	4.6	3	7.2	8.1	9.5	12.5
Senegal	9	10.6	7.3	5.3	9.6	4.6
Sierra Leone	4.1	3	6.8	2.3	1.9	2
Togo	3.9	2.7	2.8	1.8	1.6	1.8

Source: International Monetary Fund (IMF) Direction of Trade Statistics (DOTS). Available online: https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/cat/longres.cfm?sk=19305.0 (accessed 12 June 2014).

Although asymmetric trade need not necessarily be an impediment to sustainable regional integration, it is to be noted that the permanence of dominant exporters and net importers is likely to be a drag on trade diversification. Moreover, intra-regional trade (i.e. both exports and imports) in ECOWAS remains very low relative to its potential. According to analysts, if all

factors restraining its expansion were addressed, trade in West Africa may increase substantially (UNCTAD 2013a:19). Table 4.5 below indeed reports the declining proportion of intra-regional trade in ECOWAS, which hovered at 7.5 per cent over the period 2009-2012, down from over 10 per cent in the preceding years (Inganäs 2014).

Table 4.5 - Intra-ECOWAS trade (%)

	1994-1995	1996-2004	2005-2008	2009-2012
ECOWAS	~14.5	~12	~11	~7.5

Source: Inganäs 2014, based on World Integrated Trade Solution (UN COMTRADE)

The declining volumes of regional trade can be explained by the fact that, despite having established its FTA, ECOWAS trade liberalisation policies have known a slow start, therefore making it difficult to assess their impact on conflict transformation, as discussed below. For instance, while the ETLS condemns it, countries still retain diverse customs policies for external borders, as the origins of goods have to be checked at the borders. Such implementation hurdles underline how regional trade policy, when not correctly implemented in practice, may become a strain on integration rather than facilitate it. Nevertheless, it is argued that the launch of the ECOWAS Customs Union, scheduled for 2015 and already well on track, may overcome such difficulties (Interview No. 6).

Similarly, it is worth noting that official trade and migration flows in West Africa constitute only part of the picture. Much trade within the region is informal and escapes official statistics. Moreover, many West Africans avoid border posts and cross borders every day, largely undisturbed. There are no reliable figures on the volume of informal cross-border trade, but research points to the fact that its scale may be very significant (Meagher 2003; Meagher & Lindell 2013). Talking about the expansion of informal economic activity in Africa, for instance, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) has referred to West Africa as the most informalised region in the world (2002). As a matter of fact, over 90 per cent of the non-agricultural labour force in the region is said to be engaged in informal activity. Informal cross-border trade is a form of "regionalism from below", which challenges colonial borders and reconnects communities across artificial state divides (Meagher 2003: 59). At the same time, many informal traders may very well profit from the opportunities offered by policy disparities and protectionist

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barriers, thus reinforcing rather than challenging national borders and asymmetrical regional policies (Igue & Soule 1992; Meagher 2003). As a result, the contribution of informal trade to regional integration remains controversial, with some authors arguing that informal trade constitutes an alternative form of regionalism that is incompatible with formal free-market driven integration (Bach 1999, 2003).

4.2.2 Migration and free movement of people

Another central criterion of regionalism is the free circulation of people. In West Africa, "migration is historically a way of life," deeply rooted in the geography of the region (Adepoju 2005b: 1). Intra-regional migration, in particular, is an ever-present feature in West Africa (ACP Observatory on Migration 2010). Such patterns have been driven amongst others by demographic, economic, political and related factors, with the majority of West Africans moving for social and economic reasons (livelihood, employment, education and so forth) (Olsen 2011). Migrants include among many "cross-border and clandestine workers, seasonal migrants, professionals and refugees", who predominantly move towards West African coastal areas (Adepoju 2005a: 1).

In general, countries in West Africa can be classified according to three types: immigration, emigration and transit countries (Adepoju 2005b). While some are recognised as 'main' countries attracting the most immigrants in the region (i.e. Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Senegal and Nigeria), others are famous for exporting labour (i.e. Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali and Togo) (Adepoju 2005b).

Similar to intra-regional trade, a key objective of ECOWAS since its establishment, as stated in Paragraph 1 of Article 27 of the founding treaty, has been "to abolish obstacles to the freedom of movement within the community" (ECOWAS 1975: 30). In May 1979, the organisation established the Protocol relating to the Free movement of Persons, the Right of Residence and Establishment (ECOWAS 1979), first among all African regional economic communities to do so. The Protocol underlines three distinct phases initially scheduled to be implemented over a period of 15 years: 1) the right of entry and abolition of visas; 2) the right of residence, and 3) the right of establishment (ECOWAS 1979, Article 2). Three steps were identified for the

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implementation schedule of the Protocol: the first step entailed the implementation of the first phase between 1980 and 1985; the second step entailed implementing the second phase between 1985 to 1990, and the third phase was to be implemented between 1990 and 1995 under the third step.

It must be noted that four supplementary protocols accompany this Protocol, seeking to "augment, define, clarify and detail some sections of the Protocol, such as Article 7, and aspects relating to the phased implementation of the protocol" (Nshimbi & Fioramonti 2013: 45). Particularly, Article 7 of the Protocol stipulates that "any dispute that may arise among member states regarding [its] interpretation or [its] application shall be amicably settled by direct agreement", and that the dispute "may be referred to the Tribunal of the Community by a party" for final verdict, "in the event of failure to settle it" (ECOWAS 1979, Article 7). As such, the four supplementary protocols include: the 1985 Supplementary Protocol A/SP.1/7/85 on the Code of Conduct for the implementation of the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, the Right of Residence and Establishment (ECOWAS 1985); the 1986 Supplementary Protocol A/SP.1/7/86 on the second phase (Right of Residence) of the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, the Right of Residence and Establishment (ECOWAS 1986); the 1989 Supplementary Protocol A/SP.1/6/89 amending and complementing the provisions of Article 7 of the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, the Right of Residence and Establishment (ECOWAS 1989); and the 1990 Supplementary Protocol A/SP.2/5/90 on the implementation of the third phase (Right of Establishment) of the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, the Right of Residence and Establishment (ECOWAS 1990).

The first phase of the Protocol was endorsed in 1980 by all member states, yet only took effect in mid-April 2000 (Adepoju 2002). It grants a visa-free entry to ECOWAS citizens for a period of 90 days, renewable for another 90 days within a year. Therefore, with "valid travel documents and an international health certificate", a citizen of ECOWAS is entitled to spending a maximum of six months in another ECOWAS member state without any additional documentation, within a year (ECOWAS 1979, Article 3.1). In order to further accelerate the free movement of persons within the region, the majority of ECOWAS members have started issuing ECOWAS passports, which are gradually replacing national passports. However, notwithstanding the Protocol, it is

the right of a member state to deny entry to any immigrant, which it considers inadmissible by its laws (ECOWAS 1979, Article 4).

Despite the Protocol, local analysts report numerous cases of corruption at the border posts, with citizens forced to pay bribes when transit should be allowed automatically with the presentation of an ID (Interview No. 1). In addition, language differences further compound cross-border migration, as bureaucracies are often unable to cater for linguistic differences thus resulting in Anglophone citizens travelling to other English-speaking countries and Francophones migrating across French-speaking countries (Interview No. 13).

Moreover, there are difficulties implementing the second and third phases of the Protocol, which correspond respectively to the Right of Residence and Establishment, in all countries of the region (Nshimbi & Fioramonti 2013).

The second phase grants ECOWAS citizens the right to reside in any other ECOWAS member state "for the purpose of seeking and carrying out income earning employment" (ECOWAS 1986, Article 2). It was ratified in 1986 by all member states and came into force (Nshimbi & Fioramonti 2013). However, the implementation of this phase is still contradicted by domestic policies. For instance, there have been several cases where foreign workers have been deported (Adepoju 2005a; Interview No. 14). In 1983 and 1985, the Nigerian government expelled 0.9 and 1.3 million non-national residents respectively (mostly from Ghana), who had immigrated into the country because of its oil-led economic opportunities (Adepoju 2005a). Similarly, the following ECOWAS member states have also expelled immigrants ever since the endorsement of the Protocol: Liberia (1983); Senegal (1990); Benin (1998) and Côte d'Ivoire (1999). Such sentiments against non-nationals can be attributed to economic downturns and massive human displacements, which have had the negative effect of increasing unemployment among young nationals, as well as political instability (Adepoju 2005a, 2005b; Nshimbi & Fioramonti 2013). As a result, many ECOWAS citizens would rather not register themselves after migrating to other ECOWAS countries, thus leaving the issue of informal migration status an open question (ACP Observatory on Migration 2010).

On the other hand, the third phase allows ECOWAS citizens "to establish in another member state and to have access to economic activities, to carry out these activities as well as to set up

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and manage enterprises, and in particular companies, under the same conditions as defined by the legislation of the host member state for its own nationals" (ECOWAS 1990, Article 1); and is yet to be ratified.

Yet in spite of the constraints enumerated above, ECOWAS still has "the most advanced freedom of movement regime in Africa" (Nshimbi & Fioramonti 2013: 46). Moreover, there is no doubt that the legal framework of the ECOWAS protocol on free movement has eased mobility within the region, which seems to be increasing, also due to tougher border controls and stricter entry requirements for migration to Europe (Nshimbi & Fioramonti 2013). In turn, this has contributed in increasing labour migration in the region (Klavert 2011). The large majority of immigrants in West Africa (83%) arguably come from this same region (Konan et al. 2011: 17). However, data on migration and remittances are of poor quality, so migration statistics tend to be outdated, unreliable or not comparable at the regional level, something to consider when looking at official reports.

The findings of a study prepared for the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), focusing on migration across ECOWAS member states like Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal, suggest that most migrants move within the region (Konan et al. 2011). Table 4.6 reports the migration data for the period 1995-2005 showing that above 50% of immigrants come from within ECOWAS, with the only exception of Cape Verde where it is only 10.2 %. Côte d'Ivoire has the highest percentage of immigrants from ECOWAS member states (including Mauritania) with 90.7 %, followed by Niger (89.7%), Senegal (83.6%), Mali (78.6%), Nigeria (75.8%) and Ghana (58.9%) (Konan et al. 2011).

Table 4.6 - Immigrants from ECOWAS (including Mauritania) in selected countries, 1995-2005

	Number of immigrants from ECOWAS (including Mauritania)	Total number of immigrants	Share of regional migrants %
Côte d'Ivoire	2 119 822	2 336 364	90.7
Niger	106 941	119 220	89.7
Senegal	237 155	283 746	83.6
Mali	37 807	48 083	78.6
Nigeria	569 273	751 118	75.8
Ghana	361 674	613 659	58.9
Cape Verde	1 054	10 370	10.2

Source: Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty (Migration DRC) (2007)

Note: The above estimations are based on census data from the period 1995-2005.

Similarly, emigrants from some of the selected countries are primarily found within other ECOWAS member states (including Mauritania). Looking at the period 1995-2005, findings suggest that while a huge amount of emigrants from Niger (89.4%), Mali (85.5%) and Ghana (72.0%) prefer moving to other ECOWAS countries (including Mauritania), those from Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, Nigeria and Cape Verde would rather move out of the West African region (Table 4.7) (Konan et al. 2011).

Table 4.7 - Emigrants to ECOWAS from selected member states (including Mauritania), 1995-2005

	Number of emigrants to other ECOWAS member states (including Mauritania)	Total number of emigrants	Share of regional emigrants %
Niger	444 282	496 773	89.4
Mali	1 350 560	1 578 695	85.5
Ghana	689 653	957 883	72.0
Côte d'Ivoire	79 072	176 692	44.8
Senegal	211 213	479 515	44.0
Nigeria	214 574	1 041 284	20.6
Cape Verde	37 143	199 644	18.6

Source: Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty (Migration DRC) (2007)

Note: The above estimations are based on census data from the period 1995-2005.

4.2.3 Monetary integration and macroeconomic convergence

Monetary cooperation constitutes one of the oldest forms of regionalism in West Africa. However, its scope does not expand to all current members of ECOWAS, but has remained limited to the current members of the Union Economique et Monétaire de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (UEMOA).

UEMOA, also known in English as West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), was created in 1994 through the merger of two previous organisations, the Union Monétaire Ouest Africaine (UMOA) and the Communauté Economique de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (CEAO). The organisation groups all the French-speaking countries in West Africa, with the exception of Mauritania and Guinea Conakry. Guinea Bissau also joined UEMOA in 1997.

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It is important to note that formal regional governance in West Africa is characterised by a dualism between the region as a whole and its French-speaking members, which constitute a de-facto sub-region in many respects (Adedeji 2004; Franke 2007; Bach 1983). Although ECOWAS and UEMOA today stress the complementarity of their efforts and have signed a common agenda for regional integration (ECOWAS & UEMOA 2006), the two organisations have historically rivalled with each other (Adedeji 2004; ; Bach 1983; Franke 2007), as the creation of UEMOA has been, to an extent, a response to the major crisis in the 1980s (Grimm 1999), when the economic situation of francophone countries started to deteriorate vis-à-vis the rest of the region (Van de Walle 1991).

UEMOA has an institutional structure similar to ECOWAS, with a conference of Heads of State, a Council of Ministers, a Commission and a Court of Justice. The organisation also has several consultative organs, the Consular Chamber, the Inter-Parliamentary Committee, the Labour and Social Dialogue Council and the Council of Local governments. A key institution of UEMOA is the Banque Centrale des Etats de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (BCEAO), headquartered in Dakar (Senegal), which manages UEMOA's common currency, the CFA Franc. Such so-called Franc Zone (FZ) also includes the former French colonies of Central Africa under a separate arrangement.

Created in 1945 as the currency of the Federation of French West Africa, at the time under colonial rule, the CFA Franc is a very special arrangement because of its pegging to the French Franc, and later to the Euro (Bach 1983; Claeys & Sindzingre 2003; Van de Walle 1991). The West African CFA is managed by the Banque Centrale des Etats de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (BCEAO). It is also managed and guaranteed by the French Treasury, which calls into question not only the autonomy of the regional monetary system but also its capacity to function as an instrument of genuine regionalism in West Africa.

UEMOA works to harmonise fiscal and economic legislation across the region. The organisation has also set strict criteria of convergence in economic and monetary policy (UNECA 2010) and a system of multilateral surveillance to enforce them. For instance, when comparing the inflation rate progress of UEMOA to that of ECOWAS from the year 2001 to 2008 (see Table 4.8 below), UEMOA's rates are much lower and largely within international standards (with the exception of 2008, when both organisations experienced high inflation rates mainly due to the increase in the

price of fuel and food and the global financial crisis). One of the main reasons for this is the fact that, different from ECOWAS, UEMOA is a monetary union. As such, its central bank has a direct impact on the organisation's monetary policies (UNECA 2010).

Table 4.8 - UEMOA and ECOWAS macroeconomic convergence criteria inflation rates, progress from 2001-2008 (%)

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
ECOWAS	6.6	7.5	7.2	6.7	8.5	7.8	7.0	11.5
UEMOA	4.1	3.0	1.3	0.5	2.6	2.4	2.4	7.4

Source: UNECA (2010)

Although ECOWAS has not defined a clear monetary union, it has created macroeconomic convergence programmes. A look at its economic growth performance (see Table 4.9 below) suggests that some member countries registered sustained economic growth. The only exception is the year 2003, in which its average growth rate was below 3%. It is argued that the high growth rates are attributable to the flourishing production of cocoa in Ghana and Sierra Leone, as well as investments in the extractive sectors of post-conflict countries Liberia and Sierra Leone (which both achieved average growth rates of about 9.4 per cent and 6.9 per cent respectively in the year 2007) (UNECA 2010). Yet, such rates in the gross domestic product have often been achieved through massive exploitation of natural resources, which have caused tensions and also negative spill-overs across the region (Fioramonti 2013a). For instance, in Nigeria, both the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta and, more recently, the group Boko Haram, which have rebelled against the central state and have operated largely across regional borders, have been motivated by a popular reaction against environmental degradation and rising inequality (Bassey 2014).

Table 4.9 - ECOWAS growth performance from 2001-2008 (% of gross domestic product)

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
ECOWAS	5.1	3.7	2.6	3.8	4.8	4.5	4.2	5.0

Source: UNECA (2010)

Since the inception of ECOWAS, there have been discussions over the possible establishment of a single West African common currency, as reflected in its Monetary Co-operation Programme (EMCP) (ECOWAS 1987). Similarly, ECOWAS' 1993 revised Treaty sets "the creation of a monetary union" as one of its long-term objectives (ECOWAS 1993, Article 3.e). In an attempt to push the process forward, the majority of non-FZ countries of West Africa established, in 2001, the West African Monetary Zone (WAMZ). The aim of the WAMZ is the establishment of a common currency, which is to be called 'ECO', and is expected to ultimately merge with the CFA Franc to create a single currency for all ECOWAS member countries.

However, the WAMZ agenda has met several challenges, the most important one being the reluctance of Heads of States to afford their neighbours a say in their financial policies, which adds to the existing Franco-Anglophone divide (Interviews No. 12 & No. 16) and poses practical obstacles to the creation of a single ECOWAS currency (Interview No. 16). Another problem revolves around the establishment of a unified central bank, which is opposed by governors of national central banks, who are more likely to support a federation of central banks (Interview No. 16). Similarly, especially after the Euro-crisis in Europe, there has been much concern that a common currency would lead to instability without joint policies on fiscal and other matters (Interview No. 16). At the current stage, it seems therefore unlikely that the deadline of 2020 set by ECOWAS for the launch of a West African currency will be met.

4.2.4 Conflict management and resolution initiatives

Among other functions, regional organisations can be portrayed as potential conflict management and resolution catalysts. Although ECOWAS initially regarded the promotion of economic development as its main mission, the organisation soon invested in security after

realising that security and economic integration were strongly related, as has been discussed in Chapter 3.

Following the outbreak of the bloody Liberian civil war of 1989, ECOWAS deployed for the first time the newly established ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in a military intervention aimed at containing the situation in the country (Adebajo 2002; Adeleke 1995; Olonisakin & Aning 1999). ECOMOG intervened militarily again, a few years later, on two other occasions: in Sierra Leone (1997) and in Guinea Bissau (1998). ECOWAS was also militarily involved in the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire (2002) and recently in Mali (2013) (see Chapter 3). Despite the mixed results of these operations, the organisation's schemes on conflict management and resolution have grown over the years.

Of note here is the organisation's revised Treaty, which is to be credited for the reinforcement of its involvement in peace and security matters (ECOWAS 1993). While the Treaty underlined the basis for the institutionalisation of ECOMOG, it also led to the adoption of several texts addressing security issues. The 1999 Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security (PRMCR) has been the most comprehensive of these texts, replacing the outdated Protocol on Non-Aggression (PNA) and the Protocol Relating to Mutual Assistance on Defence (PMAD).

PRMCR highlighted the adoption of a broad framework by the organisation and emerges in its peace building provisions. It created a Mediation and Security Council with broad supranational powers, which has the main responsibility in all peace and security matters (ECOWAS 1999, Article 10), and can even "constitute and deploy a civilian and military force to maintain or restore peace within the region, whenever the need arises" (ECOWAS 1999, Article 10.2.h). The Protocol has also instituted a multi-dimensional ECOWAS Standby Force (ESF) and a Defence and Security composed by senior military and civilian officers of the member states. Moreover, it established two innovative organs. The first organ is the Council of Elders, composed by "eminent personalities who, on behalf of ECOWAS, can use their good offices and experience to play the role of mediators, conciliators and facilitators" (ECOWAS 1999, Article 20). The second one is "a [regional] peace and security observation system known as the Early Warning System" (ECOWAS 1999, Article 20, Chapter IV (Early Warning); which is a very sophisticated

structure, including not only officers based in the Secretariat, but also local Observation and Monitoring Zones within the region.

Different from PMAD, PRMCR espouses a broad vision of security and is applicable to a broad spectrum of situations. This includes among all internal conflicts "that threatens to trigger a humanitarian disaster, or that poses a serious threat to peace and security in the sub-region" (ECOWAS 1999, Article 25.c), "serious and massive violation of human rights and the rule of law" (ECOWAS 1999, Article 25.d) and any other situation as may be decided by the Mediation and Security Council. The Protocol also embraces "cross-border crimes, the proliferation of small arms and all illicit trafficking" (ECOWAS 1999, Preamble) and environmental concerns (ECOWAS 1999, Article 10). While PRMCR lays the basis for ECOWAS involvement in peace building and post-conflict resolution (ECOWAS 1999, Article 44), it does not establish structures explicitly dedicated to this task.

Furthermore, ECOWAS has issued a number of documents addressing specific security issues. In 1998, a Declaration of a Moratorium on Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Light Weapons in the organisation's member states was adopted (ECOWAS 1998), which was replaced in 2006 by a binding Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, their Ammunition and other Related Matters (ECOWAS 2006). The ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF) was ratified in 2008 in order "to serve as a reference for the ECOWAS system and Member States in their efforts to strengthen human security in the region" (ECOWAS 2008a). In the same year, ECOWAS also endorsed the Political Declaration on the Prevention of Drug Abuse, Illicit Drug Trafficking and Organized Crimes in West Africa (ECOWAS 2008b). Recently, the organisation renewed its commitment to fight against terrorism by signing the Political Declaration on a Common Position against Terrorism, including a Counter-terrorism Strategy and Implementation Plan (ECOWAS 2013).

Interestingly, the organisation has gradually embraced 'democracy' and 'good governance', thus expanding its approach to peace and security. ECOWAS now regards the promotion of democracy and good governance as key precondition for conflict prevention and peacebuilding (Paris 2004), and considers it as an integral component of its peace and security architecture. The next sub-section gives an account of the evolution of ECOWAS' normative agenda.

4.2.5 Regional norm diffusion

Regional organisations can also be regarded as promoters of norms and values, especially when it comes to issues such as democratisation, good governance and fundamental rights (Adler & Crawford 2006; Hanggi 2003; Manners 2008; Santander 2005). In this regard, ECOWAS has experienced an impressive evolution in its normative framework. At its onset, ECOWAS was not perceived as a promoter of democracy (see Chapter 3), a stance that has gradually changed since the 1990s.

The new vision of ECOWAS has been enshrined in a series of official documents. A first sign of its normative evolution was the 1991 Declaration of Political Principles of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS 1991). Although it was purely declarative and non-binding by nature, this document posed for the first time the issue of democracy and human rights in ECOWAS countries and the connection between governance and security issues. Member states reaffirmed the "commitment to securing peace and maintaining stability in the ECOWAS [region]" and establishing measures for their peoples to "live in freedom under the law and in true and lasting peace, free from any threat to or against their security" (Article 1). They also pledged to "respect human rights and fundamental freedoms (Article 4) and to encourage the participation of the "individual" "by means of free and democratic processes in the framing of the society in which he lives" (Article 6) (ECOWAS 1991).

ECOWAS' 1993 revised Treaty also played a significant role in initiating its normative agenda. Different from its 1975 predecessor, the new Treaty details a series of "fundamental principles" that ECOWAS' members must uphold. Some of these principles are directly related to the broadening mission of ECOWAS, such as the "recognition promotion and protection of human and peoples' rights" (Article 4.g) and the "promotion and consolidation of a democratic system of governance (Article 4.j) (ECOWAS 1993).

Moreover, the signing of the Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security (PRMCR) in 1999 also outlined the new ECOWAS normative trend. It explicitly espouses the view that 1) "good governance, the rule of law and sustainable development are essential for peace and conflict prevention" (ECOWAS 1999, Preamble); 2) "economic and social development and the security of peoples and States

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are inextricably linked (ECOWAS 1999, Article 2.a), and that 3) the "promotion and consolidation of a democratic government as well as democratic institutions in each Member State", along with "the protection of fundamental human rights and freedom and the rules of international humanitarian laws" (ECOWAS 1999, Article 2.c, d) are part of the member states' commitments (ECOWAS 1999). It must be emphasised that ECOWAS' PRMCR on democracy shaped the formulation of "pro-democratic governance norms in the Protocol of the [Peace and Security Council] (PSC) of the AU and in particular for the Democracy Charter" (Lieninger 2014: 18).

The 2001 Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance (PDGG), which entered into force in 2005, is a continuity of the normative evolution initiated by the 1993 Treaty and the 1999 PRMCR. The Protocol sets a series of Constitutional Convergence Principles that are expected to be shared by all ECOWAS members. These include: 1) accession to power by free elections only and zero tolerance for power obtained or maintained through unconstitutional means, 2) separation of powers, 3) independence of the judiciary, 4) subordination of the armed forces to the civilian power, 4) respect of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, 5) freedom of the press and association, 6) non-discrimination and 7) secularism (ECOWAS 2001, Article 1). Article 2 forbids any substantial modification to the electoral laws in the last six months before the elections, except with the consent of a majority of political actors. The Protocol also institutionalises ECOWAS' activities in the field of electoral observation and assistance (ECOWAS 2001, Article 12). Although the PDGG has a broader scope, the provisions with more immediate application regard: a) accession to power via free elections only b) zero tolerance for power obtained or maintained through unconstitutional means (ECOWAS 2001, Article 1). Similarly, the most innovative provision of the Protocol stipulates that in case "democracy is abruptly brought to an end by any means or where there is massive violation of Human Rights in a Member State", the Authority of the Heads of States and Government (AHSG) has the right to suspend that member state from "all ECOWAS decision-making bodies" and to refuse "to support the candidates" that it presents "for elective posts in international organisations" (ECOWAS 2001, Article 45.2).

Practically, ECOWAS's new stance on democracy has been evident in the way the organisation has handled political crises across the region. Although the organisation has been criticised for

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its ambiguities on certain occasions, such as not condemning flawed elections in Togo in 2005, most recent attempts by incumbent presidents to cling to power and military putsches have been met with a strong opposition, as evidenced by the cases of Guinea Conakry (2009), Niger (2010), Côte d'Ivoire (2010), Guinea-Bissau (2012) and Mali (2012).

In sum, the evolution of ECOWAS can be summarised as follows. On the one hand, an effort at restructuring the organisation institutionally, with a view to creating a stronger and more legitimate organisation, with a broader mandate, more supranational powers and new organs aiming at enhancing societal participation in the organisation (Kufuor 2006). On the other hand, the organisation experienced a normative evolution in the domain of governance and security, shifting from a sovereignty-based and statist institutional culture to the (at least rhetorical) embracement of democracy and human security.

Having discussed all areas of integration in ECOWAS as identified under this section, the study now turns to assessing the extent to which each of these areas are integrated.

4.3 How advanced is regionalism in ECOWAS?

In this section, the level of integration/cooperation of the key sectors of regionalism in ECOWAS is analysed. Although the assessment is eminently qualitative and based on interviews, this study has rated the results on a scale from 'low' to 'high', as shown in Table 4.10.

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Table 4.10 - **Key sectors of integration in ECOWAS and their level of integration**

Sectors of Regional Integration	Level of Integration (Low/Medium/High)
Intra-Regional Trade	Low
Migration and Free Movement of People	Medium
Monetary Integration and Macroeconomic Convergence	Low
Regional Norm Diffusion	High
Conflict Management and Resolution Initiatives	High

Source: Compiled by author

In the field of trade, it seems as if the level of integration in ECOWAS leaves much to be desired, especially if assessed against its potential (e.g. by looking at intra-regional trade as opposed to trade with outside countries and regions). The level of trade integration is deemed 'low', although the potential and policy development could be substantial. Even if regional trade policies are more advanced in West Africa than in most regions on the African continent, ECOWAS still faces serious implementation challenges. Moreover, trade facilitation has not resulted in increasing regional trade volumes, with exchanges very unevenly distributed across member states. The region is mainly outward oriented when it comes to trade: from 1994 to 2012 less than 15% of trade has taken place among members of the community.

As previously mentioned, such a low percentage can be attributed to several challenges including poor quality infrastructure, language and corruption. Some policy makers and analysts also add that there is no real political will among member states to trade with each other (Interviews No. 3 & No. 11). At a structural level, there is little doubt that the lack of economic diversification poses a great obstacle to meaningful integration. This in turn makes it difficult for them to trade with each other as they export more or less similar products. This is also likely to become a

vicious circle: the lack of intra-regional trade hinders the abilities of member states to diversify their economies, because of short-term gains from extra-regional trade and high transaction costs.

The level of free movement of people among ECOWAS member states is regarded as 'medium'. Different from intra-regional trade, the free movement of people within ECOWAS is better established and has been further accelerated by the introduction of the common ECOWAS passport. Yet, despite the organisation's protocol on free movement, this sector of integration is hindered by challenges of regulation and partial lack of implementation.

Moreover, monetary integration and macroeconomic convergence within ECOWAS have a 'low' level of integration. As monetary integration only applies to UEMOA members (eight in total, out of 15 members of ECOWAS), it is only a partial achievement in the region. Although there have been talks about the creation of a single currency for all ECOWAS member states, it seems unlikely that this will happen anytime soon. Non-FZ countries are still battling to create their own common currency, the ECO, supposedly expected to merge with the CFA to develop a single currency for all member states of ECOWAS at a later stage.

As regards conflict management and resolution initiatives in ECOWAS, the assessment of this study is that they are very advanced, especially if one draws a comparison with other African RECs. Moreover, ECOWAS paved the way for continental initiatives such as the Standby Force and Early Warning System, which are integrated into the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). ECOWAS conflict management mechanisms have achieved some considerable success in containing several conflicts in the region. For this reason, the level of integration of this sector is considered 'high'. Nonetheless, as discussed below, there are still major challenges, notably the jealous attachment of some states to their exclusive sovereignty prerogatives and lack of political will at national levels, which limit its scope of action at times. These are further compounded by the lack of funds and limited institutional coherence.

Regional norms among ECOWAS members appear to be well diffused and widely shared. Compared to other areas of integration, member states seem to be more keen to adhere to certain normative principles, especially in the case of democracy and human rights. It is hard to say whether the adherence to certain norms is purely instrumental, that is, linked to the benefit of

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membership and the fear to avoid suspension from the organisation, rather than a genuine internalisation of certain rules of conduct.

4.4 The effect of regionalism in ECOWAS on the root causes of conflict

The overview of regional integration in ECOWAS has attested to the presence of many sophisticated regional integration initiatives. Regional governance in ECOWAS therefore appears advanced, although to varying degrees. Yet to what extent has this helped tackle the root causes of conflict?

Over the past two decades, the level of violence in West Africa has diminished. This period has indeed coincided with the re-launch of institutionalised regionalism through ECOWAS as described in previous chapters. However, a full appreciation of the effects of regionalism on peace and security is difficult, as the existence of formal institutions such as ECOWAS has only been one of the multiple factors in determining the stability or instability of the region, together with trends at the global and national level.

An important positive effect of regionalism in West Africa has been the improvement of inter-state relations in general. ECOWAS has been effective in creating a pattern of day-to-day interaction among state authorities, which are now much better at dealing with each other than in the past. If one compares the way West African leaders were divided about Liberia and Sierra Leone in the 1980s and early 1990s, with the way they addressed the most recent turmoil in Côte d'Ivoire and Mali, it is clear that regional cooperation has gone a long way forward. Today, state authorities in the West African region see security problems as a common concern, which must be addressed through coordinated regional initiatives, rather than as opportunities for short-term profit at the expense of their neighbours (Interview No. 15). This is important, as transnational support for insurgencies and lack of coordinated reaction were one of the main causes of the failure of ECOWAS to effectively tackle past crises.

At the same time, it is difficult to evaluate the impact of ECOWAS' economic integration agenda on peace and security. On the one hand, economic integration has been seen by members as a method to encourage economic growth rather than political stability or conflict resolution. Even

the recent ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF) does not make any reference to economic regionalism (or trade integration) as a form of conflict resolution or transformation mechanism (ECOWAS 2008a). More practically, this means that there have been tensions between ECOWAS officials dealing with security and officials dealing with economic integration, with the latter contending that the focus on conflict management has diverted attention from development issues (Interview No. 7). On the other hand, despite its rather advanced set of policies in the context of economic integration, many of ECOWAS' schemes in this field have experienced delays and their actual implementation on the ground leaves much to be desired.

Economic integration amongst French speaking West African countries has been more effective. It has been estimated that UEMOA countries trade three times more amongst themselves than a few decades ago (Carrère 2004). The fact that until the beginning of the new millennium the FZ looked remarkably stable compared to the rest of West Africa (Fearon & Laitin 2003: 86; Collier et al. 2006: 14) is to be regarded as a further positive effect of economic integration.

In the last few years, however, the trend has been reverted and major recent crises have occurred in UEMOA countries, included in which are the Ivorian civil war of 2010 and the Mali crisis of 2012. These new patterns suggest that the lower incidence of civil wars in French-speaking Africa up to the year 2000 may have been due to external factors, including the military arrangements between France and its former colonies, particularly during the Cold War. Monetary and economic integration also fitted into Franco-African post-colonial arrangements and were meant to contribute to the stability of the economic rather than the political domain. This, in turn, calls into question the extent to which this form of externally induced monetary integration is really responding to Africa's local needs. UEMOA's modest results in tackling the root causes of conflicts by re-launching economic growth and alleviating poverty in its member states also casts doubts about its long-term potential impact. The lack of financial means has hindered the extent to which the organisation can promote regionalism. While its macroeconomic policies are strongly oriented towards promoting macroeconomic stability, for instance by setting a 3% inflation rate as convergence criterion, UEMOA still lacks a clear developmental trajectory for the region. This further limits its chances at becoming a catalyst for conflict transformation.

In short, the structure of West African economies and the challenges experienced by both ECOWAS and UEMOA in advancing economic integration seem to have limited the potential for economic interdependence, despite making an important difference in some areas, especially when compared to other African RECs.

ECOWAS' policy on free movement is certainly more advanced than anywhere else in Africa. Yet, its actual effect on conflict is ambivalent. Undoubtedly, free movement provides an opportunity for mutual learning and norm diffusion. In the case of ECOWAS, these have been enabled through cultural exchanges and tourism between member states. Such activities in turn generate strong ties, which are likely to play a role in diminishing the occurrence of conflicts. At the same time, the permanence of bottlenecks and inefficiencies result in formal free movement being relatively limited (Interview No. 12), which means that most migration still occurs informally as regional borders are porous. Such a situation also facilitates the circulation of weapons and insurgents. Terrorist groups, such as Boko Haram in Nigeria or Al-Qaeda in the Islamist Maghreb (AQIM) in Mali, Mauritania and Niger, appear able to move across borders and use this to their advantage (Interviews No. 12 & No. 13). In addition, corruption and mismanagement caused by the poor regulation of free movement trigger tensions among people in the region, making conflicts more likely to occur.

In addition, ECOWAS has been the main security actor in the region and it has been successful in developing a sophisticated conflict management framework. Yet, the effect of such a framework on conflict transformation is not clear, especially if one considers that there remains a gap between the organisation's legal and institutional framework and its actual work on the ground. Most of its peace and support operations have been under-resourced. Its regional standby force is meeting significant challenges, and, as discussed in Chapter 3, it appears unlikely that it will be able to overcome the problems faced by previous ECOMOG missions (Interviews No. 8 & No. 9). Because of its region-specific knowledge, ECOWAS seems better placed when it comes to early warning and preventive diplomacy (Interview No. 12).

Although cooperation has increased, the region is still dominated by a reluctance to share sovereignty, which poses limits as to how much ECOWAS is able to achieve. As long as conflicts remain 'frozen' or low-scale, member states may refuse ECOWAS interference and insist on solving 'their' security issues themselves. At the time of writing, this was the case in

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Nigeria, where the government considered the escalating tensions with groups such as Boko Haram as an internal matter, thus limiting ECOWAS' ability to intervene (Interview No. 2). Also, during the Malian crisis which the ECOWAS Early Warning System detected on time, the actual capacity of the regional organisation to act was hampered by inefficiencies and frictions (Interview No. 10), ultimately resulting in the intervention of a foreign force (France). This is not to say that the lack of political will at the national level is solely responsible for limited early response. Other factors, such as the lack of capacity and financial means, also appear to contribute.

Finally, ECOWAS' new stance on democracy and good governance is probably one of its major achievements. By emphasising key norms such as constitutional and peaceful power transition, ECOWAS has achieved notable success in addressing a huge potential source of conflicts, especially in a region traditionally marred by coup d'états and flawed elections. Although both challenges are still present in the region (with two military coups having been recorded in 2012 in both Guinea-Bissau and Mali, and electoral violence in 2010 in Côte d'Ivoire), member states have not hesitated to condemn violent takeovers and the toppling of legitimate governments. As evident during the 2010 disputed elections in Côte d'Ivoire, the 2012 crisis in Mali or even in Guinea-Bissau (2012), the violation of existing norms has often received a unanimous condemnation from ECOWAS member states.

The positive effect of ECOWAS' normative framework has also been evident when the organisation prevented both Mamadou Tandja of Niger and Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal from changing their countries' constitutions, which would have allowed them to stay in power for a third term (Birikorang 2013). The organisation achieved this through "regional diplomatic pressure, as well as pressure from local actors", therefore succeeding in making those incumbent presidents compel to just two terms in office, as per their constitutions (Birikorang 2013: 3). In doing so, ECOWAS also prevented the outbreak of possible conflicts.

While the diffusion of regional norms in ECOWAS has proven to be an important tool to tackle the root causes of conflicts, the fact that incoherencies still prevail with regards to the application of such norms and regulations points to the need to strengthen the implementation processes. In particular, besides public condemnation, it is not clear the extent to which tougher measures,

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such as targeted sanctions, can be applied with a view to deterring member states' elites from resorting to unconstitutional means of attaining power.

In Figure 4.1, the estimated effect of these various forms of regionalism on the root causes of conflict is summarised.

Figure 4.1 - **Modelling the effect of regionalism on the root causes of conflict in ECOWAS**
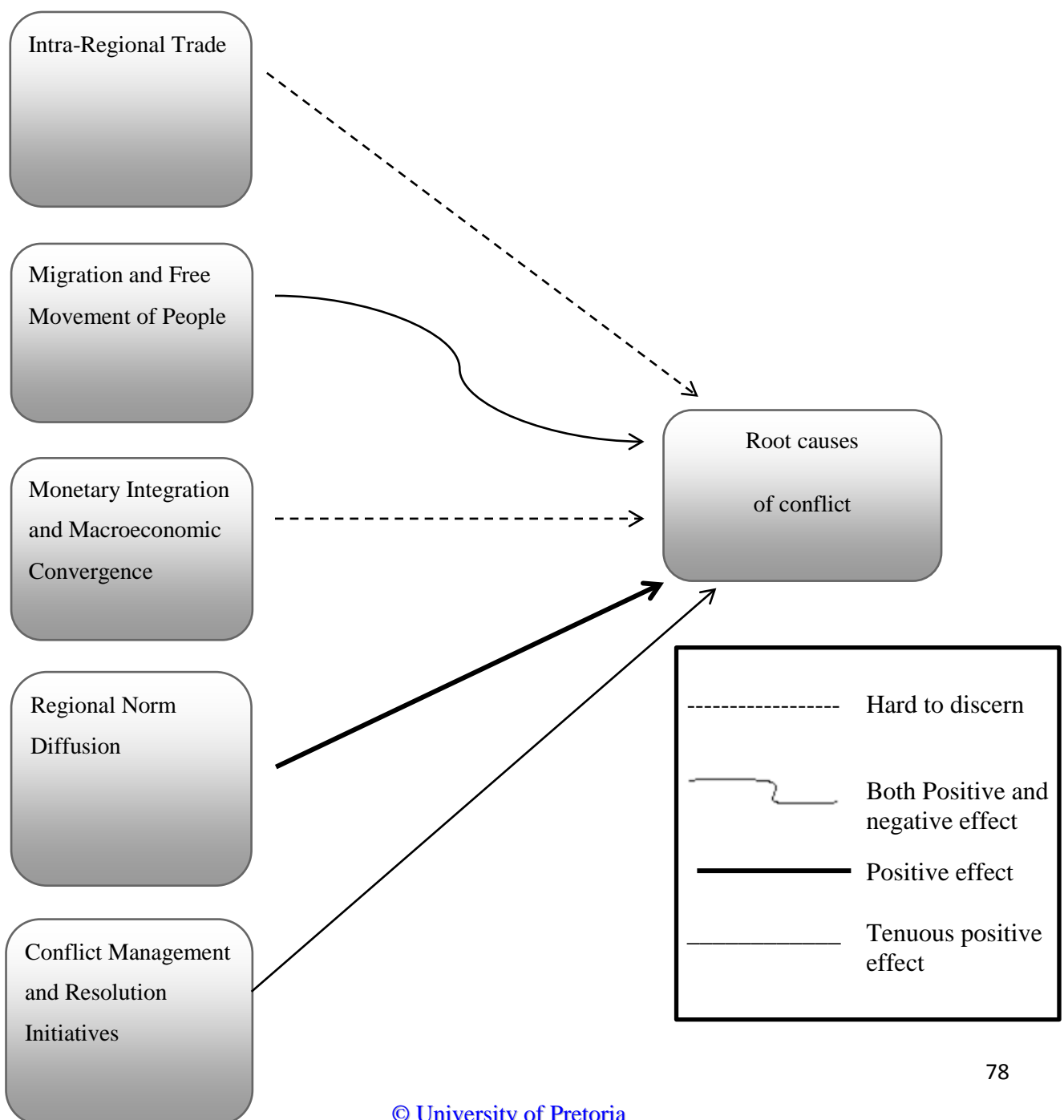
4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has identified five key regional integration areas among ECOWAS member states: intra-regional trade; migration and free movement of people; monetary integration and macroeconomic convergence; regional norm diffusion; and conflict management and resolution. Overall, it appears that the region is advanced in its approach to regional cooperation, especially when compared to other African regional organisations. Yet, this does not necessarily result in actual integration (e.g. in shared sovereignty), let alone a successful effect on conflict transformation. The review of the extent to which each of these sectors is factually integrated shows a gap between existing policies and their implementation. Of all sectors, only two (regional nom diffusion and conflict management and resolution) are considered as highly integrated, because of their ability to translate in practice some of the elements for which they have been designed. The remaining sectors either have low or medium levels of integration, mainly due to challenges of regulation and implementation along with the absence of political will and real commitment from most member states.

As regards the issue of whether ECOWAS has had any effect on tackling the root causes of conflicts in the region, results are mixed. In general, it seems as if the organisation has contributed to the reduction of violence in the region. In particular, it has improved inter-state relations, which in turn has helped lower tensions among member states. Although still plagued by political tensions and security problems, West Africa appears less violent today than it was just a decade ago. Nevertheless, when we look at the various areas of regional cooperation and integration, then the picture becomes more blurred. ECOWAS has succeeded in diffusing regional norms of good governance and democracy, which are by and large supported by all members and regularly lead to condemnation of unconstitutional processes. In the field of intra-regional trade, monetary integration and macroeconomic convergence, ECOWAS does not seem to have any discernible effects on reducing tensions. The main challenges include limited trade diversification, poor implementation, lack of real commitment and infrastructure, and divide between Anglophone and Francophone. Interestingly migration and free movement of people in ECOWAS may have had a double-effect on conflicts in the region. While it may foster a greater sense of common purpose and cultural sharing, the poor institutionalisation may actually trigger tension (e.g. with corruption at the border) and the existence of porous borders has facilitated the

movement of armed groups. Finally, conflict management and resolution, while a significant component of ECOWAS' work, only contributes minimally to addressing the root causes of conflicts in the region, as it focuses mainly on containing existing tensions.

This chapter has shown that ECOWAS has been more successful at addressing conflicts through its governance and security activities (identified under conflict management and resolution and regional norm diffusion) than through economic integration (intra-regional trade; free movement of people; macroeconomic convergence and monetary integration).

The fact that the organisation has never purposefully viewed economic integration as a peace and stability tool must be highlighted, as it could partly explain why its economic agenda has been lagging behind compared to its peace and security agenda.

While ECOWAS is trying to make its approach to conflict prevention more holistic, it is not clear whether economic integration fits in the picture. What seems to be evident, however, is that should the organisation decide to revise its approach to economic integration as a tool to address the root causes of conflict, it will have to commit itself to its enhancement by addressing most of the structural problems that this domain faces.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This thesis has assessed the extent to which, and the conditions under which, the promotion of regional cooperation and integration, through the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), has influenced regional conflict transformation. The study has done so by identifying key sectors of integration and cooperation within ECOWAS, such as intra-regional trade; migration and free movement of people; monetary integration and macroeconomic convergence; regional norm diffusion; and conflict management and resolution initiatives, and by assessing their role on tackling the root causes of conflict in West Africa (see Chapter 4).

This concluding chapter reflects on the mixed results outlined in the research and highlights the fact that regionalisation may help tackle the root causes of conflict in some areas while generating new frictions in other areas, therefore casting doubt on a simplistic and linear approach to regionalism and conflict transformation. This is crucial if African scholars and policy makers are concerned with achieving "deep conflict prevention" (Miall 2000: 21).

5.2 Overview of the research

This thesis departed from the assumption that regional cooperation/integration can transform conflicts by fostering interaction, shared rules of engagement and norm diffusion across states, thus (directly or indirectly) addressing factors that fuel or which are likely to fuel conflicts (Adler & Barnett 1998; Deutsch 1957). On this basis, regional cooperation/integration schemes have been portrayed as sustainable and long-term solutions to regional conflicts, as exemplified at the EU level.

The aim of the present research has been to develop our understanding of African regionalism with a view to clarifying whether the nexus between regionalisation and conflict transformation holds true in this part of the world too. In doing so, this research also aimed at exploring a field

of analysis that has not been subjected to intense scrutiny, at least compared to the wealth of research on Africa's regional approach to conflict management and resolution.

ECOWAS was chosen as the case study due to its relatively higher level of institutional sophistication, particularly if compared to other regional economic communities (RECs) in Africa.

In order to answer the overarching question, that is,

'To what extent, and under which conditions, does the promotion of regional cooperation and integration (in their multi-dimensional and multi-sectoral characters) influence regional conflict transformation in Africa?'

the study addressed the following questions:

1) To what extent has there been regional cooperation/integration within ECOWAS?

2) Has it had any detectable effect on the root causes of conflict?

3) What have been the most visible successes and failures, if any?

The study relied on secondary data (desktop reviews), as well as extensive fieldwork in West Africa, where semi-structured interviews were administered to 50 regional officers and experts in Accra (Ghana), Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) and Abuja (Nigeria). The thesis also relied on semi-structured interviews conducted with 13 officials in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) and five semi-structured interviews administered to experts in Pretoria (South Africa) on West African integration. This research design had the advantage of allowing the author to generate an in-depth analysis of the extent to which regionalism has evolved in the region and identify patterns of influence between the various forms of formal and informal regional integration/cooperation and conflict transformation.

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5.3 Summary of research findings

After introducing the research topic and the methodology in Chapter 1, the dissertation provided an overview of the key concepts underpinning the study, including regional conflict, regionalism (both generally and in Africa) as well as regional integration and regional cooperation (Chapter 2). It also provided a description of regional integration as a means to transform regional conflicts, based primarily on the experience of the European continent. Moreover, Chapter 2 put forward some relevant considerations regarding regionalism in Africa, while discussing the literature dealing with the ability of African regional organisations to manage conflicts on the continent. Over the years, a rather primordial framework for economic cooperation has gradually become an institutional web for security management, mainly though the involvement of the continental body, the African Union (AU), and the various African RECs tasked with managing conflicts. At the same time, the research has noted that these organisations' ability to carry out such tasks has been questioned and criticised for several reasons, including the lack of resources, political willingness and institutional systems, which are required to accomplish security management.

Chapter 3 provided an overview of the West African region. In particular, it discussed the dynamics and regional dimensions of conflicts in the region. It results that while conflicts in West Africa are usually localised internally, they are in fact regional through the involvement of regional actors, regional spill-over effects and the fact they are driven by regional networks. Moreover, it appears that while full-scale civil wars remain prevalent in the region, the latter is also being increasingly confronted by non-conventional security threats, namely terrorism, drug trafficking, piracy, food insecurity and the proliferation of deadly diseases such as HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and the most recent outbreak of the Ebola virus disease (EVD). The outbreak of EVD in particular is worth mentioning, as at the time of writing, especially as of August 15, 2014, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) had already announced a total of 2127 suspected and confirmed cases of EVD in West Africa, including 1310 laboratory confirmed and 1145 deaths. Although initially centred on three countries (Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone), the virus is gradually affecting neighbouring countries such as Nigeria (CDC 2014). Not only do these emerging threats pose a severe threat to the stability, security, and development of the region, especially due to their transnational nature, but it is also expected that

the security of West Africa will, in future, be challenged more by such phenomena than full-scale civil wars (see Section 3.2.1).

Chapter 3 also discussed the origins of ECOWAS and its initial involvement in direct conflict management. While ECOWAS initially focused only on economic integration, the outbreak of the Liberian and Sierra Leone civil wars in the 1990s triggered a rethinking of its approach and led the organisation to investing more resources and commitment in security matters. In doing so, the organisation became the first African regional economic community to establish conflict management capabilities. Despite its mixed outcomes, ECOWAS' achievements in the field of conflict resolution make the institution stand out as the most advanced African regional organisations regarding regional security. Today, ECOWAS seems to be led by a "very different approach, far more explicitly political, and dominated by the issue of regional security, both in the limited sense of maintaining a basic level of peace, and in the much broader and more ambitious sense of creating the structural conditions required for development within a globalised world economy" (Clapham 2001: 60).

In Chapter 4, ECOWAS' direct and indirect effects on conflict transformation were assessed. Such assessment has shown that ECOWAS is home to many sophisticated regional cooperation/integration initiatives, including intra-regional trade, migration and free movement of people, monetary integration and macroeconomic convergence, regional norm diffusion, and conflict management and conflict resolution.

In assessing the extent to which there has been regional cooperation/integration within ECOWAS, the study did not simply look at the number of policies and plans that have been agreed on paper. It actually conducted a systematic assessment of the extent to which these initiatives have been implemented and integrated. This was done through an analysis of existing research and an extensive set of interviews. Based on that, the various sectors or regionalisation were ranked on a scale from 'low' to 'high' (see Section 4.3). Two areas of integration (regional norm diffusion and conflict management and resolution initiatives) were described as high; two other areas (intra-regional trade and monetary integration and macroeconomic convergence) were regarded as low; and one area (migration and free movement of people) was regarded as medium (see Table 4.10).

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Both regional norm diffusion and conflict management and resolution initiatives were assessed as 'high' because they have achieved significant success in achieving tangible results, that is, facilitating dialogue and common approaches to democracy and governance in the case of regional norm diffusion, and managing conflicts in the case of conflict management and resolution initiatives (see Sections 4.2.4, 4.2.5, 4.4; Table 4.5).

Intra-regional trade was regarded as 'low' because of the still-limited (and, in some cases, decreasing) volumes of regional trade amongst ECOWAS member states, with less than 15% of trade having taken place among member states of the community from 1994-2012 (see Section 4.2.1; Table 4.5), despite the introduction of the ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme (ETLS) in 1983 (ECOWAS 1983). By and large, this state of affairs appeared to be a consequence of limited political will, lack of implementation, poor quality infrastructure and lack of economic diversification (see Section 4.2.1).

Monetary integration and macroeconomic convergence were also regarded as 'low,' despite the existence of a common currency for some countries in the region. So far eight members (Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal, and Togo), grouped under the Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest Africaine (UEMOA or WAEMU in English), share the same currency, namely 'CFA'. The remaining members of the community have been battling, ever since the establishment of the West African Monetary Zone (WAMZ) in 2001, to design their own common currency, which is to be called 'ECO' and is expected to merge at a later stage with the CFA to create a single currency for all ECOWAS member countries. Besides the lack of political will, the divide between Anglophone and Francophone has also been identified as a challenge to the creation of a West African common currency (see Section 4.2.3). Indeed, the monetary union appears to be a consequence of French influence rather than the outcome of a concerted effort from the region itself. Moreover, the extent to which existing trade, monetary and macro-economic factors contribute to tackling the root causes of conflict is debatable, especially due to the unclear implementation and poor results in terms of actual integration.

Migration and free movement of people have been rated as 'medium' because of the difficulties experienced by ECOWAS citizens at fully enjoying this right, despite the existence of the Protocol relating to the Free movement of Persons, the Right of Residence and Establishment, since 1979 (ECOWAS 1979), and the recent introduction of ECOWAS passports (see Section

4.2.2). Several challenges hinder this area of integration, namely partial implementation (with the Right of Residence and Establishment still facing implementation hurdles), language barriers and poor regulation (with corruption prevailing at borders). Nonetheless, existing reforms have eased mobility in the region, with West Africans being the largest migrant community in the region. At the same time, national borders stay porous, which means that illegal migration is a daily occurrence. In a sense, migration and free movement of people in ECOWAS appear to have a double-effect on conflict: fostering a greater sense of common purpose and cultural sharing, while triggering tensions because of poor institutionalisation, corruption and porous borders.

Assessing the extent to which each of these areas is factually integrated has shown that there is a gap between existing policies in ECOWAS and their implementation. As Daniel Bach puts it, although it has many "ambitious" objectives, ECOWAS has nevertheless a lot of "unfulfilled" ones (Bach 2003: 24). In addition, this study has argued that while the prevalence of many integration initiatives may point to the fact that the level of cooperation among member states of the organisation is high or advanced, this does not necessarily mean that they are highly integrated (i.e. they share sovereignty).

By and large, ECOWAS can be credited for reducing the level of violence in the region. Particularly, ECOWAS has contributed to ameliorating inter-state relations, which in turn has helped reduce tensions among neighbouring states. Although still not fully pacified, due to persistent political and security tensions, West Africa appears less violent than it was just a decade ago, when some even described it as the 'coming anarchy' (Kaplan 1994).

A mixed picture emerges, however, when we assess whether key existing areas of integration in ECOWAS, as identified above, have had any detectable effects on the root causes of conflict in West Africa. In this regard, we have found that the diffusion of regional norms like democracy and good governance have been crucial to avert conflicts, especially in a region traditionally marred by coup d'états and flawed elections. Particularly, the fact that good governance norms are now supported by all members has led to the systematic condemnation of unconstitutional processes, whether during elections or during the ordinary process of policy making. At the same time, it is not clear the extent to which the region is willing to move beyond rhetorical condemnation and apply tougher measures, such as sanctions, when power is seized or exercised unconstitutionally in a member state.

Although conflict management and resolution are critical components of ECOWAS' institutional setup, their effect on conflict transformation has been limited. Most initiatives in this field focus exclusively on containing existing tensions (see Sections 4.2.4, 4.3 & 4.4). And in those areas where the organisation could have contributed to preventing conflicts through its regional peace and security observation system, known as the Early Warning System, the actual implementation has been marred by inefficiencies and frictions, the lack of political will at the national level, the lack of capacity and financial means, and the reluctance by member states to share sovereignty (see Section 4.4).

Overall, it appears that ECOWAS has been more successful at addressing the root causes of conflicts through its governance and security activities (identified under conflict management and resolution and regional norm diffusion) than through economic integration (intra-regional trade; free movement of people; macroeconomic convergence and monetary integration). In particular, the organisation's most visible success in addressing the root causes of conflict in the region seems to have occurred through the diffusion of regional norms of good governance and democracy.

5.4 Limitation of the study and problems encountered in the course of the research

As is often the case, the main limitation of this research is that it has not been able to identify clear causal relations between regionalism and conflict transformation. This would have required a more systematic quantitative research and controls of variability. Even cases where quantitative methods are employed, it is always difficult to speak of causality. This is why we have opted for a more in-depth analysis, based on a qualitative research design grounded in extensive fieldwork. Such a wealth of information has enabled the researcher to provide an explanation of the framework and an understanding of how regionalism operates in practice, by looking at whether, and under which conditions, the promotion of regionalism (in its multi-dimensional and multi-sectoral character) can influence conflict transformation.

Interviews were crucial to corroborate or challenge the validity of some of the official data available in the region. Indeed, empirical information is often scant and incomplete, while some surveys policy makers rely on are contested. Especially in the field of migration, statistics tend to

be outdated, unreliable or not comparable at the regional level, even when they appear in official reports. The limited availability of systematic surveys and reliable data also attests to the limits of institutional regionalism in ECOWAS.

5.5 Final reflections

The findings presented in this study suggest that regionalism (in its multi-dimensional and multi-sectoral characters) may help tackle the root causes of conflict in Africa in some areas, while producing tensions in others. Perhaps this is what the term conflict transformation implies: conflict is not avoided or resolved, but transformed in its nature.

For regionalism to positively influence conflict transformation, political will and real commitment by national leaders are crucial. As ECOWAS is mainly a regional cooperation scheme, with limited capacity to pursue and integrated form of shared sovereignty, then member states remain the key drivers. When they only pay lip service to regional cooperation, then the potential of regionalism as a conflict transformation process is undermined.

Whether an integrated ECOWAS in the real sense of the word would have better chances at addressing the root causes of conflict in the region remains an open question. As it seems now, regional cooperation in the organisation has not proven to be a very effective means to transform conflict in the region, with the clear exception of one sector of cooperation, which faces difficulties nonetheless. In fact, regionalisation in ECOWAS appears to be generating even new frictions in other areas. This in turn raises questions as to whether regional cooperation in Africa can be seen as a promising avenue to address the root causes of conflict.

With many African states clinging to their national prerogatives rather jealously and shying away from the principles of shared sovereignty (which do not imply giving up sovereignty, but simply advocate the possibility of administering it in concert with others), it is perhaps time to reconsider what we mean by regionalism in our continent. Perhaps it is not from states that sustainable regionalism will develop in Africa, but rather through the involvement of civil society (Fioramonti 2014), which may show more willingness to address the roots causes of

conflicts. This would of course pose other types of challenges and risks, which may become a topic for further research.

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Appendix 1 - Key instruments highlighting the evolution of the ECOWAS peace and security architecture

Years	Instruments
1978	Protocol on Non-Agression (PNA)
1981	Protocol Relating to Mutual Assistance on Defence (PMAD)
1998	Declaration of a Moratorium on Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Light Weapons in West Africa
1999	Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security (PRMCR)
2001	Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance (PDGG)
2001	Declaration on the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons
2006	ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials
2008	ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF)
2013	Political Declaration on a Common Position against Terrorism, including a Counter-Terrorism Strategy and Implementation Plan

Source: Compiled by author

Appendix 2 – List of Interviewees

Interview numbers (as referred to in text) No.	Description	Date on which interviews were administered	Place of conduct of interviews
1	Academic, King's College London	26 July 2013	Pretoria (South Africa
2	African Union Commission (AU), Peace and Security Department	28 April 2014	Addis Ababa (Ethiopia)
3	African Union Commission	25 April 2014	Addis Ababa (Ethiopia)
4	African Development Bank (AFDB)	17 October 2013	Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso)
5	ECOWAS Commission	28 October 2013	Abuja (Nigeria)
6	ECOWAS Commission	31 October 2013	Abuja (Nigeria)
7	ECOWAS Commission, Office of the Vice-President	29 October 2013	Abuja (Nigeria)
8	ECOWAS Commission, Political Affairs, Peace and Security Department (PAPS)	25 October 2013	Abuja (Nigeria)
9	ECOWAS Commission, PAPS	30 October 2013	Abuja (Nigeria)
10	ECOWAS Commission, PAPS	1 November 2013	Abuja (Nigeria)
11	European Union (EU) Delegation to the African Union	24 April 2014	Addis Ababa (Ethiopia)
12	Institute for Security Studies (ISS)	24 July 2013	Pretoria (South Africa)
13	Kofi Annan Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC), Faculty of Academic Affairs	3 October 2013	Accra (Ghana)

14	KAIPTC, Faculty of Academic Affairs and Research	1 October 2013	Accra (Ghana)
15	Legon Centre for International Affairs and Diplomacy (LECIAD)	5 October 2013	Accra (Ghana)
16	West African Monetary Institute (WAMI)	1 October 2013	Accra (Ghana)

Source: Compiled by author

(Note: The interviewees' details have been entered in numerical order and not according to their order of appearance in this study).

Appendix 3- List of Questions

1. Background on the interviewee

-Full name

-Work Place, title/position/tasks

2. Regional conflict

- How would you define a 'regional conflict'? If any, which West African conflicts would you consider 'regional conflicts'?

- What are the root causes of political instability and conflicts in West Africa, in your opinion?

- What would you say are the regional dynamics in West African conflicts, and what could be done to tackle them?

- Are West African conflicts a 'regional issue'? Do you think that their solution is better located at the national, regional or international level, or is it necessary to address them at all three levels?

3. Regional organisations and conflict management

- ECOWAS has been one of the first organisations in Africa to develop a regional conflict management architecture. Which factors have been crucial in pushing ECOWAS to get involved in conflict management?

- More than 20 years after the launch of the first ECOMOG operation, what is the balance sheet of ECOWAS conflict management initiatives, notably in the fields of early warning, mediation and peace operations? Is there any activity that has been more successful or any specific conflict where ECOWAS has been more successful?

- Have other regional organisations (i.e. WAEMU, the Mano River Union) had a direct role in regional conflict management/resolution? If yes, which role?

- Conflicts have not really diminished in number in West Africa since the end of the Cold War, yet recent conflicts have been significantly shorter (at least with respect to the phase of actual combats) and have involved less casualties than previous wars. In your opinion, to what extent is this trend attributable to the efforts made by regional organisations? Are the causes rather to be found elsewhere, i.e. in efforts made by the UN or by extra-regional actors?

4. Regional integration/cooperation and conflict transformation

- What is 'regional integration', in your opinion? Is there any initiative that you would qualify as regional integration in West Africa?

- Trade, cultural exchanges and migration. These are some examples of how countries integrate regionally. Do you think these phenomena are good or bad for regional stability? Can you connect them positively or negatively to past or existing conflicts?

- Do you think that regional integration/cooperation has improved economic, cultural and social relations in the region?

- Do you think that some of these 'indirect' effects of regional integration/cooperation may have had an impact on conflicts? If so, how?

- Is 'informal regionalisation' undermining regional integration in West Africa? Can, on the other hand, regional integration be an effective response to the challenges posed by informal regional dynamics?

- What is your view on the promotion of regional cooperation/integration as a strategy for conflict transformation/resolution?

- What are some of the daily activities that ECOWAS, as a regional organisation, undertakes towards the fulfilment of this goal?

- Do you think that economic integration as it is currently practiced in West Africa has any potential of addressing the root causes of conflicts in West Africa? If yes, by which mechanism? If no, would you say that integration-oriented programmes risk to increase regional instability, or that a different approach to economic integration could have more chances to have a positive impact on regional conflicts?

- To what extent has ECOWAS, as the primary regional organisation in West Africa, failed (or succeeded) in transforming regional conflicts, that is, in tackling the root causes of conflicts?

- In cases where there have been successes, (a) what conditions could have allowed for the achievement of this goal and to what extent has the 'said' conflict been transformed? (b) To what extent have these been due to ECOWAS, local actors, and/or other global actors (including a proponent of regionalism such as the EU)?

- How would you explain cases of failures?

- What would you say are the various key challenges that ECOWAS faces, on a daily basis, which in turn affect its effectiveness in preventing and resolving/transforming conflicts in the region?

5. *The role of other actors*

- Are any other major external actors that support regional integration and/or regional conflict management in West Africa and in Africa, more broadly? If yes, which are the main similarities and differences between their approach and the EU's approach?

- Are there any external actors undermining regional integration and/or regional conflict management in West Africa and Africa more in general?

- Would you like to add anything else?

- Is there anyone else you think it may be useful for me to meet with?