The African Union’s Involvement in Conflict Resolution in Some ECOWAS Countries

Master’s Thesis

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Richard Parmentier, Advisor

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By
Esther Chollom Jack

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Abstract

The African Union’s Involvement in Conflict Resolution in some ECOWAS countries

A thesis presented to the Graduate Program in Global Studies

Brandeis University

Waltham, Massachusetts

by

Esther Chollom Jack

The African Union is the largest Pan-African organization that is saddled with the task of uniting the African continent through economic integration in order to create self reliance among its citizens. However, the Union has faced a number of challenges with regards to destructive civil wars that have riddled the continent since the dawn of independence, especially immediately after the cold war of the 1990s. The African Union established a commission for Reconciliation, Mediation and Arbitration, but due to certain structural clauses in its charter, the commission was limited in its role. So, as the watch dog of the African nation, the Union established Regional Economic Communities (RECs), one of which is the Economic Community of West African States, and mandated them to find the means of resolving conflicts within their regions. This is based on the understanding that the RECs understand their terrains better than external parties. ECOWAS became the first REC to launch a forced intervention through its military arm, the ECOMOG, first in Liberia and Sierra Leone, and subsequently in the rest of the region. The organization faced a number of challenges while executing its mandate. These include the lack of unity among the intervening forces and the lack of funding to provide logistics needed to execute its missions successfully. These notwithstanding, the ECOWAS forces received reinforcements from the United Nations and the British army under the Palliser...
program, which helped to calm the situations in Liberia, Sierra Leone and the rest of the region. Subsequently, fruitful negotiations were initiated and peace accords were signed by the warring parties to end the conflicts. Although there is relative peace in the ECOWAS region today, this study was carried out in order to find means of attaining lasting and sustainable peace and stability so that meaningful developmental activities can take place in the region.
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OAU</td>
<td>Organization of African Unity</td>
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<tr>
<td>AU</td>
<td>African Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECOWAS</td>
<td>Economic Community of West African States</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECOMOG</td>
<td>ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>RUF</td>
<td>Revolutionary United Front</td>
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<td>NPFL</td>
<td>National Patriotic Front of Liberia</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNIA</td>
<td>Universal Negro Improvement Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACL</td>
<td>African Community League</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIS</td>
<td>Community of Independent States</td>
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<tr>
<td>UAS</td>
<td>Union of African States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>United States of America</td>
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<tr>
<td>USSR</td>
<td>Union of Soviet Socialist Republic</td>
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<tr>
<td>PAFMECA</td>
<td>Pan-African Freedom Movement of East and Central Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAAU</td>
<td>Constitutive Act of African Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSC</td>
<td>Peace and Security Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>REC</td>
<td>Regional Economic Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>AMU</td>
<td>Maghreb Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>COMESA</td>
<td>Common Market for Eastern</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEN-SAD</td>
<td>Southern Africa Community of Sahel-Saharan States</td>
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<tr>
<td>EAC</td>
<td>East African Community</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECCAS</td>
<td>Economic Community of Central African States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IGAD</td>
<td>Intergovernmental Authority for Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>SADC</td>
<td>Southern African Development Community</td>
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<tr>
<td>MARIUN</td>
<td>Mano River Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>FTA</td>
<td>Free Trade Area</td>
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<td>CET</td>
<td>Common External Tariff</td>
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<tr>
<td>MU</td>
<td>Monetary Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UEMOA</td>
<td>Union Economique Monitaire Ouest d’Africain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FCCD</td>
<td>Fund for Cooperation, Compensation, and Development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TLS  Trade Liberalization Schemes
EBID  ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development
SMC  Standing Mediation Committee
ICJ  International Court of Justice
ICC  International Criminal Court
AAFC  Allied Armed Forces of the Community
ANAD  Agression et d’Assistance en matiere de Defense
MAD  Mutual Defense Assistance
MSC  Mediation and Security Council
CA  Committee of Ambassadors
DSC  Defense and Security Commission
NDPL  National Democratic party of Liberia
INPFL  Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia
ULIMO  United Liberation Movement
LURD  Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy
MODEL  Movement for Democracy in Liberia
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LNTG</td>
<td>Liberian National Transition Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPRC</td>
<td>National Provisional Ruling Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLA</td>
<td>Sierra Leone Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EO</td>
<td>Executive Outcomes</td>
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<tr>
<td>AFRC</td>
<td>Armed Forces Revolutionary Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDG</td>
<td>Democratic Party of Guinea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCNR</td>
<td>Military Committee for National Recovery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPP</td>
<td>Unity and Progress Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCNR</td>
<td>Transitional Committee for National Recovery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIFA</td>
<td>Federation of International Football Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAIGC</td>
<td>Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FARP</td>
<td>People’s Revolutionary Armed Forces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRS</td>
<td>Party for Social Renovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MFDC</td>
<td>Movement of Democratic Forces for Casamance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDP</td>
<td>Internally Displaced persons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APSA</td>
<td>African Peace and Security Architecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>R2P</td>
<td>Responsibility to Protect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HI</td>
<td>Humanitarian Intervention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICISS</td>
<td>International Commission on Intervention and state Sovereignty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNOMIL</td>
<td>United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WANSA</td>
<td>West African Network on Small Arms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WANPB</td>
<td>West African Network on Peace Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information and Communication Technology</td>
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CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND

1.0 Introduction

Since African countries attained independence, the African continent has experienced political and military conflicts that have resulted in civil wars and have threatened regional, continental, and international peace, security, and stability. Most of these conflicts took place at the end of the Cold War between the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), and the United States of America (USA). The end of the Cold War ushered in peace and security in many regions of the world. However, in Africa violent upheavals erupted and resulted in the deaths of millions of citizens. The main reasons for this political instability were ideological, bad governance, military coups, lack of enforced law and order, leadership rivalries, ethnicity, regional representation, boundary disputes, corruption and outright power struggles and economic deprivations.

During most of the Cold War period, the West African region became home to some of the world’s deadliest conflicts in the 1990s. In its attempt at resolving these conflicts, The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the regional economic organization, put together an intervention force consisting of the armies of its member states to establish peace in the region. The intervention force known as the ECOWAS cease-fire monitoring and observer group (ECOMOG) was authorized on August 25, 1990, to intervene militarily in Liberia to put a
stop to the chaotic situation and mass murder that engulfed that state. ECOMOG forces also intervened in the crises in Sierra Leone, where the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), with support from the special forces of President Charles Taylor’s National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) was attempting to overthrow the government of President Joseph Momoh (Draman and Carmen, 2001). ECOMOG forces not only succeeded in restoring peace in these countries, but also established democracy with elections that restored power to the civilian administration.

1.1 Statement of the Problem.

Conflicts are an intrinsic part of human society and as such, they are unavoidable. As people interact, they often have differing ideologies. More often than not, these differences in opinion leads to conflict situations which, if not well managed, can give rise to violent eruptions that could result in serious disputes. The West African sub-region as an entity has been challenged with both internal and external problems. Internally, the people of West Africa are faced with economic, social, and political deprivations due to the unequal allocation of scarce resources. This situation created tensions among the citizens who felt marginalized by their government. The resulting effect is an upsurge of conflicts in most of the states of the region. Externally, West African states have had boundary issues that have often resulted in serious disputes. The creation of regional organizations by the Organization of African Unity (OAU), now known as the African Union (AU), was an effort made to stem the tide of these conflicts. One of such regional organizations is the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), whose mandate, among other things, is to find the means of restoring peace and stability to the region and to bring harmony to its people. This thesis examines some of the challenges that ECOWAS encountered in its bid to restore peace to the warring nations.
1.2 Research Questions

The questions that this study will address are: What is the origin of conflicts in the region and why have the conflicts remained prevalent? Why did it take the regional and the continental leaders more than a decade to be able to put an end to the conflicts? What can be done to ensure that these conflicts do not reoccur? The questions raised in this thesis are intended to serve as guides to the numerous issues that this study addresses. The study focuses on analytic and descriptive approaches to conflict resolution in the ECOWAS region, and also examines the factors responsible for the conflicts.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study is to provide a clearer picture of some of the challenges faced by the regional leaders who have made efforts to end the conflicts between the combatant nations. The study also aims to examine the impact of the conflict on the region and to identify the factors that are essential to peaceful coexistence among the varying groups within the region.

Additionally, the study will suggest ways that the African Union, the ECOWAS, and indeed the United Nations can partner to not only end political crises in Africa and other parts of the world, but also to prevent future reoccurrence of the conflicts. It is hoped that this research will encourage additional analyses into issues of conflict resolution and peace into the ECOWAS region.

1.4 The Significance of the Study.

The research is significant because it will bring to the foreground the activities of regional organizations such as ECOWAS and of course, that of the African Union, whose mandate the regional organizations aim to execute. The study is also significant because it brings the
ECOWAS region into the limelight so that its people both at home and in the diaspora will appreciate the efforts made by the regional organization toward peaceful resolution and economic development, and give them the opportunity to participate in the developmental efforts of the region in particular and that of the continent in general.

1.5 The Scope of the study

This study will discuss the early colonial era of the West African subcontinent and how it achieved independence from colonial rule. It will discuss the rise of pan Africanism, with emphasis on African unity, and discuss the aims and objectives of establishing the largest pan African organization, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), and why it was later transformed into the African Union (AU). However, the study will focus on the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and its efforts at economic integration through regional cooperation, and its conflicts intervention activities among the warring countries of the region.

The main body of the thesis will contain an analysis of the causes of the conflicts in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Guinea Bissau and Cote d’Ivoire. It will also discuss the impact of the causes and identify the challenges that the ECOWAS encountered while executing its mandate of restoring regional peace. In order to realize these grand objectives, this paper assumes that principles of democratic governance, rule of law and political stability would prevail in the Sub region (Sarki, n.d).

1.6 Limitations of the study
Although the writer is from Nigeria, West Africa, and is familiar with the culture and geography of the people, it would have been helpful if the writer had been able to conduct field research in the conflict-ridden areas. Moreover, formal interviews with the leaders of the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) at their respective headquarters would have provided more analytical insights to the study. Views from the various sources will be analyzed and held in high regard.

1.7 Research Methodology

This study adopted the following methods of research:

a. Source of Data: The study relies mainly on secondary data which are sourced from published and un-published materials such as: books, journals, and newspapers. The data are collected from existing documentation on the subject matter from libraries, lecture notes, Internet research, and discussions and informal interviews with some respondents on the subject matter.

b. Method of Data Analysis: the data gathered are analyzed through the qualitative method through progressive thinking and consistent presentation of prevailing views of various contributors on the subject with the aim of assuming a realistic position. In this research work, the author consulted and analyzed literature from published books in the library and various documentations from the official websites of the African Union and ECOWAS. A number of the sources consulted explained the origin and factors responsible for conflicts in the ECOWAS region. Some of these conflicts were said to have stemmed from both internal and external factors. The internal factors responsible for the conflicts include corruption, dictatorship, and lack of democratization. The external factors, however, comprise the numerous cases of border disputes, which were traced back to the period of colonial rule. During the colonial period, the
rulers carved out territories that merged different ethnic groups together. A situation that was not resolved before independence was granted. When indigenous leaders took over the leadership of these countries, they were unable to resolve the issues. The birth of Pan-Africanism, however, attempted to solve the question of boundary disputes through its call for the unity of the African people. The Pan-Africanists knew that any attempt to shift back these boundaries would result in more chaotic situations. They thus called on the Africans to embrace a united African continental government that will serve as the antidote to the boundary issues. Eliminate ethnic bias and create a basis for unity and freedom. This effort resulted in the creation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which was later renamed the African Union (AU).

The creation of regional organizations within the continent was to further supplement the effort of the largest pan-African organization (AU), especially in dealing with issues of economic, social and political integration of each region. Lately, these regional organizations have taken up the responsibility of dealing with security issues such as conflict resolutions and peace building in the various sub regions. This thesis focuses on the ECOWAS region where some of the deadliest conflicts on the continent took place. The role of the ECOWAS peacekeeping forces known as the ECOMOG, as well as diplomatic efforts in conflict resolution are the principal areas of analysis in this study.

1.8 The Itinerary

This thesis is divided into five chapters. The first chapter consists of the background of the study. This includes: an introduction, the statement of the problem, research question, objectives, significance, scope and the limitations of the study. The chapter concludes with the research methodology where the various methods used in sourcing information for this study are indicated, and the itinerary.
Chapter two comprises the historical background of West African sub region. It further discusses the rise of Pan-Africanism, an ideology that seeks to promote the unity of the African people through political integration of the African continent. Pan-Africanism was initiated because Africans and people of African descent faced discrimination and exploitation of different kinds both at home and abroad. The chapter will conclude with the establishment of ECOWAS. Reference will be made to its original mandate—the socio-economic and political integration of the West African States—with a focus on ECOWAS efforts at developing policies aimed at the convergence of the various economic and political sectors of the region in order to boost economic development and the well being of its people. This will be followed by an analysis of ECOWAS’ secondary mandate of maintenance of peace and security in the sub-region.

Chapter three will analyze the nature and goals of conflict, types of conflicts, the factors responsible for conflict in ECOWAS region, and the different strategies or methods for resolving them. Furthermore, it will trace the factors that led to the civil wars in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau, Cote d’Ivoire, and Guinea Conakry and the efforts made by ECOWAS to mediate the wars.

Chapter four will analyze the concepts of humanitarian intervention and the role played by the ECOWAS forces and the United Nations peacekeeping forces including other independent organizations and church societies during the conflicts. This chapter will also evaluate the successes and failures of the Humanitarian Intervention. The study will also analyze the challenges of humanitarian intervention and conclude with a summary, conclusion and recommendations.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 An Overview of West Africa

West Africa is bounded in the west and south by the Atlantic Ocean, the Sahara desert on the north, and on the east by the eastern borders of present day Nigeria (McDonald, 2005). The first humans, who settled in the region in 12,000 BCE, had migrated from the eastern part of Africa because they needed to enlarge the area in which they were hunting and gathering. However, cattle ranchers from Northern Africa who desired more grazing area joined them almost immediately. At that time what is now the Sahara desert was essentially a plain full of vegetation that was good for grazing cattle (Atlas, 2009-2013).

The ancestors of modern West Africa first made contact with Mediterranean peoples in 400 BCE, and traded with them by exchanging gold, cotton cloth, metal ornaments, and leather merchandise with copper, horses, salt, textiles, and beads across the trans-Saharan trade routes. Later, ivory, slaves, and kola nuts were added to the trade. And as the economy of the region increased, these early settlers developed more centralized states, with the founding of Ghana Empire in the 8th century. It was succeeded by Mali Empire, which developed trading routes that linked with the rest of Africa. Mali Empire collapsed in the late 11th century and was succeeded by Songhai Empire whose founders took over the trade routes that had been developed by their predecessors. Subsequently, many foreign invaders came to the region, a development that led to the collapse of the Songhai Empire and the ensuing creation of smaller states (Atlas, 2009-2013). West African slave trade began in the 15th century when Portuguese traders invaded the region and established a trading post at Arguin Island; off the coast of present-day Senegal. The Portuguese traders subsequently took hundreds of Africans as slaves back to their countries and later to the Americas slaves through Trans-Atlantic routes. Trans-Atlantic slave trade began in
earnest with the arrival of Christopher Columbus to the Americas and the subsequent demand for cheap colonial labor. The Spanish Crown legalized slave trade in 1510, followed by the English in 1562. This development negatively affected the development of the local inhabitants and retarded its economy. The expansion of the European modern world economic system (capitalism) also destroyed local cultures and political systems in West Africa. The European powers continued to rule West Africa through colonialism until the end of the 1950s. In both Africa and the Americas, Africans were used as producers of raw materials for the benefit of the European colonialists during the industrial revolution. The new global economic system significantly contributed to the exploitation and denial of African peoples’ fundamental human rights. Global discrimination against African peoples intensified. This neo-capitalist system led to the germination of the ideas of pan-Africanism, which culminated in the formation of movements that struggled for decolonization.

Immediately after the Second World War, massive protests against European rule began all over West Africa, especially with the initiation of Kwame Nkrumah’s clamor for self-determination in Ghana. With the European economy adversely decimated by the war, the imperialists did not have the means to continue running the colonies. Independence was granted almost immediately to the sub-Saharan Africa beginning with Ghana in 1957. “After a decade of protests, riots and clashes, French West Africa voted for autonomy in a 1958 referendum… and in 1973, Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde who initiated a bi-national government, proclaimed their freedom from Portugal following the 1974 Carnation Revolution, and were internationally recognized” (Atlas, 2009-2013).

2.1 The Emergence of Pan-Africanism
Pan-Africanism as an ideology emerged as a result of racial discrimination faced by Africans in both the new world and in Africa. Africans and people of African descent faced rejection wherever they dwelled. This sense of rejection brought Africans both on the continent and diaspora together through the idea of pan-Africanism — the unity of all African people the world over. Pan-Africanism as an ideology was originally conceived by Henry Sylvester-Williams. It is a movement that encourages the global unification of Africans. The ideology is based on the belief that unity is vital to economic, social, and political integration of the African people. It objectifies the unity and uplifting of people of African descent wherever they were domiciled (Janari et al., 2006). Pan-Africanism fundamentally believes that people of African origin do not just share a common past, but also a common fate. This ideology stresses the fact that the fate of all African peoples and countries are interwoven. Hence, it lays emphasis on mutual self-sufficiency (Minkah, 2011). Pan-Africanism generally promotes socialist principles and tends to oppose external political and economic involvement on the continent. While commenting on the need for an African socialism, one of the Pan-Africanists, George Padmore quoted in Koffi (1976), said that: “just as various schools of European socialism aspire to bring about on earth the good life… we must evolve our own form of African socialism, suited to our own conditions and historical background”. This means that Africans must not follow blindly the kind of socialism practiced by either the former Soviet Union or that of China; but Africa must evolve its own form of socialism that is based on moral principles that traces its origins from ancient times, and promotes values that are the products of the African civilization as it struggles against slavery, racism, colonialism, and neo-colonialism (Adi 2007 ).

Pan-Africanism exists as both legislative and grassroots objectives. Its advocates include Kwame Nkrumah, Muammar Gaddafi, Marcus Garvey, Malcolm X, W. E. B. Du Bois, and
others in the Diaspora (Maguire, 2009). As a legislative objective, the principles of Pan-Africanism emphasize unity, which will enable self-reliance, and allow the continent’s potential to independently provide fulfillment for its people. Moreover, an all-African coalition is an important factor that will universally empower African people. The achievement of this objective would strengthen the African government, which will in turn compel the reallocation of continental resources. It will also release a stronger mental dynamism and political assertion that would reconfigure socio-political control globally (Agyemang, 1998). When the African nations unite, they will have the economic, political, and social power to act and compete on the global stage like their counterparts in the European Union and the United States of America (Agyemang, 1998).

As a grassroots objective, several pan-Africanists organizations were formed to fight against discrimination wherever Africans were suppressed. For instance, Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) founded in Jamaica in August, 1914, sought to promote Pan-Africanism and black pride through his vision of economic independence of the black race. The single largest black organization ever, boasted of over six million followers around the world (Lanset, 1990). Others include African Communities League (ACL) and Trans-Africa and the International People's Democratic Uhuru Movement (TIPDUM).

Modern Pan-Africanism was established at the beginning of the twentieth-century. Henry Sylvester Williams organized the First Pan-African Conference in London in 1900 (PADEAP n.d). In the United States, the term is closely associated with “Afro-centrism,” which emerged during the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s to 1970s (Walters, 1987). Pan-Africanism is an attempt to return to a traditional African civilization. An important idea that runs through most pan-Africanist literature deals with the historical connections that link the
continent and what the Africans stand to benefit as they collaborate to fight imperialism and colonialism.

West African Pan-Africanism dates back to the eighteenth century, a period where most Africans immigrated to Britain through slave trade and subsequently resided there. During the colonial period, some of the people of West Africa were forced to leave their home countries for employment and/or education abroad. These people played pivotal roles in the advancement of politics of resistance to European imperialism while in the Diaspora. The relationship between the growing political consciousness of Africans in the Diaspora and those on the continent was sharpened more through established networks and linkages. There were dialectic transfers of ideas and influences (Adi, 2000). West Africans overseas were influenced by their experiences in Britain, France, Belgium, Canada, United States and contacts with other people of African descent (Adi, 2000).

2.2 The Establishment of the Organization of African Unity and the African Union

African countries developed a rich tradition of collaboration with each other through Pan-Africanism. The cooperation among African people dated back nearly forty years to the formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963. Despite the diversity among the various African nations, relationships between countries became very important. This was mainly because they had had shared experiences that brought a sense of unity and solidarity among them. The most relevant of these shared experiences was colonialism. Colonial oppression and exploitation within the colonies helped to unite the different ethnic groups and religious groups in a nationalist struggle against imperial powers. At the dawn of independence of African countries, the feeling of solidarity carried across national boundaries as people
celebrated freedom. Leaders and citizens of countries that gained their independence early showed great support for the nationalist struggle in countries not yet independent as reflected in the popular sayings of the time; “no African nation is free until all Africans are free” (Appiah, 2013). As the great Pan-Africanist Kwame Nkrumah said in a speech during the independence celebrations in Ghana in 1957: “The independence of Ghana is meaningless unless it is linked up to the total liberation of Africa” (quoted in Appiah, 2013).

Since the last century African leaders both on the continent and in the diaspora began to view the continent as a whole rather than in fragmented pieces. They also began to discuss continent-wide developments as opposed to gradual expansion in specific sections of the continent. This observation was eventually incorporated into the nationalist struggle. The pan-African congress that was held in Manchester in 1945 brought together African nationalist leaders all over the world. The African vision was clearly expressed at the conference: “the achievement of independence from colonial rule throughout the continent” (Bujra n.d.). Moreover, when Africans rule themselves democratically, there will be continental unity through which they will attain a faster economic growth on the continent, and will enable Africa to catch up with the developed countries, and become a force to reckon with within the international system. The Pan-Africanists vision was further made popular at the sub-regional level where nationalist movements rallied people at the grassroots for the struggle against colonial rule. This culminated in the attainment of independence (Bujra n.d.).

As many African countries attained independence, the Pan-Africanist idea of unity became very attractive to all African leaders. They saw Pan-Africanism as the basis for the economic, socio-cultural and political integration of the peoples of African origin. In this respect, Pan-Africanism became a strategy for resolution of conflicts among African people, for nation
building and settlement of disputes among African ethnic groups, states, territorial conflicts, and ideologies. Unfortunately, there arose a conflict of ideologies among the Pan-Africanists themselves as they thought of the kind of African union for the entire African people. The first attempt at unity culminated in the exchange of resident ministers between Guinea and Ghana. The ministers were immediately recognized as members of the governments of Ghana and Guinea (Nkrumah, 1963). Subsequently, other liaisons between the heads of governments of West African states led to the formation of Community of Independent States (CIS) with the intention to totally emancipate the African continent. The members of the community agreed to maintain their own national identity and constitutional structure, and where each member country agreed to stay clear of the internal affairs of the others. The general policy of the community would be founded on the maintenance of diplomatic, economic and cultural relations, on a basis of equality and reciprocity, with all the states of the world. The adoption of this position was compatible with African interests. One of its main objectives would be to help Africans under colonialism to gain their own independence (Nkrumah, 1963). Based on this understanding, Ghana, Guinea, and Mali formulated and adopted a charter where they agreed on a Union called the Union of African States (UAS). The UAS was declared open to every state or federation of African states that accepts its aims and objectives as stated in articles (3) and (4) of its charter (Nkrumah 1963). The charter of the UAS provided for regular conferences between its heads of states and the conference. The conference, which is the supreme executive organ of the UAS, meets once a quarter in Accra, Bamako and Conakry respectively and is presided over by the Head of State of the host country. At these conferences, opinions are exchanged on African and world problems, with a view to strengthen and widen the union (Nkrumah, 1963). According to Nkrumah, “The ultimate goal of a United African State of Africa must be
constantly kept in sight amidst all the perplexities, pressures and cajoleries with which we shall find ourselves confronted with, so that we do not permit ourselves to be distracted or discouraged by the difficulties and pitfalls which undoubtedly lie ahead” (Nkrumah 1963).

Despite this admonition, the realization of the continental organization faced obstacles that initially held back the prospects of the African Union. There were disagreements as to what direction or shape the expected continental union should take. By the early 1960s, there were competing regional and ideological groupings such as, the Brazzaville group, the Casablanca group, the Monrovia group and the Pan-African Freedom Movement of Eastern, Central and Southern Africa. Each group thought its own ideologies were the best for the continent (Organization, 1962).

The Casablanca group which first met in the capital city of Morocco in January, 1961, comprised Algeria, Egypt, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Libya, and Morocco. Ethiopia, Gambia, Liberia, Nigeria, Togo, Tunisia and Sudan were invited but declined. However, the Brazzaville group was not invited to this gathering. The group adopted the African charter of Casablanca, which acknowledged their resolve “to promote the triumph of liberty all over Africa and to achieve its unity” (Walters 1997). The Casablanca group supported the Algerian self-determination and promoted political unity for Africa as a necessary condition for economic cooperation. They envisioned a federal government type of unity where there is a communal mobilization of resources. Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, the champion of the socialist approach to unity for the African people, maintained that for “economic union to be effective, it must be accompanied by political unity” (Okumu 2008). Therefore, both political and economic unities are necessary for the future greatness of the continent, as well as the full development of its resources (Okumu 2008).
In view of the above, the Casablanca group suggested the Union of African States (UAS), as a replicate of the United States of America. Their argument is that the emergence of African states from colonialism does not rule out the disparity in their statuses. Where some of the countries are bigger and stronger, others are smaller and weak. Therefore, if there must be equality among the states where all Africans will speak with one voice irrespective of their differences, then a UAS with a central governing body is the solution.

The Monrovia group (Senegal, Nigeria, Tunisia, Ethiopia, Liberia, Sudan, Togoland, Somalia and Cameroun) believe that unity of the African continent should be gradually achieved through economic cooperation, not political integration. Nkrumah (1963) asserted that the Monrovia group was not ready to give up certain aspects of its sovereignty to a central government that might become too powerful and subject its people to another form of imperialism. In a bid to protect its sovereignty, therefore, the Monrovia group called for the establishment of economic integration through regional groupings.

The Brazzaville group consists of twelve French-speaking countries, which comprise Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroun, Central African Republic, Chad, Togo, Gabon, Madagascar Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Cote D’Ivoire. The group that first met in 1960 was hosted by President Felix Houphouet-Boigny of Cote D’Ivoire. The Twelve francophone countries agreed to remain attached to their former colonial power, France. They, therefore, wanted the French-speaking states to intervene in the Algerian war of independence without parting from France. Guinea, under Sekou Toure, condemned the meeting, and Togo refused to attend the meeting. The same group met again in Brazzaville in December 1960. The Brazzaville group sided with France on the Algerian conflict and opposed communist intrusions in Africa. It also supported the UN policy on Congo Kinshasa. This gave the impression that the Brazzaville group believed
African unity should be approached through economic cooperation and not political integration (Okumu 2008). The twelve francophone countries agreed to sustain the unique relationship they had with their former colonial power. Although their original aims were both economic and political, they agreed to adopt common stands on international issues as well, to promote economic and cultural cooperation, and to maintain a common defense organization. The organization eventually merged with the Brazzaville group to form the Monrovia group (Organization, 1962).

The Pan-African Freedom Movement of East and Central Africa (PAFMECA) was formed at a conference held in Mwanza, Tanganyika, from September 16 to 18th, 1958, for the purpose of coordinating regional activities towards the achievement of independence for territories in East and Central Africa. The conference, which was attended by representatives of political parties from Kenya, Nyasaland, Tanganyika, Uganda and Zanzibar, considered a number of issues such as the position of those present towards the non-African minorities in Kenya, Tanganyika and Uganda, and that of the central African federation (Nyasaland, Northern Rhodesia and Southern Rhodesia). In addition, they considered methods for achieving coordinated action among the nationalist movements in east and central Africa and for pooling resources in a concerted drive against imperialism. Finally, they discussed the development of a fundamental philosophic creed for the emergent African nations. These discussions resulted in the institution of the freedom fund for East Africa. They also appointed a caretaker committee, with Mr. Francis, J. Khamisi of Kenya as the chairman. He was expected to coordinate nationalist efforts and programs of political organizations in the region. The conference also adopted a freedom charter, which declared liberty to be the birthright of all African peoples. The charter denounced imperialism and all other allied matters. These were considered as enemies of
African freedom (Organization, 1962). Although these different groups were divided along the lines of ideology, they all agreed on the issue of continental unity.

Prior to the inauguration of OAU in 1963, the African heads of governments met in Addis Ababa, to debate on the pan-African vision. This was to be integrated into its charter. The arguments were based on the crucial issue of unity. Nkrumah of Ghana and the Casablanca group promoted the immediate political and economic union on the continent. But Julius Nyerere of Tanzania and the Monrovia group supported the idea that independent states should first of all be consolidated through regional economic cooperation. The Monrovia group won the debate, and the house established the Organization of African Unity (OAU). The treaty establishing the OAU was ratified by 31 independent African countries in May, 1963, at a meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Since then, nation building and economic development at national levels were given priority throughout the continent (Bujra, n.d.). Nevertheless the goal of continental unity continued to be a powerful force in the OAU.

Despite some measures of successes from OAU’s regional based projects, there were dissatisfactions with the running of the institution (Students 2013). These dissatisfactions arose from what Jeng (2012), identified as “Limitations and failures of the OAU.” Jeng described these limitations as emanating from “structural and normative weaknesses in confronting armed conflicts.” By structural weaknesses, he meant the decision-making processes which the OAU charter requires before an action could be taken. By normative weaknesses, he refers to the basic principles of sovereignty, non-interference, territorial integrity and “African solutions to African problems” where he argues that strict adherence to these implies that conditions of conflicts, violence and rights abuse in Africa are mostly unattended to by OAU (Jeng 2012). In the same way, Okoth, (2008) observed that historical weaknesses also form part of the limitations of
OAU. These arise due to the fact that lessons were not learnt from past experiences. According to Okoth, “OAU had been more active in dealing with boundary disputes and as such, had no experience in tackling internal conflicts”. He cited an instance where a large peacekeeping troop was sent into Chad in 1981 to peacefully resolve an ongoing civil war but did little to achieve a peaceful solution to the war. This is because the organization’s charter emphasizes the settling of border disputes rather than resolving internal conflicts (Okoth 2008).

Some African nationals began to query the efficiency of OAU, especially after South Africa’s independence in 1994. Although it succeeded in its efforts towards political emancipation of all African colonies, the OAU, however, was not as successful in dealing with the problems of post-independent Africa. For instance, its strong commitment to the national sovereignty of each country meant that the OAU could not get involved in the civil wars that overwhelmed some African countries. In the same way, the OAU could not intervene in member countries where civilian governments were ousted in military coups. Moreover, the OAU’s economic commission did not have the wherewithal to facilitate collaboration in addressing Africa's economic problems. Similarly, the OAU did not have an African Court of Justice that could help resolve legal disagreements between member states.

Based on these realities, African citizens began to demand that their leaders seriously consider reforming the OAU to make it more effective in tackling Africa's economic, political and social issues, by promoting greater cooperation and unity among the independent nation-states. Some recommended that the OAU should be disbanded and replaced by an organization that was comparable with the European Union, which by the 1990s had demonstrated its effectiveness in facilitating cooperation and unity in Europe (Students 2013).
And so, in the 2001 at the OAU summit meeting in Libya, African leaders devoted themselves to developing an African Union to replace the OAU. The African Union they envisaged would have some similarities with the European Union, but it would mirror the needs and realities of Africa. So, in a summit meeting of the heads of African government in Durban South Africa, the AU charter was officially ratified by the Heads of Governments of the 54 African countries, to establish the AU and at the same time, OAU was disbanded (Students 2013). Although the African Union was expected to continue with the legacy of its parent organization, the objectives set out in its Constitutive Acts, acknowledged the multifaceted nature of conflicts within the African regions, especially in the area of peace and security. The Chatter of the African Union placed more prominence in the promotion of peace, security and stability in Africa (Appiah, 2013).

The African Union differs from the OAU in a number of ways. First of all, a Pan-African parliament with representatives from each member country was established so that attention could be given to a greater diversity of voices. African Court of Justice was created so that disputes between nations can be heard in a neutral venue. This will enable the AU to hold those culpable of gross human-rights abuses accountable for their actions. The African Central Bank, the African Monetary Fund, and African Investment Bank were also established to provide strong institutional support for economic cooperation and coordination throughout the continent. Those who supported the AU pointed out that in addition to the structural distinction from the OAU the charter of the African Union obligates the Union to be more actively occupied with the affairs of member states than was allowed by the OAU charter. Given the OAU’s strong commitment to the complete sovereignty of each state, the OAU was not allowed to interfere in the domestic affairs of member states. Consequently, since its existence, the OAU never directly
intervened to stop a civil war or human rights violations, not even in Rwandan genocide of 1994, where more than 500,000 people were killed within few months (Students 2013). The AU Charter explicitly commits the African Union to get involved in civil wars within member states and where there are clear signs of human rights abuse. Moreover, the AU promises to uphold democracy and good governance in its member states. This is a great difference from the Article III (2) and (3) of the OAU charter that clearly prohibited the organization (or any of its member) from intervening or interfering in the internal political affairs of any member country (OAU 1963).

An important arm of the African Union that is responsible for conflict resolution is the Peace and Security Council (PSC). This was instituted by the African Union in May, 2004. This became necessary due to the prevalence of conflicts and political turbulences as well as the human disasters that burdened the African continent. The PSC has fifty elected members charged with the responsibility of recommending the deployment of the African Union’s peacekeeping forces to conflict areas and also to negotiate peace treaties. It is also expected to urge the African Union to intervene militarily, where there are cases of ethnic cleansing or gross human rights abuse. The council is expected to be funded by the 53 member countries of the African Union as well as other donors; an important aspect that requires serious attention. This is because there were instances where peacekeeping missions are not adequately executed because of lack of funding. An example of this is the case of Burundi in 2003, where the implementation of the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) program initiated by the AU failed to succeed due to the lack of funding (Okoth 2008).

2.3 Regional Integration in West Africa
West African countries have had a fairly long history of repeated attempts to link themselves together through several comprehensive forms of regional integration and cooperation schemes. These attempts in almost all cases have reflected their wish to deal with the apparent growth retarding problems thought to be associated with a number of key elements of the structure of the African countries (Mubarik 2013). Traditionally, West African people earned their living from the land, which is why agriculture remains the bedrock of all other indigenous economic activities in the region. Other occupations such as trade and crafts manufacture were partially undertaken, while other forms of industrious businesses were often made possible by the financial surplus from agriculture. The nature of the economic activities in West Africa, however, drastically changed with the arrival of Europeans on the west coast of Africa between the 17th and 18th centuries, and the change of the local servitude into a largely profitable transnational venture. This development greatly slowed down socio-economic progress throughout the region for centuries.

The attainment of independence in the West African region was the beginning of the move towards nation building, and towards a stronger, independent economy which had been battered by both slave trade and colonialism. West African states began to look for ways through which they could attain sustainable economic development and self reliance. The founding fathers of the region felt that this could be achieved through regional economic integration, a practical approach through which the dilemma of sub-regional economic development could be tackled. Regional integration among the countries was therefore supposed to reinforce the economies of its members and correct its imbalances in the international market (Mubarik 2013).
Regional based intervention in African conflicts became necessary when the OAU Commission of Mediation, Conciliation and Arbitration (set up to settle disputes between African countries) could not handle the enormity of the rising conflicts within African countries (Appiah, 2013). Ad hoc committees of wise men were initially set up to take over specific security challenges from the commission. The formation of the Regional based Economic Communities (RECs) by OAU was a more permanent solution to this problem. The RECs were to help in managing security on the continent through a decentralized system. This is based on the understanding that the RECs understand the cultural practices of their communities as well as the geographical terrain better than external parties, so they are in a better position to manage peace and security challenges within their domain (Appiah, 2013). The RECs were founded under independent regional pacts. These include: Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), and Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), East African Community (EAC), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD), and Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the ECOWAS (Appiah, 2013).

The formation of regional blocs and groupings has progressively become a prominent feature of world politics since the end of the Second World War. Today, there is no region of the world that is not encompassed by one or more regional alliances. Since the United Nations was formed in 1945, it recognized the role of regional organizations and acknowledged them as efficient mechanisms of dealing with regional conflicts and the maintenance of international peace and security. However, regional groupings were considered as supplementary to the central role of the United Nations in this regard. This is because the United Nations remains the ultimate institution of global governance (McCormick, 1999).
2.3.1 The Processes of Regional Integration

Regional integration generally involves a complex web of cooperation between countries within a given geographical area to harmonize policies in such sectors as trade investments, infrastructure, monetary and fiscal policies of member states (Mubarik 2013). Regional integration is defined as “a process by which two or more nation-states agree to co-operate and work closely together to achieve peace, stability and wealth.” (Mubarik 2013) It is a process that involves one or more written agreements that describe the areas of cooperation in details, as well as some coordinating bodies representing the countries concerned. More often than not, the cooperation starts with economic integration, which is followed by political integration. As the economies of the states become completely integrated into a single market, the need for common social policy in areas of education, health care, unemployment benefits and pensions, and common political institutions arises. Political integration is the culmination of the cooperation among integrating countries; when they share the same foreign policies and merge their armies. In effect, they form a new country (McCormick 1999). The single market is the point at which the economies of the co-operating states become so integrated through the removal of all barriers to enable the free movements of labor, goods and capital from one part of the region to another. The integrating states go on to set a Common External Tariff (CET) on goods from other countries. This process is referred to as Customs Union (CU). This is followed by the adoption of a common currency regulated by a common monetary policy set by a single central bank (McCormick 1999).

2.4 The Establishment of ECOWAS
Early efforts at coordinating regional cooperation in West Africa began with the idea of ECOWAS, which was initiated by President William Tubman of Liberia as far back as 1964. The idea was followed by a conference on industrial harmonization held in Lagos, Nigeria and the Niamey conference of 1966, on economic cooperation. Similarly, in 1967 another conference was held in Accra, Ghana, where a tentative agreement on the Articles of Association of a proposed economic community in West Africa was signed. An interim council of ministers mandated to prepare a draft treaty for the proposed community recommended that the inaugural meeting of the proposed community be held on the level of heads of states and government. Though the heads of states and governments actually met in Monrovia in 1968 and signed the protocol for a regional group, neither the draft treaty nor the protocol on customs union submitted by the interim council was adopted. This process was revived in 1972 by the heads of states of Nigeria and Togo, who mandated their officials to streamline a framework for community cooperation. It was not until July 28th, 1975 that a Lagos Treaty signed by the fifteen West African Heads of states (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde Cote d’Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo) confirmed ECOWAS as a regional institutional framework. ECOWAS was mandated to coordinate and promote trade and other economic cooperation and sustainable development activities throughout the sub-region so as to improve the standards of living of its members. It aims to achieve this through the gradual elimination of custom duties and tariffs on imports and exports of goods; abolish quantitative and administrative restrictions on trade; establish a common custom tariff and a common commercial policy; and eliminate all barriers inhibiting the free movements of persons, goods, and capital flows between members.
The challenges of economic development in the underdeveloped and highly unstable region of ECOWAS seemed enormous so much so that the possibility of successfully realizing such ideals became obscure with the post-cold war period of the 1990s. This period especially posed a threat to the regional economic project when civil wars erupted in Liberia and Sierra Leone, both located on the Mano River Union (MARIUN) area of the region. This threat to regional security forced ECOWAS to come up with an alternative project that involved defense and maintenance of peace and security. Consequently, ECOWAS evolved into an organization that is capable of intervening diplomatically and militarily in cases of serious threats to its environment (Turack 2009). Although its primary function was the promotion of economic integration among its members, ECOWAS extended its operations to deploy military forces into Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea Bissau in 1990, 1997, and 1998, respectively, and then to Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia in 2003. These interventions opened up new possibilities for safeguarding international peace and security in Africa (Adeyemi 2003).

2.4.1 Economic Integration in ECOWAS

The ECOWAS initiative was motivated to some extent by the European Union’s scheme of bringing its nations together under a common institutional umbrella. The goal of the organization is to build a large commercial block that will boost free trade within its region. Its primary objective however, is to create a positive environment for trade to develop within the region and to ensure that private ventures are encouraged and maintained (Briney 2010). ECOWAS hopes to achieve these same goals through regional integration. By attracting foreign investors, it hopes to develop projects throughout the region as a sustainable endeavor. In its quest to achieve economic integration, ECOWAS recognized the development and expansion of
its regional market as the center piece of its comprehensive development scheme. As such, ECOWAS decided that economic integration among its member states can only be achieved through liberalization of national economies. The organization therefore decided to work hard in order to improve its investment climate by creating a favorable business environment, where its private sector can develop and become a powerful engine of the regional economy. This is clearly stated in the preamble of Chapter two, Articles 3 of ECOWAS Revised Treaty (ECOWAS 1993).

ECOWAS first set out to form Free Trade Areas (FTAs) by undertaking a progressive removal of all custom duties and other charges of similar effects on imports and exports and all quantitative restrictions and other administrative impediments on trade between the member states within the region (ECOWAS 1993). Its plan was to gradually phase out duties on industrial products from community projects over a period of 6-10 years at 10-16.6% annual rates of reduction, depending on the classification of member states level of development, location, and importance of custom revenue (Jonathan Reuben 2013). Based on the preamble of Chapter 8, Articles 35, 36, 37 and 38 of the ECOWAS revised Treaty, “the process of eliminating tariffs and other obstructions to trade among members, and the establishment of a common external tariff structure on non-members, is to proceed gradually and be completed over a transitional period of 15 years from 1979” (ECOWAS 1993).

The first two years of the implementation of ECOWAS trade liberalization policy sought to maintain existing custom tariffs on goods within member states, and then gradually eliminate them over a period of 8 years. All quotas and other quantitative restrictions of similar effect are to be eliminated within 10 years, while differences in external tariffs between member states are to be harmonized in the remaining five years (ECOWAS 1993).
Moreover, ECOWAS envisaged a gradual roll-over to a customs union that will eventually metamorphose into a common market, with the eventual elimination of all obstacles to free mobility of factors of production between them, while at the same time maintaining CET structure in their trade with countries outside the union. ECOWAS protocol on free movement was envisioned in 1979 “as an instrument to enable free movement of its citizens within the region.” (ECOWAS, 2011a:2) This protocol was projected as an integral part of institutionalizing a single regional socio-economic space where all citizens can benefit from opportunities in member states, including the utilization of arable land by indigenous agriculturists, access to coastal areas by landlocked member states, and unlimited access to natural resources by member states (Adeniran 2012).

Finally, in the preamble of Chapter 9, Articles 54 of ECOWAS Revised Treaty, the organization sought to cap its efforts by attaining a complete economic union through the harmonization of agricultural, industrial, transport and communication, energy and infrastructural developments as well as common economic and monetary policies between member states (ECOWAS 1993).

But then, without an agreed CET in the region or a functioning CU, countries applied their own tariff schedules. For instance, Ghana and Nigeria have largely aligned their tariff schedules to what largely looks like CET. The simple average of Ghana’s external tariff is 12.7 percent, while that of Nigeria is 11.9 percent. However, Nigeria levies an additional duty of up to 100 percent on 245 lines, increasing the average tariff to 13.0 percent. Nigeria also applies import ban on roughly 10 percent of tariff lines at the 6-digit level and is now considering additional duties on some products. Conformity to product standards remains a problem and there have been reports of standards being used to conceal protectionist measures (Aidoo 2012).
Moreover, since the inception of the Commission, free movement of persons and goods within the sub-region has not been fully realized. Incompatibilities in immigration and custom policies, monetary zones, and official languages among member states, have impeded productive migration and integration within the sub-region (Adeniran 2012).

2.4.2 ECOWAS’ Macroeconomic Policies, Institutions and Monetary Union

ECOWAS acknowledges the urgency of a complete and effective convergence program for the national economies of member states in order to stimulate the adaptation of sound fiscal and monetary discipline required to put the region on the course of sustainable economic growth and development. In order to accelerate the development of intra-regional trade, creation of a workable monetary union and strengthening national economies, ECOWAS developed a program of macro-economic policy convergence criteria based on consumer price stability (single digit deflation), sustainability of fiscal deficit (5% of GDP), limiting of deficit financing by central banks (cap of 10%) and gross official exchange reserves (at least three months of import cover) (Anadi 2005). And in order to facilitate the realization of the convergence criteria, a monetary zone for the English speaking member states was created, with the aim of merging it with UEMOA in the future. The achievement of this great feat has been slow with almost no realistic steps taken towards the transfer of financial independence to a regional transnational bank for greater macroeconomic integration (Anadi 2005).

Although the organization of macroeconomic policies has remained largely under the control of the individual states, ECOWAS has endeavored to promote macroeconomic policy convergence in the face of persistent economic interferences resulting from conflicting monetary policies in member states and continual balance of payments problem.
ECOWAS also established institutions necessary for effective management of the day to day activities of the community and also for increasing trade flows among its member states. The two main institutions that are responsible for the implementation of policies are the Secretariat and the Fund for Cooperation, Compensation, and Development.

The Secretariat which was renamed the ECOWAS Commission sets out to achieve the objectives of the organization, which is to improve the living standards of the community, ensure economic development, and build an atmosphere that is favorable for its growth and integration (Bocar n.d.).

The fund for cooperation, compensation and development (FCCD) was established as the financial resources for the implementation of the community’s projects and to supervise payments of compensation to member states that might have incurred losses in income while implementing trade liberalization schemes (TLS). In 2001, the Fund was later renamed ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID). EBID (the financial arm of ECOWAS) was established to promote the private sector and other public sector developments. Its main objective is “to contribute towards the economic development of West Africa through the financing of ECOWAS projects and programs; the most prominent of which are programs relating to transport, energy, telecommunications, industry, poverty alleviation, the environment, and natural resources. The operational activities of EBID are planned with the intent to lay the foundations for sustainable development of member states through the funding of regional and national projects for both public and private sectors” (ECOWAS n.d.).

Since its establishment, EBID has embarked on the developments of good road networks, reliable communication networks, well organized transport system and strong financial institutions with the hope that these will enhance trade between member states. Jonathan Reuben
(2013) reported that two major road constructions are currently at various stages of completion: the 4,767 km trans-coastal highway to link seven countries, and the 4,633 km trans-Saharan highway. It is hoped that these roads will open up some of the member states. A telecommunication project of the community being designed is to aid the growth of intra-ECOWAS trade (Jonathan Reuben 2013).

Despite these efforts, trade within ECOWAS region has remained insignificant. There is no apparent change over the years. Various reasons have been given for the dwindling nature of trade within the region. Some analysts have argued that ECOWAS countries with limited or no potential natural resources required for intra-regional trade are responsible for the poor nature of trade in the region. Others however, claimed that trade is weak in the region because trade barriers have not been completely eliminated among member states (Jonathan Reuben 2013). Meanwhile, some scholars have argued that import substitution policies that were implemented in the past, income restrictions and the alteration of the system of distribution of benefits and compensations; are the main reasons why the development of trade within the community is slow (Collier 1993).

The independent states of the region had hoped that the success of ECOWAS will significantly ameliorate their seemingly intractable socio-economic and political problems of underdevelopment, poverty, and external dependency. Yet more than decades after its formation, there is hardly any meaningful impact in the region. In order for the region to benefit from the current global trade dynamics therefore, ECOWAS needs to develop a more favorable macro- and micro-economic frameworks (Collier 1993).
CHAPTER 3: CONFLICTS AND CONFLICT RESOLUTIONS IN ECOWAS

3.0 Introduction

Most ECOWAS countries expected that the attainment of their independence would usher in a period of peace and rapid economic development. However, this expectation has been replaced by what Olusegun Obasanjo, the former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, described as “the culture of rising frustrations” (Obasanjo, 1999). The failure to meet regional expectations has contributed to political instability, which is considered to be ‘the theatre for more endemic deadly conflicts than any other region of the world’ (Ibid). Obasanjo (1999) concluded that “there is no sub-region in Africa that is invulnerable from conflicts and large-scale violence.” ECOWAS, a region with an enormous potential is now riddled with regular fluctuations from violence and political conflicts to disasters, underdevelopment and impoverishment. Indeed, “Without peace, development is not possible,” in the same way, “Without development, peace is not durable” (Kutesa 2009). This is why the leaders of ECOWAS made spirited efforts in order to achieve peace and development. In this chapter, we will discuss the various theories of conflict resolution and examine the origins and nature of conflicts in some ECOWAS countries. We will also analyze the roles played by the regional leaders in eliminating these conflicts.
3.1 Nature and Goals of Conflicts

Conflict has been a part of mankind from the beginnings of time. This is because, each individual is unique and this uniqueness makes us perceive ourselves differently from others. The differences in perception often lead to misunderstandings that result in conflicts. The degree to which conflict affects human beings is determined by their competence to resolve it. Conflict has been defined as “a disagreement through which the parties involved perceive a threat to their needs, interests or concerns.” According to Ross Stagner (1967) “conflict is a situation in which two or more human beings desire goals, which they perceive as being obtainable by one or the other, but not both.” This means that most conflicts arise as a result of the desire to control certain situations where perceived threats would otherwise not permit. It is, therefore, expedient for the parties involved to find common grounds under which they could resolve the problem. Conflict resolution therefore, consists of all actions taken to ensure that peace is not just sustained but that a reoccurrence of the conflict is prevented. This can be achieved through certain activities that include rebuilding of government through electoral activities, rebuilding of infrastructure, rehabilitation of displaced persons and the establishment of mechanism for conflict prevention (Umaru, 2003).

A proper understanding of the nature and goals of conflict is a fundamental requirement for developing greater ability and the appropriate strategy of managing or resolving conflict.

Many conflict situations involve conditions of values or philosophy that place premium on possessing the same resources or positions. It is characterized by disagreements over the distribution of some scarce resources such as solid minerals or gaining political power, which the parties all attach great importance to. Other sources of irreconcilable differences may arise in more fundamental situations where the parties possess completely different cultural beliefs or
values about ways to achieve desirable futures and social structures. Philosophically, the parties may fail to share the same perspectives of the situation and work in other ways that have no shared values. This leads to the setting of goals in order to outdo each other. Goals, therefore, indicate the fundamental sources of particular types of conflicts. Where rivals hold different views while trying to achieve similar goals, they tend to focus more on the conflicting views because each is conscious of their goals.

There are different types of goals that result in conflict. These range from self-determination, religious control, and cultural domination to resource control. Conflicts over resource control exist in settings where resources such as oil and gas or solid minerals are found. Over the years, natural resources have been shown to play major roles in the conflicts that have afflicted most African states. These have motivated and fueled armed conflicts. The revenues realized from the exploitation of the resources are used to sustain armies, and enrich the individuals involved in the exploitation. In some instances, this revenue is used to build political alliances. The outcome of this is often a hindrance to peaceful coexistence, as the leaders involved in this exploitation of resources are often not willing to surrender its control. Even when fragile peace is established, these leaders often hold unto the control of the resources as well as the revenues. Thus a handful of elites benefit from the natural resources at the expense of the entire nation (Nations 2006).

Another form of conflict is one that occurs as a result of the need to control the political system of a country, either through election or through revolutionary war. In this case, coups and counter coups feature prominently as one leader strives to depose another in order to gain access to political control. Electoral malpractices such as electoral frauds are also instances where a political candidate will go to great lengths to manipulate the results of an election to his
or her favor. These were some of the issues that resulted in armed conflicts in the Mano River Basin – Liberia, Sierra Leone, Cote D’Ivoire, Guinea, and Guinea-Bissau – of the ECOWAS region. In both cases, one party wins while the other loses.

3.2 Causes and Types of Conflicts

Since conflict is an essential part of the human reality, the nature of conflicts changes just as human attitudes, values, and behaviors change over time. As a result, social, political, and economic issues become dangerous grounds for conflicts to thrive. According to Osita Eze (1984) “socioeconomic privileges afford the material basis for the enjoyment of political and civil rights.” In the same way, we can say that civil and political rights can also influence its direction of change. Therefore, where people are deprived of these basic rights either through some form of injustice or unequal allocation of available resources or national wealth by governments, then forceful resistance can be the ultimate outcome. Some examples of basic rights include “the right to education, social security, and basic societal facilities as well as employment” (UN 1994). People who are the most hit by the lack of these basic needs are the able bodied youths who form the core of the society. These angry youths eventually organize themselves into strong forces and rebel against the state. Examples of these types of conflicts are the Liberian and the Sierra Leonean civil wars where young people formed rebel forces and fought the governments.

The different faces of goal-oriented conflicts constitute a great challenge to the management and resolution of conflicts in general. The fact that intervening bodies such as the United Nations and or ECOWAS hold different views while seeking to resolve and manage conflicts further compounds these challenges. The ECOWAS, for example, is composed of
member nations that have great differences in cultural, ethnic and colonial backgrounds. Other differences are political structures, cultural and religious beliefs, as well as economic developments. Anglo-Francophone division, extra regional influences, fear of hegemonies, and standards of training of military forces are other causes of disagreements in the regional body. Evidently, the plurality in the nature of the ECOWAS countries creates great challenges to collective resolution and management of Conflicts in the region.

Generally, any attempt at conflict resolution has to take into account the root causes of the conflicts. Some of the root causes of conflicts in the ECOWAS region stemmed from corruption from the dictatorial rule of the military heads of states that took over the mantle of leadership at independence. Some of these leaders, in a bid to perpetuate their power, took certain stances that were detrimental to the growth and development of their states. The citizens who were dissatisfied with the status quo, therefore, took to arms in protest. This led to prolonged conflicts that lasted for decades.

Other causes of conflicts in the region include border disputes. During the colonial era, the imperialists that dominated Africa carved out boundaries without regard to ethnic divide and linguistic affiliations, and since the majority of the people in Africa are linguistically related, any threat to their affiliates in neighboring countries leads to eruption of conflicts within that region. This is because their allegiance lies more with their ethnicity than with the states. The founding fathers of the OAU foresaw this, but hoped that the new independent leaders of the African states would create conditions that would minimize or resolve the differences in the future (Nhema 2008). Other identified causes of conflicts include lack of democratization, lack of legal safeguards such as the rule of law in political dispensations, the concept of simple majority rule system that is practiced in more mature polities, the role of external powers and the financing of
conflicts by the super powers during the cold war periods. The results of these conflicts are the deaths of innocent people, internal displacements of citizens, mass movements of refugees across borders, destruction of property, disruption of socio-economic activities as well as high financial costs relating to conflict management and resolution.

3.3 Theories of Conflict Resolution

According to Wallis (1994), “War is the decision to go for victory [rather] than resolution. Peacemaking is an attempt to resolve the sources of the conflict and restore a situation of balance, thereby eliminating the need for victory and defeat” (Wallis 1994).

3.3.1 The Needs-Based Theory

There are different approaches to the issue of conflict resolution. Scholars have propounded different methods for resolving conflicts; some of which are: the need-based approach, interest-based approach, realism or power-based and rights-based approaches to conflict resolutions. John Burton, a proponent of the needs-based theory, based his theory on human needs. Burton’s theory works “in an environment where a pre-condition for conflict resolution requires that basic human needs are met” (Mills 2006). The human needs described by Burton include: “control, security, justice, stimulation, response, meaning, rationality, esteem/recognition and ‘role-defense’” (Ibid). He refers to these needs as “ontological needs” because he sees them as universally applicable to human life (Ibid). The needs-based theory views conflict as a consequent of competition over scarce resources due to common needs. To Burton conflict resolution thus unravels deep rooted issues that seem difficult to resolve (Mills 2006). Most of the conflicts in the ECOWAS region originate from scarce resources allocation.
The techniques of the needs-based theory of conflict resolution are: “integrative bargaining and analytic or interactive problem-solving” (Mills 2006). The integrative bargaining process is sometimes called principled negotiation. This method involves a negotiation where attention is given to “merits of the issues and the parties try to enlarge the available ’pie’ rather than stake claims to certain portions of it” (Ibid). This means that integrative bargaining involves “concession making and searching for mutually profitable solutions” (Mills 2006).

Interactive or analytic problem-solving approach is a “form of third-party consultation or informal mediation” (Mills 2006). It starts by analyzing the political needs and uncertainties. It is a “non-traditional, non-governmental method that emphasizes analytical dialogue and problem-solving” (Ibid). This process is described as the “track two,” or a grass root method of conflict resolution, in contrast to governmental diplomacy which is known as “track one diplomacy” (Mills 2006).

The ECOWAS attempt at conflict resolution first of all began with the establishment of the Standing Mediation Committee, a high powered diplomatic body consisting of the heads of governments of the ECOWAS countries, sent to mediate in Liberia and Sierra Leone. The African Union in 2010 also delegated a number of high powered diplomats including President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa and the Prime Minister of Kenya Raila Odinga, to mediate in the conflict in Cote d’Ivoire.

3.3.2 Interest-based Theory

The interest-based approach to conflict negotiation was propounded by Roger Fisher in 1978. Fisher’s approach to conflict resolution became popular with the publication of his book ‘Getting to Yes’, where he introduced the term ‘principled-negotiation’ (Mills 2006). Fisher’s
approach seeks to resolve conflict by “differing judgment to a moral principle” (Ibid). This approach advocates the need for interest-based negotiations in contrast to those based on a ‘position’ (Ibid). For instance, Fisher suggested that an interest includes issues like security, esteem and pleasures, while positions would refer to the ways those interests are achieved. Fisher advocates the need for empathy and asks the question – “why does one hold one position and another hold a different one?” (Mills 2006) He therefore suggests that “empathy allows parties to recognize the fundamental interests which may result in harmonious solutions for each party” (Ibid). Like Burton, Fisher defines the most powerful interests as human needs, which he identifies as security, economic-well-being, a sense of belonging, recognition, and control over one’s life (Mills 2006).

3.3.3 The Theory of Conflict Transformation

Scholars began to refer to conflict resolution as ‘conflict transformation’ and ‘peace-building’ in the 1990s. Such terms signify processes that encourage positive results from conflict for all parties. In conflict transformation, conflict is not seen as the ultimate position, but a “dynamic process…wherein as one problem is resolved a new one emerges” (Mills 2006). “This point of view assumes that mediators can be charged with: widening the borders of political community, defeating sectional and factional disparity, expanding the domain of moral responsibility…and promoting relations which conform to some standards of international order”(Mills 2006).

3.3.4 The Power-based and Right-based Theories
There are two options to the needs-based approach to conflict resolution that includes the ‘power-based’ and the ‘rights-based’ approaches. The ‘power-based’ (‘force-based’ or ‘coercive’) approach to international conflict resolution is also known as ‘realism’. It consists of violent and nonviolent forms of force such as war and diplomacy. Usually diplomacy is described as “war by other methods,” and as such a win/lose situation (Mills 2006). Negotiators press forward their own ‘positions’, which process is decided by the dominant party. Realism argues that global security is best achieved through the action of Great Powers which can create regional stability all over the world, either through force or diplomacy. Respective United States presidents have used power-based approach (American muscle) to resolving conflicts in the past (Mills 2006). The mediatory form of resolving power-based conflicts is usually through nonviolent coercive methods, such as military aid (Mills 2006). The power-based approach was the method of conflict resolution that was more successful than all the others during the ECOWAS intervention in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea. The forced intervention executed by the ECOMOG forces and the UN forces succeeded in putting an end to the conflicts in these countries and the enthronement of democracy through electoral votes.

Realism also deals with conflict manipulation. Conflict manipulation is a devious method of diplomacy where there seems to be an ongoing process of a form of conflict resolution while in reality, dialogue is only engaged to ‘buy-time’ and increase bargaining power. This is a short term approach to conflict resolution. Once the party being manipulated finds out, they may strike back or re-start the dispute, thus destroying any progress that had been achieved.

An example of this is seen in the case of the crises in Cote d’Ivoire, where the mediators, rather than maintaining neutrality in the crisis, took sides with one party or the other, further escalating the already deteriorating conflict. For instance, President Thabo Mbeki, who was sent
to mediate on behalf of the African Union in the Côte d'Ivoire conflict, was alleged to have taken sides with President Gbagbo; whereas, Raila Odinga of Kenya was alleged to have favored arms intervention rather than a peaceful negotiation. These cases of intervention failed because the parties involved in the conflict felt betrayed. This led to a further escalation of the conflict in the country (Onians 2011).

The rights-based approach to conflict resolution involves resolution based on standard or normative principles that are acceptable by the parties concerned. It often involves the use of a legal system as a source. A rights-based method to international conflict resolution is found in the International Court of Justice (ICJ/World Court, the Hague), and International Criminal Court (ICC). The influence of the ICJ deals with state disputes and the ICC is the place where individual violators of human rights are arraigned. There are formal and informal methods of the rights-based conflict resolution. The formal includes adjudication in courts and arbitration, while the informal is an alternate dispute resolution known as mediation. Despite the fact that conflict resolution prefers the need-based approach, it still acknowledges the place of power-based and right-based methods.

3.3.5 Types of Conflict Resolution Mechanisms

The different types of conflict resolution mechanisms include: coercion, avoidance, arbitration, adjudication, negotiation, mediation and reconciliation. ‘Coercion’ consists of violent and nonviolent methods of force. Chapter 7 of the UN charter states that conflict resolutions include the nonviolent method of coercion such as economic sanction, and the violent type as in the case of military action (UN 1945). ‘Avoidance’, on the other hand, is a short term solution. It includes territorial severance, such as partition of states, and relies on the saying “good fences
make good neighbors” (Mills 2006). ‘Adjudication’ of conflict involves a third party who pronounces a judgment on a complaint. The third party in this case is often linked with the state, whereas, ‘arbitration’ refers to a situation where a negotiator is chosen by the disputing parties - a judge or lawyer- to resolve the dispute. Arbitration differs from adjudication in that it is generally a less formal and more cost effective process, which is likely to leave the parties with more satisfying outcome. An early form of international arbitration was developed following The Hague Peace Conference of 1899 (Mills 2006).

In negotiations, agreements are made in the absence of a third party even though one of the parties may still have a little more power than the other. In other words, negotiation involves an agreement by parties in a non-judicial or non-arbitral setting. In ‘mediation’ and ‘facilitation’ a third party helps an agreement to be concluded. In ‘reconciliation’ both parties seek friendship from each other, while conciliation “implies a closer relationship of parties that lead to an agreement” (Mills 2006).

3.4 ECOWAS Mechanisms for Intervention

When ECOWAS treaty was signed in 1975, it made no provision for security role for the sub region. This is because ECOWAS was initially established as part of the strategy of West African states to promote economic prosperity for their respective countries. The prevalent conflicts and volatility that pervaded the sub region in the 1990s and early 2000s made the ECOWAS leaders realize that economic success cannot be achieved in the absence of peace and security. This resulted in the adoption of nascent security protocols in 1978. Today, the region has institutionalized highly structured conflict resolution, peacekeeping and security mechanisms (WANEP, n.d). Kabia (2011) observed that lack of adoption of security mechanisms at
inception is not unique to ECOWAS. “Several other regional organizations have gradually assumed security and foreign policy roles by default” (Kabia 2011). The European Economic Union is an example of an economic union that progressively incorporated security and foreign policy capacity when it adopted the Treaty of Maastricht. This became helpful to them in formulating general foreign and security policy (Kabia 2011).

According to Ropper (1981), military threats to peace have led to the incorporation of security into regional based governance. For instance, in the 1970s, two ECOWAS countries became victims of external military assault. Portuguese mercenaries attempted to invade Guinea in November 1970. A similar attempt was made in Benin by foreign mercenaries in January 1977. Moreover, there were cases of reoccurring military coups in the sub region in the 1970s. These cases of external aggression and internal instability prompted ECOWAS leaders to take actions that will defend the sub-region’s security. ECOWAS began moving into security in 1978 when it adopted the Non-aggression Treaty. This treaty enjoined member states to “…refrain from the threat and use of force or aggression” against each other (ECOWAS 1975).

The protocol was criticized because it failed to make provisions for “institutionalized response mechanisms in the case of a breach” (ECOWAS 1981). The West African leaders acknowledged this weakness by endorsing the Mutual Assistance on Defense (MAD) Protocol at the 1981 Summit in Freetown, Sierra Leone. This protocol was enforced in September 1986 (ECOWAS 1981). In article 4 of the treaty, the protocol spelt out that in a situation where there is a failure of peaceful means of resolving conflicts within a state, or where the conflict is ‘engineered and supported from outside’, armed action shall be required to resolve the conflict between two or more member states (Ibid). The protocol also created response mechanisms, that
included a defense council, a defense committee and a sub-regional intervention force known as “the Allied Armed Forces of the Community (AAFC)” (ECOWAS, 1981).

This protocol also faced criticism for its lack of effective conflict prevention, management and resolution mechanisms. Critics further argued that the Article focused more heavily on external threats and did not envisage a role for the regional body in the coups that weakened the sub-region in the 1970s and 1980s, as well as the domestic conflicts that swept through West Africa in the 1990s. Critics regard this as regime protection strategies meant to serve the interest of the leaders. Interestingly, the institutions provided for in this protocol were never established. A possible reason for the non-implementation of this protocol lies in francophone countries’ suspicions of Nigerian hegemonic role in the region. These suspicions were further deepened by the protocols that called for the withdrawal of foreign troops from all member states. With strong military ties with France, most of the francophone West African states depended on their former colonial power for defense and security. In addition to these security concerns, the presence of a rival francophone security mechanism – The Accord de Non Agression et d’Assistance en matière de Défense (ANAD) ratified by Francophone West African states in 1977 – adversely affected the chances of the success of MAD (ECOWAS, 1981).

The Liberian crises, which started in 1989, represent a critical stage in ECOWAS’s transition into security. Faced with unprecedented scale of human suffering and international disengagement from African conflicts, and with no institutions to respond to the conflict, ECOWAS was forced to devise ad hoc security mechanisms to eliminate the conflicts. The mechanisms consist of major bodies, systems and policies such as: the authority of Heads of State and Governments that made up the Mediation and Security Council (MSC). The MSC is a body that is responsible for decision making related to the deployment of peacekeeping
enforcement of troops to war prone areas. These work together with a Committee of Ambassadors (CA) and a Defense and Security Commission (DSC) made up of defense chiefs and security technocrats, who work out the details and technicalities of a mission and make recommendations to the MSC. ECOMOG is the officially recognized military arm of ECOWAS that serves as a multi-purpose standby force. The Early Warning System undertakes risk mapping, observation and analysis of social, economic and political situations in the region that have the potential to deteriorate into conflict. The last mechanism is the Council of Elders and prominent personalities and the Executive Secretariat (Kabia 2011).

When the standing mediation committee (SMC) was established, it was charged with the responsibility of finding a peaceful means of resolving the conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Following weeks of unproductive diplomatic talks with various faction leaders in July 1990, the SMC took the bold step to establish and deploy the ECOWAS ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) despite major protests from the then rebel leader Charles Taylor and some West African leaders. In neighboring Sierra Leone, ECOMOG was able to reinstate the deposed President Kabbah. They also acted as the de facto army in the absence of a national army in the war-torn country. It was after several years of ECOMOG’s military presence under extremely difficult security conditions, that Sierra Leone and Liberia received the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations. In 1998, this ad hoc sub-regional peacekeeping force also intervened to restore peace to Guinea Bissau following a revolt in the national army. In December 2002 ECOWAS sent its peacekeeping mission to Cote D’Ivoire and in August 2003, a peacekeeping mission was deployed in Liberia for the second time following its relapse into violent conflict. Despite criticisms received by ECOMOG, its presence at the height of the fighting and chaos in
the two countries played a major role in the stabilization of the Mano River Basin region (WANEP, n.d).

3.5 Analysis of the Conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone

In post colonial ECOWAS, the first country to experience regional based civil unrest in the late 1980s is Liberia. This war spread to its neighboring Sierra Leon, then to Guinea and the entire region. The conflict in Liberia began in 1989 with Charles Taylor’s NPLF rebellion, which was logistically supported by Burkina Faso, Libya and Cote d’Ivoire- to overthrow the government of President Samuel Doe. The rebellion evolved into a violent civil war that affected the entire Mano River Union (MARIUN) Basin within a very short time. The conflict first lasted from 1989-1997, but eventually rebounded and threatened the security of the entire West African region. Some of the factors that contributed to this conflict include poor governance, political instability, corrupt leadership, ethnic discrimination, economic deterioration, intense poverty, high level of unemployment, and the suppression of political opponents (Omeje n.d.).

The causes of the Liberian conflict lie in its history. The Liberian state was founded in 1847 when freed slaves from America settled in the country. The founders of the nation known as Americo-Liberians established a very strict hierarchical social system with themselves as rulers. Although they constituted only an estimated five percent of the total population, the Americo-Liberians dominated the socio-political and economic life of the entire country for about 130 years (Brown 1999).

The political dominance of the Americo-Liberians came to an end when in 1980 a 28 year old Samuel Doe, a staff sergeant of the Liberian Army and a member of the Krahn ethnic
group, wrested power from President William Tolbert in a coup d’état. President Tolbert had risen to power following the death of William Tubman who had ruled as president of Liberia from 1971-1980. Tolbert was Tubman’s vice president from 1944-1971, and their combined rule did not bring about any significant improvement in the lives of native Liberians. After executing William Tolbert and the members of his cabinet, President Doe went on to establish a military government with a promise to relinquish power to a democratically elected government in 1985. He also promised to put an end to corruption and redistribute national wealth. This was not to be as President Doe did not only renege but also ran his government by favoring the Krahn ethnic group. Moreover, the National Constitutional Committee instituted in 1981 to prepare a draft constitution was undermined by Doe as he objected to its provisions (Ero 1995).

Doe eventually transformed his military government to a transitional caretaker government where he became its constitutional Civilian President. He manipulated the Special Electoral Commission, which was set up to monitor the elections, by ensuring that his friends and members of his National Democratic party of Liberia (NDPL) dominated the Commission. Consequently, he was declared the winner of the presidential election in 1985. In order to solidify his power, President Samuel Doe of Liberia was alleged to have directly participated in several carnages and human rights violations including the harassment and intimidation of most opposition leaders (Ero 1995).

In a bid to wrestle power from the perceived dictator, Charles Taylor of the National Patriotic Front (NPFL), who had been living in exile in the United States, returned home and launched an armed assault on President Doe’s government. This situation degenerated into an ethnic massacre that endangered the whole country. In 1989, Taylor began his crusade in Nimba County, the home of the Gio and Mano ethnic groups that had suffered greatly from Doe’s
repression. The fighting and massacre of innocent civilians moved closer to the capital city of Monrovia by April and May of 1990. Charles Taylor and his rebel forces soon took over the control of most of the Liberian territories. By May 1990, President Doe was forced to call upon ‘all patriotic citizens’ to join forces with the government and fight against the rebels. As Charles Taylor continued to advance, he suffered a setback when one of his commanders, ‘Prince’ Yormie Johnson broke away from the main NPFL and began fighting both the forces of Taylor and Doe’s AFL as the Independent National Patriotic Front (INPFL) (Ero 1995).

In August, 1990, the ECOWAS Standing Mediation Committee, having received a distressed call from an overwhelmed president Doe, responded by deploying the ECOMOG forces to Monrovia, the capital of Liberia. Immediately the ECOMOG troops arrived, they took control of Monrovia from the rebel forces. Negotiations also began between the Charles Taylor faction and President Doe, with the ECOMOG as the mediating body. Doe, however, was captured by the INPFL forces of Yormie Johnson outside the ECOMOG headquarters in Monrovia. After his execution by the rebels his former soldiers formed the United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia (ULIMO) in 1991. By 1996, the warring parties endorsed the Abuja peace pact and agreed to hold elections, which Charles Taylor won.

Between 1997 and 2000, Liberia experienced a weak peace. President Taylor was accused of supporting the RUF, a situation that further pushed Sierra Leone into civil unrest. In 2000, full scale violence erupted for the second time in Liberia, when the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) forces marched in from Guinea to eject RUF fighters who were still in Liberia. In early 2003, the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL), another anti Taylor group emerged. And by the middle of 2003, LURD and MODEL had significantly reduced Taylor’s control over Liberia. Under intense national and international
demands, Taylor agreed to peace talks again, this time in Accra, Ghana, under the sponsorship of the ECOWAS. Taylor was accused of 17 war crime charges as well as other gross violations of international law through the conflicts in Sierra Leone. Before Taylor resigned from the Presidency of Liberia in August, 11, 2003 he signed a comprehensive Peace Agreement on August 18th, and went into exile in Nigeria. The Liberian National Transition Government (LNTG) was delegated with running of the affairs of the country until January 2006, when democratic elections took place (Brown 1999).

Sierra Leone is the second country that had a political rebellion that ended in civil war. The country played a significant part in modern African political liberty and nationalism, and became an independent nation in 1961. During the 1980s, however, survival became very difficult for the people of Sierra Leone and after losing hope of making any change through democratic means, a group of young people called “the Revolutionary United Front” (RUF) headed by Foday Sankoh came together and formed a combatant rebel force. This group took up arms in order to revamp the political system and redistribute the wealth of the country. In 1991, Charles Taylor and his NPFL supported the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) whose objective was to overthrow the government of Joseph Momoh. It is alleged that Taylor’s reaction was based on the fact that the government of the Sierra Leone had not permitted him to use its territory to launch a cross border incursion into Liberia. Moreover, the NPFL rebel leader is said to have planned to plunder the diamond economy of its neighbor to help fund his rebel campaign at home. Through Charles Taylor’s NPFL, RUF received significant logistical support from Libya and Burkina Faso (USIP, 2002). Charles Taylor did not only succeed in contributing to the destabilization in Sierra Leone, but also gained access to the strategic diamond resources as soon
as RUF rebels took charge of the Kono diamond mines. Taylor benefitted greatly from the war in Sierra Leone through his infamous ‘diamond-for-gun’ pact with the RUF (Omeje n.d.).

As the war raged on in Liberia, fifty percent of the country’s population of 2.6 million was reported to have been displaced internally. For instance, the population in Monrovia rose from 600,000 in 1991 to approximately one million when the conflict was at its peak. Externally the estimated number of Liberians who took refuge in neighboring countries rose to 700,000. With the cessation of most of the social services and the disruption of economic activities, dependence on humanitarian assistance from the United Nations and other non-governmental organizations increased (Ero 1995). Reflecting international dismay at the coup, ECOMOG forces intervened and retook Freetown on behalf of the government, but they found the outlying regions more difficult to pacify.

The war in Sierra Leone lasted from 1991 to 2002 resulting in the deaths of over 50,000 people and the displacement of over a million people. When the war began, RUF rebels took charge of a huge portion of the eastern and southern Sierra Leonean territories rich in alluvial diamonds. The government's ineffective response to the RUF, and the disruption in government diamond production led to a hasty military coup d’état in April 1992 by the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC). The Sierra Leone Army (SLA) had succeeded in pushing the RUF rebels back to the Liberian border by the end of 1993, but the RUF recovered and continued to fight. In order to contain the rebel war, ECOWAS forces were deployed into the country and were later reinforced by the United Liberation Movement for Democracy (ULIMO), a Liberian rebel group, to help fend off the RUF rebels at home and to attack the NPFL in Liberia (HRW: 2005:6).
The government of Sierra Leone contracted the services of a south African-based mercenary called Executive Outcomes (EO) in March 1995. The EO was a part of a larger diamond business network in the war-torn Sierra Leone that was comprised of multinational mining companies like Diamond-Works and Branch Energy (Musah, 2002); and their fighters were mainly members of the ex-Apartheid South Africa Special Forces. Their mandate was to provide 150 – 200 fully equipped soldiers and helicopters, train the Sierra Leone army, and lead in the war to combat the RUF (Selber & Jobarteh, 2002:91). Subsequently, an elected civilian government was installed in Sierra Leone in March 1996. Not only was the RUF pressured into signing the Abidjan Peace Accord but Sierra Leonean government was also pressured by the UN to terminate its contract with EO, which was carried out before the accord could be implemented. As a result, the hostilities recommenced and Sandline International, a British Private Military Company succeeded the EO in Sierra Leone (Fabricius, 2004:54).

In May 1997 a group of disgruntled SLA officers staged another coup and established the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) as the new government of Sierra Leone. The RUF joined with the AFRC to capture Freetown with little resistance. The new government, led by John Paul Koroma, declared the war over. A wave of looting, rape, and murder followed the announcement. Sandline was eventually forced to vacate Sierra Leone in 1999 when the multinational peacekeepers of both ECOWAS and the UN were extensively deployed to stabilize the situation there. Following a series of peace agreements, the war in Sierra Leone, which started in 1991, officially came to an end in 2002, and a national election was conducted that same year. With more or less similar consequences as the Liberian war, the Sierra Leone civil war was faulted with producing a large community of amputees whose limbs were brutally severed by RUF rebels (See Ebo, 2005:5).
Prior to these developments, Guinea, a former colony of French West Africa, attained independence on 1st October 1958 without war. Instead, the French president, General De Gaulle, proposed an association with the Franco-African community, which was turned down in a referendum by Ahmed Sekou Toure, a trade unionist who had been very instrumental in attaining independence for Guinea during the last years of colonial struggles. This caused a sudden break between Guinea and France leading to a cold war between them during the 1960s and 1970s. In a bid to develop his country’s economy and natural resource endowment, the president of Guinea embraced socialism and appealed for support from the Soviet Union and the eastern countries. In the 1960s, President Toure of Guinea and President Nkrumah of Ghana were seen as leaders who were devoted to Pan-Africanism and real political and economic liberty of the continent. Toure supported all struggles towards the emancipation of Africa, including the one that began in Portuguese Guinea by Amilcar Cabral.

However, within his country, the first government headed by Sekou Toure (1958-1984) witnessed a repressive and brutal rule. With the country withdrawing into itself, the President felt susceptible to conspiracies planned by France and Portugal, with so-called connivance of rivals within Guinea-Bissau. Dictatorship, security surveillance of both civilian and military elite, and the lack of freedom of speech characterized the State of Guinea. The lack of economic opportunities that inhibited private initiatives, coupled with underdevelopment in the different spheres of the society made the citizens of Guinea flee from the country and settle permanently in the neighboring countries such as Liberia and Sierra Leone among others. Others migrated to the United States and Europe, most of who returned after the death of Sekou Toure in 1984 (Keller n.d.).
When Sekou Toure died, he left behind a contentious heritage. His death left a slim chance of succession since he did not put in place the necessary machinery for it. The Interim government of Prime Minister Lansana Beavogui, ruled the country for only a few years. Then a faction of army officers took over power through a coup d’état and appointed ex-deputy chief of the army Lansana Conteh on April 3rd, 1984. President Conteh was also “a senior official of the Democratic Party of Guinea (PDG), a single party political control mechanism that was set up by Sekou Toure” (Rothchild 1996).

During the Second Republic (1984 to 1991), the Military Committee for National Recovery (MCNR), raised the hopes of the Guineans by promising to establish democratic governance and release all political prisoners as well as build a viable economy for the people. The president even invited Guineans in Diaspora to return home. Reformations began to take place in 1985 with the announcements of strategic planning in the development of free market enterprise, encouragement of private initiatives and privatization of national concerns as well as foreign investments, especially within the mining sector which serves as the main source of revenue for the country. While this was going on, there was a failed coup attempt by Colonel Diarra Traore, Conteh’s companion during the takeover. The colonel along with all his accomplices in the aborted coup plot were executed the same year (Yabi 2010).

In the early 1990s, President Lansana Conteh initiated a multiparty system of governance by promulgating a constitution through referendum, on 23rd December, 1993. The Military Committee for National Reconciliation was dissolved to make room for the new Transitional Committee for National Recovery (TCNR), a civilian-cum-military organization with equal representation. Political parties were allowed to form in 1992 and presidential elections took place in 1993 to usher in the Third Republic. Conteh’s candidacy of the Unity and Progress
Party (UPP) was challenged by eight other candidates. And under controversial circumstances, the outgoing president re-emerged as the winner of the elections with total votes of 51.7%. Conteh got re-elected again in 1998 and 2003 respectively. His 24-years rule suffered many coup plots; the most difficult of which was the failed February 1996 attempt to oust him out of the office. Lansana Conteh escaped the assault but was subsequently arrested by the rebellious soldiers. President Conteh succeeded in not only convincing them to spare his life, but also to allow him stay in power by succumbing to their demands. The president later incarcerated all those behind the rebellion and strengthened his military institutions alongside his civilian government to crush any future reoccurrence (Yabi 2010).

3.6 An Analysis of the Conflict in French Guinea

Between 1990 and 2003, the state of Guinea was exposed to the civil wars that had dominated its neighbors in the Mano River region. Guinea found itself playing host to hundreds of thousands of refugees from Liberia and Sierra Leone. General Lansana Conteh, a Nigerian regional ally at that time, willingly responded to the strong military intervention by sending a deputation of his army to ECOMOG, the ECOWAS army, in 1990. The forces were deployed to Monrovia to prevent the overthrow of President Doe of Liberia by the NPFL rebel forces of Charles Taylor. As soon as Guinea joined the war, the entire Mano River region became destabilized for twelve years. In a bid to protect the territorial integrity of his country, President Conteh supported the United Movement for Democracy in Liberia (ULIMO) against the forces of Charles Taylor when he received ULIMO leaders into Conakry and permitted the training of their fighters on Guinea’s territory (Yabi 2010).
The Revolutionary United Front (RUF) of Sierra Leone together with resistance put up by Taylor’s troops eventually wore out the ECOMOG forces deployed in the war. ECOWAS was forced to accept a treaty that resulted in an election in 1997 with Taylor as president. Consequently, the civil war in Liberia resumed while that of the neighboring Sierra Leone persisted. The President Lansana Conteh of Guinea actively involved himself in this new conflict by supporting the Liberia United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), a rebel movement that succeeded ULIMO rebel forces against the new elected president Charles Taylor. The rebels were recruited mainly from the Liberian refugee camps set up in the forest areas of Guinea (Yabi 2010).

In September 2000, Guinea experienced a series of coordinated assaults at its borders from rebels who were in the employ of President Charles Taylor. The Liberian helmsman was displeased with the fact that President Conteh supported the LURD and the ULIMO rebels against him. This attack recorded numerous deaths and destructions of property. In order to fend off the attack, Conteh employed the use of paramilitary groups consisting mainly of volunteer combatants from the refugee camps. When Conteh eventually received reinforcement from the United States and France, his army was strengthened and he was able to reorganize and fend off the rebels (Yabi 2010).

In August, 2003, the rebel leader President Taylor of Liberia was forced into exile by the combined teams of the LURD forces and MODEL, the ECOWAS diplomatic teams, Nigeria and the UN peacekeeping forces. Temporary peace was also restored to the neighboring Sierra Leone with the re-election of President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah. However, Cote d’Ivoire, a border state with Guinea, plunged into armed conflict in 2002, with no major consequences on the security of Guinea except for the support given to President Laurent Gbagbo by Lansana Conteh.
But the president of Guinea did not participate in the mediation efforts to find solution to the problem in Cote D’Ivoire.

The rigors of wars fought on the Guinean borders took Lansan Conteh’s attention away from governance. While the war raged on in 2001, the president amended the constitution that removed age limitation of the presidential candidate and pushed the tenure of office from five to seven years. Although his state of health continued to deteriorate, Lansana conteh held on to power till 2007 amidst strikes and protests from the populace.

3.7 An Analysis of the Conflict in Cote d’Ivoire

It is no coincidence that the civil war that erupted in Cote D’Ivoire began in 1999 when the entire Mano River region was engulfed in civil unrest. When the civil war began, Cote d’Ivoire was divided into two factions; the northern part was controlled by rebel forces while the government controlled the south including Abidjan, the state capital. By 2006, the tension had escalated resulting in renewed hostilities and raids of foreign troops and civilians alike. The feat displayed by the Ivoirian National Football team at the FIFA world cup of 2006, however, ushered in a temporary truce between the government and rebel forces when Cote d’Ivoire won the world cup. And as nerves were calmed, the United Nations, which had hitherto been silent, began its operations in the country. But the peacekeepers were overwhelmed and outnumbered by the civilians and the rebels. A peace pact was signed in 2007 to put an end to the conflict. But the result of the 2010 elections, held after it had been delayed six times, triggered the violence on 24th February 2011 (North 2011).

One of the immediate causes of the war had to do with the introduction of democracy immediately after the death of President Felix Houphouet-Boigny. President Houphouet-Boigny,
who had ruled the country for 33 years since independence, has been described as a charismatic leader, who is competent in economic and political matters. The end of his rule ushered in the beginning of democratic processes for the first time in 1993, giving room to open and competitive elections. This era of open democracy brought to the fore the issue of ethnicity which had been suppressed by the authoritarian rule of Houphouet-Boigny. Cote d’Ivoire had been settled by foreigners mainly from the northern Burkina Faso, consisting of the Mandinka ethnic group like those found at northern Cote d’Ivoire. The foreigners who made up about 26 percent of the total population of Cote d’Ivoire had lived there for more than two generations. Ethnic rivalry began to rise between the foreign Burkinabes and their Ivoirian hosts over the issue of voting rights. This tension had existed for a long time but had been suppressed by the government of Houphouet-Boigny, had resurfaced after his death. Moreover, the term “Ivoirity”, which had been coined by Henri Konan Bedie to denote the common cultural identity of all those living in Ivory Coast, was later used by the nationalist and chauvinistic politics as well as the press to represent only those who came from the south eastern part of the country, mainly those from Abidjan.

The discrimination meted on the people of Burkina Faso coupled with the decline in the once buoyant Ivoirian economy caused by the worsening of the terms of trade between the third world nations and their industrialized counterparts further worsened the political and ethnic situation in the country. Furthermore, unemployment forced a part of the urban population to return to the fields, which they realized had been taken over by the northern Burkinabes (North 2011).

The initial violence that erupted in Cote d’Ivoire targeted foreigners mostly from West Africa, especially those from Burkina Faso. This is because the Burkinabes had been granted
nationality status by the government of Houphouet-Boigny. The Ivoirian nationals criticized this
gesture claiming that the erstwhile president did so in order to gain political support from the
foreigners. Consequently, many Burkinabes were killed during the violent crisis of 1995 at the
Plantations in Tabou. Obviously the ethnic rivalry that existed between the Burkinabes and their
hosts emanated from the fact that since independence, the former had been encouraged to move
to the south-west of the country where they were given permission to produce cocoa, coffee and
food items. Many years later the Ivoirians came to resent them because these land tenants had
become successful, and were denied the right to vote (North 2011).

Despite the rising tensions, what triggered the civil unrest was the drafting of a law in
2000 by the government through a referendum that required a presidential candidate to prove his
citizenship by proving that both of his parents originated from Ivory Coast. This law excluded
Alassane Ouattara – a northern presidential candidate who represented the predominant Muslim
north, particularly the poor immigrant workers from Mali and Burkina Faso – from the race.

Combatants came from the northern part of the country and fought in the early hours of
19th September, 2002. Assaults were launched on major cities including Abidjan. By midday,
the combatants had captured the northern part of the country. The combatants said that their
main concern is the redefining of citizenship, restoration of their voting rights, and the issue of
representative government from among their own people in Abidjan. During the first night of
the conflict, the former president Robert Guie was murdered. Alassane Ouattara, whose home
was razed down, took refuge in the French embassy. Several attacks were launched at the same
time in the major cities with the government forces maintaining the control of Abidjan and the
southern part of the country, but the new rebel forces took charge of the north with their
headquarters in Bouake. President Lauren Gbagbo however, reported that the uprising was
caused by army deserters who were supported by Burkina Faso. And indeed, most of the rebels were well armed because they had been serving soldiers. It was at this time that the government of France came in and called for reconciliation between the two warring factions. Although the government supporters claimed that France was behind the rebel forces, the rebels denounced France, claiming it was on the side of the government. Amidst this controversy the French forces moved between the two sides in order to stop the rebels from mounting new attacks on the South (North 2011).

3.8 An Analysis of the Conflict in Guinea-Bissau

In West Africa, the only countries that were colonized by Portugal were Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde. They were also the only countries in West Africa that obtained their independence through armed struggle in 1974. Portugal did little to develop its administrative, political and economic system that could enable the independent state to stand on its feet at independence (Yabi 2010).

When Guinea Bissau began to make a move for independence, Portugal’s initial response was a refusal to negotiate with the people. Amilcar Cabral, a cape Verdean born in Portuguese Guinea, initiated an armed struggle under the auspices of the African Party for Independence founded by a core of elites in 1956. The African Party for Independence eventually transformed into the Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) when PAIGC sponsored a bi-national idea of integrating the struggle for the liberation of Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde. The liberation forces of the party launched their first attack from Conakry, the capital of French Guinea in 1962. This was followed by the incapacitation of the colonial military barracks and the commercial ports. The Portuguese army responded with a reprisal attack, which formally
launched a guerrilla war fought by the People’s Revolutionary Armed Forces (FARP), the Military branch of PAIGC. This culminated in military successes and the control of over 70% of the territory by the end of the 1960s by the PAIGC.

After years of costly colonial wars in terms of resources and without prospects of victory and convincing strategic motivation, Portuguese military men showed signs of weariness. Coupled with the carnation revolution in Portugal that led to the overthrow of Marcelo Caetano’s government in April 1974, the new Portuguese authorities accepted the principle of independence for Guinea Bissau and other Portuguese colonies in Africa. After accomplishing its mission, the PAIGC was left with the task of building a politically and economically viable nation state, a different kind of challenge altogether (Yabi 2010).

Guinea Bissau is a small country whose agricultural based economy and limited human resources made it incapable of setting up the institutional base of an independent state. At the time of the formation of the bi-national government of Amilcar Cabral, almost all of the elites were either Cape Verdeans or mixed race. Tension thus, developed between the Cape Verdean elites of the PAIGC and guerrilla fighters recruited mainly from rural areas in Guinea Bissau. Consequently, Cabral was assassinated by dissidents in January 1973 under unclear circumstances. Luis de Almeida Cabral, who succeeded his half brother Amilcar as the leader of the party, became the first president of the independent state. The tension between the Cape Verdeans and the Guineans continued because, during the liberation war, the Cape Verdeans, who were fewer in number, constituted the leadership of the party while Guineans from rural areas, particularly those from the Balante ethnic group, formed the bulk of guerrilla combatants. The Guineans were afraid of being marginalized by their counterparts from Cape Verde (Yabi 2010).
Aware of the tension that existed, Luis Cabral attempted to consolidate his power by protecting himself against the ex-combatants, particularly Joao Bernado Vieira (known as Nino) from the Papel ethnic group, and one of the heroes of the liberation war. The majority of the Balantes in the army supported Nino Vieira during his show down with Luis Cabral, and on November 14 1980, Vieira took over power through a military coup d’état with the support of most ex-combatants, which made up the national army. The coup put an end not only to Luis Cabral’s presidency but also the bi-national project with Cape Verde, and having been stripped off their high ranking positions, a number of Cape Verdean militants of the PAIGC left the country.

Nino Vieira, an acclaimed hero of the independence war, was popular within the armed forces of the new independent state, but lacked the tools and technical administrative skills to propose a political, economic and social project for Guinea Bissau, which was then free from Cape Verdean influence. Vieira concentrated on consolidating his power by relying more on single party state machinery, the PAIGC, and especially an army which inherited the guerrilla fighters. Most of the military men, including those who were promoted to the rank of general officers, received only practical training in the arms profession, and to maintain power, Vieira made efforts to distribute favors to the army rather than reforming and modernizing them. His aim was to neutralize potential opponents who may nurture ambitions of coup d’état. Vieira’s task was made easier with the concentration of all power in the hands of the President. He chaired a revolutionary council with seven out of the nine members coming from the military and which made decisions concerning the party and the country. When he felt threatened, the Head of State resorted not only to dismissals but also carried out institutional reforms which further strengthened his authority (Yabi 2010).
The most serious threat to Nino Vieira’s power however came from his ex-companion-in-arms. Paulo Correia, a very popular Balante soldier in the army, who held the position of Vice President. Correia was arrested together with about fifty other soldiers for a coup attempt in November 1985. Condemned to death, Correia and his accomplices were executed in July 1986 despite many appeals for clemency from both within and outside the country. This development made president Vieira’s administration unpopular as he constantly lived in perceived fear of a number of the Balante soldiers that had earlier on supported him. So, rather than concentrate effort on development, Vieira used the scant resources of the country to calm the army down but paid little attention to civil servants’ salaries (Yabi 2010).

In the early 1990s, the government of President Vieira gave in to international pressures to reform the economic, political structures, the multiparty system and government administration. Most of the political parties that registered either relied on personalities with large financial resources for sponsorship, or gather the support of ethnicity rather than good governance. Unsurprisingly, the PAIGC and its leader Nino Vieira won the first multiparty elections organized in 1994, with 62 seats out of 102 in the new parliament. But then, a disgruntled Kumba Yala whose party –the Party for Social Renovation (PRS) – won the next highest seats, challenged Vieira to a second round of the presidential polls of August 1994. Despite the fact that Kumba Yala enjoyed the support of his Balante military men, Vieira upheld his election with 52% of the votes (North 2011).

Ironically, civil war broke out just a few years after the country opened up to multiparty elections. The conflict went on for many years, particularly in Casamance, a region in the southern part of neighboring Senegal. The fact that it is culturally close to Senegal, made it a potential dangerous area where there could be a rise in tensions among political and military
leaders in French Guinea. As Vieira drew closer to Senegal, he joined the French West African economic monetary Union (UEMOA) in July 1997 and adopted its currency, CFA franc. President Abdou Diouf of Senegal mounted pressure on Vieira to put an end to arms dealings between the elements in the Guinea Bissau army and rebels of the Movement of Democratic Forces for Casamance (MFDC). Vieira blamed his then Chief of Defense Staff, General Ansumane Mane, for the alliance between his army and the enemies of Dakar. General Mane counter-blamed the President and the then Minister of Defense for arms trafficking. He was immediately relieved of his post and placed under house arrest on June 6th 1998. The following day, soldiers loyal to Mane set out to the state capital and the rebellion demanded that Vieira resign, and also called for the formation of a transitional government to hold new elections.

An unusual civil war ensued at the heart of the state capital of Bissau with serious human, psychological, social and economic implications. The fight was fought between two former rebel soldiers, the ones supporting Mane and the loyalist supporting the President. At first, the civilian population was less concerned since the war was between two former friends, and liberation war fighters behind the coup d’état of 1980. However, military interventions came from two neighboring countries both supporting Vieira’s troops. The Government of Lansana Conte of Guinea sent helicopters with 400 men to support his close friend, Nino Vieira, while Senegal sponsored 2200 men to help the President subdue the rebellion. This development proved counterproductive as the intervening troops were seen as foreign aggressors and rekindled nationalism in Guinea Bissau. Many combatants from the liberation war teamed up with Mane to fight foreign troops. The civil war did not stop until the peace agreement was signed in Abuja on November 1st, 1998. The agreement resulted from the diplomatic efforts of ECOWAS chaired by Gnassingbe Eyadema of Togo (North 2011).
3.9 The Impact of the Conflicts on the Region

The civil wars that affected the ECOWAS region in the early 1990s had a serious impact on not only the region, but the entire continent and the global community as a whole. The impact of the wars on the lives of people especially in Liberia and Sierra Leone resulted in war crimes such as the rape and mutilation of women and young girls, arson, looting of property, kidnap and forceful training of children into rebel and government soldiers. By the end of the 1990s, the civil wars in Sierra Leone and Liberia had left about 1.5 million refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).

The wars also impacted the bordering state of Guinea through cross border attacks between the Guinean forces and the various warring factions in Sierra Leone and Liberia. These include the fleeing civil militias, known as the kamajors in Sierra Leone, the rebels and even some of the government soldiers. This situation suddenly caused random conflicts of diverse intensities in 2000 and beyond. Presently, only a fragile peace exists between Guinea and its war-ravaged neighbors. Moreover, occasional cross-border attacks have continued to erupt, especially in the Yenga district, a Sierra Leonean border with Guinea whose territory the Guinean authorities have more violently claimed since the end of the RUF rebel war. Ford et al (2002: 20) captured the desperate situation in the war-torn Mano River Basin, especially its impact on children as follows: the unfortunate union of systemic poverty and estrangement, a large youth gang and widespread availability of light weapons and facilitated the use of children as combatants. Often provided with drugs and alcohol, and under threat of brutal punishment for errors or desertion, children were conditioned into obedience to undertake fearless killings. Many were forced to commit atrocities against their own families and communities, and others were
forced to act as sexual slaves – young girls were raped and became pregnant. Childhoods were literally stolen from many youngsters in the sub-region during the wars, and the yet unknown psychological effects of their experiences will likely have a lasting impact on the (Ford et al 2002: 20).

The economy of the region was put on hold as these activities were disrupted during the war leading the region into intense poverty. Properties worth millions of dollars were lost and displaced persons now lived in refugee camps in neighboring countries where they depended on hands out from humanitarian organizations. Women took to prostitution in order to provide for their children. Young men either joined the government soldiers or rebel factions for economic benefits, while others took to crime. As the war escalated from one country to another, the security of the international community became threatened. This called for a global response to help put an end to the conflicts and restore peace and stability within the region.

3.10 The Roles of the AU/ECOWAS in the Resolutions of the Conflicts

The African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) is the operational structure for managing crisis in Africa (L’AFRIQUE 2011). The AU thus, focuses on the endorsement of peace, security and stability as well as egalitarian ideologies, institutions and human rights. The AU is “the world’s only regional or international organization that explicitly recognizes the right to intervene in a member state on humanitarian and human rights ground.” (L’AFRIQUE 2011) This right originates from the principle of Pan-Africanism and the law of “non-indifference.” (L’AFRIQUE 2011) The laws demand that African countries have a task of creating and preserving peace and security within their vicinity in particular and on the continent in general; based on the provisions of articles 4(h) and 4(j) of the charter of the AU. The responsibility to
protect (R2P) is also employed by the AU’s Peace and Security Council (PSC). The PSC makes decision to lead intervention with the agreement of a two-thirds majority and cannot be prevented by a veto (Pavšič 2013).

During the 2011 electoral dispute in Cote d’Ivoire, for instance, there was increased tension as both Laurent Gbagbo and Alassane Ouattara declared themselves winners of the presidential run-off election. The elections were expected to put an end to the violence that had lasted for a decade. However, both the AU and the ECOWAS reached a consensus that legitimized Ouattara as the winner of the elections. This provided the basis for the African Union’s resolution of 9th March, 2011, where Ouattara was acknowledged internationally. African leaders, therefore, launched a diplomatic mission for a peaceful resolution to the crisis by mounting pressure on the defiant leader Laurent Gbagbo to relinquish power to Alassane Ouattara or face an armed intervention. Thabo Mbeki of South Africa was initially chosen by AU to mediate in the dispute between Gbagbo and Ouattara in December 2010. Mbeki’s effort failed to yield the desired result. This is because he failed to combine his efforts with that of the ECOWAS. Moreover, South Africa was seen as a peacemaker that often sides with the government (in this case, Gbabo) (L'Afrique 2011).

The African Union later selected the Kenyan Prime Minister Raila Odinga to try and negotiate an end to the confrontation between Gbagbo and Ouattara. Odinga, who promised to keep an open mind on finding a solution to Cote d'Ivoire’s problems, met the Cote d'Ivoire’s strongmen together with three regional presidents who represented ECOWAS. The Presidents of Benin, Sierra Leone and Cape Verde; Boni Yayi, Ernest Koroma and Pedro Pires respectively, had earlier on attempted to convince Gbagbo to concede to Ouattara with threats of military intervention to overthrow him if mediation fails (Onians 2011). Raila Odinga used the same
approach by compromising his neutral stance as a mediator in favor of an armed intervention. He had not confirmed with ECOWAS before taking that stand and ECOWAS had not yet reached a consensus on whether to undertake a forced intervention in Cote d’Ivoire or not. As a result, both Gbagbo and Ouattara felt that they were dealt with unfairly. Consequently, an outgoing Malawian President Birgu Wa Muthanika, and Todora Nguema also visited Cote d’Ivoire in an effort to rescue the declining role of the AU, but this also proved unsuccessful (L’AFRIQUE 2011).

Although the African Union has recognized Mr. Ouattara as the outright winner of the election, regional divisions about whether to use military force to overthrow Gbagbo encouraged the formation of a panel. The panel was charged with the responsibility of submitting a set of binding plans for the two rival leaders to resolve the political crisis. The African Union decided to appoint Presidents of Chad and Mauritania to a panel and made them responsible for solving the leadership crisis in Côte d’Ivoire. Other members of the panel included Heads of States from Burkina Faso, Nigeria, South Africa, and Tanzania.

The AU’s attempts at a peaceful resolution of the Cote d’Ivoire crisis were hindered by international divisions between member states. This weakens the authority of the African Union as the major political intermediary. The divisions were reflected within the AU’s mediation team, particularly when RSA took sides with Gbagbo. “Ouattara, thus claimed that RSA had stationed a naval warship off the coast to stop ECOWAS interference. It was later discovered that South African Naval presence was part of a joint military exercise between Cote d’Ivoire and RSA” (L’AFRIQUE 2011).

It has been observed that there is inconsistency between the African Union’s competence on paper and its actual impact in crisis situations based on poor leadership and lack of
agreements in the AU, as well as the weak early warning in the field of intelligence. These weaknesses are further worsened by a lack of financial and institutional aptitude for interference. As a result, the AU is often taken by surprise and found reacting too late to crisis situations.

However, the AU remains the only continental establishment that is able to represent Pan-African vision on the global arena. The AU has been condemned for having misused the quick resolution of the conflict in Cote ‘d’Ivoire by not being up-front in supporting the ECOWAS position on intervention (L'AFRIQUE 2011).

Meanwhile, the eruption of the Liberian civil war in 1989 signifies an important phase in ECOWAS’ transition to peace and security. The regional organization was confronted with unequaled level of human suffering during the time that the international community decided to ‘disconnect itself from African conflicts. Seeing that there was no help coming from any institution, the regional organization had no choice than to strategies on how to end the conflict. The first thing ECOWAS did was to institute a Standing Mediation Committee (SMC) in May 1990, with a mandate to find the means of ending the war and restoring peace to the war-torn country, and having reasoned with the factional leaders without success, the SMC went further to establish and deploy the ECOWAS Cease Fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) despite bitter opposition from the Liberian rebel leader, Charles Taylor, and some of the leaders of West African states. This bold step gave rise to the successful restoration of the Presidency of Ahmad Tejan Kabah of Sierra Leone by the ECOMOG forces. They also doubled as the de facto army of Sierra Leone in the absence of national army.

In 1998, the sub-regional forces also fought to restore peace in Guinea Bissau in order to squash the rebellion which was started by some of the military personnel. Finally, in December of 2002 and August 2003, the ECOWAS peacekeeping mission was sent to Cote d’Ivoire and
Liberia again following the deterioration of peace and outbreak of hostilities. (Kabia 2011) It is however, important to note that whatever ECOWAS did, it submitted its recommendations to the African Union.
CHAPTER FOUR: THE IMPACT OF ECOWAS HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTION
IN THE WARRING COUNTRIES

4.0 Introduction

Regional organizations have become major actors in humanitarian interventions. Their roles in providing context-specific move towards interventions are of great importance. Moreover, international organizations and states have continued to play important roles in authorizing, and providing resources for peacekeeping missions. Some of the most successful instances of regional humanitarian intervention took place in the 1990s following repeated coups and civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone. These are both connected to Charles Taylor, the rebel leader of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) and a supporter of the rebellion in Sierra Leone led by Foday Sankoh of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). The engagement of ECOWAS forces in the regional intervention culminated in a successful election where President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah of Sierra Leone won and was installed as a civilian president. This same intervention also secured a United Nations mission where a combined team of ECOWAS and the UN forces restored peace to Liberia and Sierra Leone. Since then, ECOWAS has intervened in Ivory Coast, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea and Mali all on the grounds of “collective self-defense” (McMahon 2013).
4.1 The Concept of Humanitarian Intervention

Humanitarian Intervention (HI) is an old notion that gained currency after the cold war. The term has been defined as “a state's use of military force against another state when the publicly declared aim of the military action is to put an end to human-rights violations being perpetrated by the state against which it is directed” (Marjanovic 2011). Although this definition does not include non-military forms of intervention such as humanitarian aid and international sanctions, Humanitarian Intervention should include non-coercive means of reducing human sufferings and pains within independent states (Scheffer 1992).

Generally, HI is a consequence of armed conflicts. The need for HI arises most especially in places where there has been gross violation of human rights and general threats to international security, peace and stability. For instance, during the crises in Liberia and Sierra Leone, cases of war crimes were reported. Apart from the mass killings of over 200,000 civilians, millions of people were displaced from their homes with properties worth millions of dollars destroyed. This resulted in the outbreak of diseases, hunger and starvation, as well as the rapes of helpless women and children. Sierra Leone alone recorded thousands of maimed persons, while others were used as barricades against opposing sides during the uprising. The abuse of child rights was evident in the instances where child soldiers were recruited by the rebel forces and the civil militias. The child-soldiers were not only made to kill and maim under the influence of drugs, but were also made to commit all kinds of atrocities against the members of their own families under the threat of death or disfigurement.

HI involves the use of threats as well as military forces, and also entails interfering in the internal affairs of a sovereign state by sending military forces into a state that has committed acts of violence against itself. “The intervention is in response to situations that do not necessarily
pose direct threats to a states’ strategic interests, rather it is motivated by humanitarian goals.” (Scheffer 1992). In Liberia, ECOMOG forces were the first to respond to the call for intervention. A total number of 3500 soldiers from five West African Countries – Nigeria, Ghana, Gambia, Guinea and Cote d’Ivoire – landed in Monrovia in August 1990 with a mandate to put a stop to the carnage taking place there (Turack 2009). In Sierra Leone, the ECOMOG forces were supported by the British Army under the Palliser program. Later, the United Nations peacekeeping troops joined the duo as reinforcements when the crises were becoming a threat to the international community. This is in accordance with Article 42 of the United Nations charter, where it is stated, that: “…the Security Council … may take such action by air, sea, or land forces as may be necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security. Such action may include demonstrations, blockade, and other operations by air, sea, or land forces of Members of the United Nations” (UN 1945).

The theme of humanitarian intervention has remained a compelling foreign policy issue as it highlights the strain between the principle of state sovereignty and the evolving international norms related to human rights and the use of force. It has rekindled normative and practical arguments over its validity, the moral principles of using military force to respond to human rights violations, when it should take place, who should intervene and whether it is useful or not (Daws 2001). To its advocates, it marks a very important action in the face of human rights abuses, over the rights of state sovereignty, while to its detractors it is often viewed as a ruse for military intervention, often lacking legal backing, selectively deployed and achieving only elusive ends. The fact that it was repeatedly used following the end of the cold war suggested that a new norm of military HI was rising in international politics (James Pattison 2010).
4.2 The Concept of National Sovereignty

The concept of state sovereignty began with the Westphalian Pact of 1684. Since then, it has constituted a major hindrance to the notion of HI. Prior to that, the idea of national sovereignty was abused such that dictatorial leaders made themselves more sovereign than the state. Immediately after the Second World War, the United Nations was formed with the aim to promoting peace and stability. The UN charter acknowledges the significance of sovereignty especially when some newly independent states began to emerge from colonial rule. The UN charter provided a legal backing for humanitarian intervention as stated in chapter 7 of its charter. The chapter gave the Security Council the right to act in situations where there is “threat to the peace, breach of the peace or acts of aggression…” (UN 1945). The opponents of HI however always base their arguments on the Westphalian Treaty, which states that “sovereign states have the right to act freely within their borders” (Economist 2008). This same law is upheld by the United Nations charter of 1945; article 2(7), which states that “nothing should authorize intervention in matters essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state” (UN 1945). This has generated controversies between the advocates and detractors of HI as to whether sovereignty or humanitarian interests should exist; since both have legal backing within the UN charter (Economist 2008). Moreover, the Genocide convocation of 1948 also ruled against the principle of non-involvement in the affairs of sovereign states. The United Nations has also become controversial where in some cases, it involves itself in HI and justifies it by quoting its law in the charter, while in some instances it fails to involve itself in HI by quoting the law of sovereignty. For instance, Brown (1999) observed that in 1990 when Iraq invaded Kuwait leading to the eruption of the Gulf War, both the United States and the United Nations sponsored interventions to the oil rich region. Meanwhile, the Liberian conflict erupted the same
year; but the UN did not respond immediately. West Africa was left alone to find solution to its problems (Brown 1999). In the same way, the Rwandan genocide of 1994 and the carnage that took place in Bosnia in 1995 received no response from the United Nations. This draws one’s attention to the intricacies of “international responses to crimes against humanity” (McMahon 2013).

### 4.3 The Concept of Responsibility to Protect (R2P)

The emergence of a ‘Responsibility to Protect clause (R2P)’, established by the Canadian Government based on a report produced in 2001 by the International Commission on Intervention and state Sovereignty (ICISS), was a response to the history of substandard humanitarian interventions. The report was aimed at instituting a set of clear rules for determining when an intervention is necessary, the appropriate channels through which interventions can be approved and how it should be carried out. R2P also sought to initiate clearer regulations for HI and to also advocate a greater dependence on non-military procedures. The report criticizes and tries to alter the wording used to describe the matter of HI, by arguing that the idea of 'right to intervene' should be replaced with 'responsibility to protect'. That is, instead of saying that countries have the right to intervene in the affairs of another state, it should be stated that they have the responsibility to protect the citizens of another state where the state itself has failed to protect its own citizens. The R2P involves three stages: to prevent, to react and to rebuild; it also has gained strong support in certain circles including Canada, some parts of Europe and among African nations, but has been criticized mainly by Asian countries (Gierycz 2010).
Intervention by Africa’s regional organizations is the directive given to them by the mechanisms of the AU and ECOWAS protocols that endorse HI. The charter of the African Union and the ECOWAS protocols link humanitarian intervention to the rising norm of R2P. ECOWAS leaders saw Liberian and Sierra Leonean mission more as R2P than just interference in the internal conduct of a member state.

4.4 The Impact of Humanitarian Intervention on the ECOWAS Region

In the early days of the conflict in the ECOWAS region, individual states and their leaders began to call for negotiations for regional treaties based on the standard African practices. Negotiations, mediations, reconciliation, and arbitration were the preferred ways to peacefully resolve conflicts. This conforms to the charter of the OAU, which was adopted in 1963. It also guided the ECOWAS treaty by stating that: “there should be non-aggression between member states; maintenance of regional peace, stability and security through the promotion and strengthening of good neighborliness; peaceful settlement of disputes among member states, active co-operation between neighboring countries, and promotion of a peaceful environment” (OAU 1963). These non-violent techniques were all applied to the Liberian situation, but failed. By May 1990, the neighboring countries became troubled as the arrival of thousands of refugees to their borders is a threat to the peace of their own countries. Guinea and Sierra Leone particularly pressured ECOWAS to find a solution to the violent crises. The heads of ECOWAS states met and formed a five-member Standing Mediation Committee (SMC) with representatives from Gambia, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria and Togo. Their mandate was to find a peaceful means of resolving the conflict (Brown 1999). The SMC committee’s attempt to bargain a truce was aggravated by Doe’s refusal to step down as president. They also used other
diplomatic methods such as; threats to enforce travel sanctions, freezing of Liberia’s assets that are situated outside its boundaries and restricting the rebels from using sovereign territories for training their combatants and for staging their bases. These also failed because Charles Taylor and the other rebel groups were unwilling to compromise their positions and settle the disputes. When the SMC failed to create a peaceful resolution, ECOWAS reluctantly came to a conclusion that forced intervention is the next line of action (Brown 1999).

Despite some disagreements with regards to intervention, the ECOWAS sub-committee on defense held a two day meeting in July 1990 to draw up a plan for military intervention force. Members of the committee met again in August and approved the “ECOWAS Peace Plan for Liberia”, which ordered the formation of the ECOWAS Monitoring Group in Liberia (Brown 1999). A few weeks later, 3500 troops from Nigeria, Ghana, Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Gambia were deployed to Liberia. Their assignment was peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance through: the imposition of a ceasefire, disarmament, halting the slaughter of civilians, placing a ban on arms dealing, instituting a provisional government while arranging for elections, and the movement of foreign nationals out of the warring zones (Brown 1999).

The ECOMOG forces took over the control of Monrovia immediately after they arrived, and enforced a temporary ceasefire. This move made Charles Taylor angry, as he claimed it was an attack on a sovereign nation. He thus led a counter attack against the ECOMOG troops. In self defense, ECOMOG switched its role from peacekeeping to the de facto army of Liberia. They launched an offensive when they realized that President Doe had been captured outside their headquarters by Jonson’s rebel force. ECOMOG immediately installed a provisional government in Monrovia. At the same time Taylor formed his own government in Gbarnga, a sign that he rejects the interim government. This move made
ECOMOG to assume a role of peacemaking and for the next seven years. This worked to maintain stability in Liberia (Brown 1999).

Ironically, there were divisions among the peacekeeping forces, especially with Nigeria, the largest regional sponsor, assuming leadership roles. The Francophone countries were opposed to this, and began to debate the mandate and management of the force. Yet, as the war persisted, more troops were sent to reinforce the ones on ground. As the ECOMOG presence expanded with more than 10,000 West African troops, there was need for additional logistics. Cote d’Ivoire donated a medical team, while some of the smaller countries gave modest financial contributions. ECOMOG’s role and mission also changed again. The observers of the operation testified that the ECOWAS troops were divided into three distinct groups during the Liberian conflict with each adopting the character of its leader. In the early 1990s, ECOWAS believed that it will achieve a quick solution, it therefore pursued peacekeeping activities. But by the mid-90s, the rebels accused ECOMOG of being a party to the war when they assumed the role of the de facto army for the country, and the last years of the war was marked by traditional peacekeeping, peace enforcement, humanitarian assistance, and disarmament. Moreover, by 1995, ECOMOG also took on the difficult task of defending some 160 United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) observers (Brown 1999).

4.5 Justification for Humanitarian Intervention by ECOWAS

According to the international commission on intervention and state sovereignty (ICISS), justification for humanitarian intervention includes: intervention for human protection purposes, including military intervention in extreme case (2001:16). This is supported when major harm to civilians is taking place or about to take place and the state in question is not able to or unwilling
to defend the civilians against the perpetrators or if the state itself is the perpetrator. Intervention in the affairs of a sovereign nation is usually forbidden in international law; but ECOWAS undertook a group intervention in a sovereign nation with the sole aim of protecting the civilians from harm. This is the justification given by the ECOWAS leaders for the ECOMOG mission in Liberia and Sierra Leone. The conditions given by ICISS under which military intervention could be lawfully undertaken states that: “only in extreme circumstances for ‘human protection purposes’ and only if the mission satisfies the six military principles of military intervention” (2001:32). In addition to the critical elements, only the right authority can authorize a military intervention. It should also be in pursuit of a just cause, with a proportionate and a reasonable prospect of success (2001:32). Almost all of the above requirements were fulfilled in the Liberian case. As at the time of the uprising, Doe continued as the president of Liberia. He was the one who called for an intervention in a letter addressed to ECOWAS SMC, on 14th July 1990 (Weller 1994:61). The ECOWAS SMC accepted Doe’s request purely on humanitarian protection grounds.

Contemporary state practices and academic outlook generally concur on the justifiability of HI in situations where the governments of a sovereign state is connected with acts of evil subjugation of its citizens, or when a it fails to deal with a situation to the extent that it results in the gross violation of human rights. Human rights norms require intervention because a commitment to human rights also implies a commitment to reliable action, including that of the military. ECOWAS did not obtain prior permission from United Nations Security Council before its troops were deployed to Liberia and Sierra Leone, as expected by the UN charter; but it invoked the principle of Humanitarian Intervention and its security protocols (Brown 1999).
4.6 Successes of the Humanitarian Intervention by ECOWAS

The ECOWAS peacekeeping intervention in West Africa has succeeded in opening up new potentials for the preservation of global peace and security in Africa. It has also invalidated the portrayal of Africa as a ‘hopeless’ continent by showcasing the considerable progress in Africa’s international relations. The fact that the regional troops were involved in the conflicts of warring states marks a clear departure from the principle of non interference in the internal affairs of sovereign states, which had previously characterized the region.

ECOWAS’s success in establishing peacekeeping operations with conflict prevention and peace building as endemic parts of its security mechanisms deserves to be honored. This is because there is a rising need to maintain a coherent technology that is necessary for the sustenance of peace in the face of difficult political uprisings such as was witnessed during this time. This will serve as preventive measures to curtail a reoccurrence of violence in the future. The states of Liberia and Sierra Leone serve as examples where the integration of humanitarian intervention and peace building were combined to maintain security in the societies.

Other areas of successes of ECOWAS during the intervention and peacekeeping missions include the establishment of the Peace and Security Mechanisms, the adoption of the protocol for good governance, and its engagement with civil societies. There is a growing transformation within ECOWAS’s guiding principles with regards to human security and good governance. The protocol on good governance tackles the root causes of the security threats within the sub-region with the aim to finding solution most especially where the well being of the individual is concerned. This is not to say that bad governance has been eradicated in the sub-region, but the fact that ECOWAS took it upon itself to ensure that member states do not disregard the principles of democracy by punishing dissident nations who violate this principle. For instance,
Guinea and Niger were suspended from ECOWAS for cases of military coup d’états. But the regional leaders recognized the democratically elected government of Alansan Ouatara as winner of the November 2010 elections. Civil society organizations have also become active participants in soliciting for good governance all over West Africa due to the growing understanding between them and ECOWAS. For instance; the West African Network on Small Arms (WANSA) and the West African Network on Peace Building (WANPB) are examples of civil society organizations that are actively involved in the advocacy for better peace building measures (Mashishi 2003).

The relationship between the UN and ECOWAS forces in Liberia and Sierra Leone as well as Cote d’Ivoire afforded practical lessons for cooperation in areas of peace and security interventions. This form of cooperation laid the foundation for a budding structure where task sharing and division of labor between the AU, the RECs and the UN are built. The growing complimentary roles between the ECOWAS and the UN took place because of the willingness of West African leaders to quickly respond to the call to intervene in the conflict situations. They did not just provide stability to the region, but also willingly handed over their leadership role to the larger and better equipped UN mission. “This has given ECOWAS a leadership role in matters relating to peace and security in the sub-region. In most cases, the AU and UN have been content with following the ECOWAS lead and endorsing its positions and resolutions” (Kabia 2011).

4.7 The Failure of Some of the Humanitarian Mission

Despite the recorded accomplishments of the ECOWAS peacekeeping missions, there were a number of constraints that hindered their achieving total success as they labored to restore
peace to the conflict prone countries. Kabia (2011) reported some of the areas of constraints to include the fact that the forces lacked the capacity to effectively protect the masses under their commands. The “poor record of human rights troops, lack of neutrality and complicity in exploiting the natural resources of the host countries” were listed as additional factors (Kabia 2011).

Other factors that hindered the ECOWAS missions from achieving success are poor funding, military and political intricacies. The prevalent financial and logistical constraint that confronted the sub-regional forces adversely affected their proficiency. Another important factor that negatively affected ECOMOG’s operations was the fact that there were cases of rivalry between the Francophone and Anglophone troops, which caused divisions among them. The Francophone troops that challenged the hegemonic role of the Nigerian troops at the Liberian and Sierra Leonean missions became less cooperative. Instances were cited where some of them cooperated with the rebel groups against the peacekeeping force. For example, Charles Taylor launched his first assault on Liberia from the neighboring French speaking Cote d’Ivoire in December 1989. Moreover, a report by a UN panel of experts also claimed that Burkina Faso supported the RUF and the NPFL in Sierra Leone and Liberia respectively (UN, 2001). These divisions among the sub-regional troops made the task of intervention very difficult and even ruined the chances of attaining peaceful resolutions to the conflicts.

Finally, opinions differed with regards to the approach and strategy to be employed by the ECOMOG troops in Sierra Leone and Liberia. These divisions created problems with inter-contingent management and levels of authority. Where Ghana supported the use of traditional model of peacekeeping strategies, Nigeria approved of a more forceful action. These strains were
intensified especially by the lack of successful supervision of the forces by ECOWAS and also by the resentment of Nigeria’s hegemonic position in the region (Kabia 2011).

4.8 Challenges of Humanitarian Intervention/Conflict Resolution in ECOWAS

Humanitarian Intervention in conflicts in the ECOWAS region faced a number of challenges. These have continued to serve as hindrances towards the achievement of total peace and tranquility within the sub-region. It has been observed that the institutional and financial failures of ECOWAS stand as an obstacle to the realization of the objectives that are set out in its emerging peace and security framework. The fact that the organization is not able to fund most of its programs signifies the poor economic status of its member states. In its effort to ensure the availability of funds for projects, the community levied its members a 0.5 percent tax on all imports into the region to help fill the gap between each country’s contributions. Most of the states were unable meet up with the payment of the levy due to competing priorities. (Kabia 2011) ECOWAS had had to turn to external donors in order to fund its peace and security missions. A number of western countries have also assisted in funding some of the peacekeeping operations. France, United States and United Kingdom have also worked with ECOWAS to ensure that the institutional capacity in West Africa is developed in such a way as to ensure the implementation of capacity building programs. By accepting support from Western powers, ECOWAS risks not only surrendering the local rights of the security structures to the western powers, but also encouraging dependence on them to fund the programs and also lay down the rules for the execution of the programs (Kabia 2011).

One other challenge faced by the organization is the slow implementation of policies by the leaders of the organization. An example can be seen in the case of the convention on small
arms which was signed in 2006; this took almost four years before it was implemented. This is because most member states failed to endorse the treaty on time. There were also reported instances where some heads of governments supported insurgents of neighboring states. This goes on to destabilize the shared principles of the security measures that were put together in the ECOWAS peace and security mechanism. Whilst ECOWAS is making moves to address human security issues and become a more people-centered organization, it still struggles to deal with endemic human security problems in the sub-region such as corruption, diseases and the growing poverty and economic hardship. Corruption in the sub-region continues to undermine economic recovery efforts and robs the population of the expected peace dividend. “11 of the organization’s 15 member states occupy the bottom places of Transparency International’s 2009 Corruption Perception Index” (International, 2009). Although macro-economic figures and growth forecasts for the sub region are getting better, the pervasive poverty and poor social and economic indicators pose the biggest challenge to peace in West Africa. For instance, twelve of the sub-regions’ fifteen countries fall within the Low Human Development category of the United Nations Development Program’s (UNDP) Human Development Index Report of 2009 due to factors such as low life expectancy, high infant mortality rate, high levels of illiteracy, low per capita incomes and abject poverty.

One of the greatest challenges faced by the nascent ECOWAS’s peace and security architecture was tackling the situation in Cote d’Ivoire. The crises that rocked Cote d’Ivoire in between 2010 and 2011 occurred at a time when global attention had shifted from Africa to the Middle East. With the Liberian and Sierra Leonean crises forgotten, focus was placed on Libya and the rest of the Middle East. ECOWAS had to take the leading role in the crises and also sought the attention of the global community to it. ECOWAS leaders had to negotiate a three-
pronged approach to dealing with the situation; including the imposition of economic sanctions, mediation and forced intervention as a last resort. These efforts combined with the effort made by the AU failed to yield the desired result. ECOWAS leaders had to call on the UN mission based in Côte d’Ivoire in March 2011, to take a more decisive move towards the resolution of the conflict. They also called on the UN and the wider international community to give more attention to the crisis. Although ECOWAS responded immediately to the crisis, the use of its emerging peace and security mechanism was unsuccessful in effectively preventing the violence within the country (Kabia, 2011).

Another challenge that the peacekeepers faced had to do with the fact that the nature and dynamics of the conflicts differed from state to state. The waves of the post cold war conflicts differed greatly from the traditional violence they were used to. Especially since the disintegration of the states was caused by different factors, the task of intervention required strategic planning in order to build and restore a sustainable peace. Bearing this in mind, the ECOWAS forces got involved in building shelters for displaced persons, providing provisions of food for the starving civilians using their meager resources, as well as security for the people under their commands. In their effort at peace building, the ECOMOG forces began to implement schemes that included “disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programs, security sector reforms and organizing elections” (Kabia, 2011). Seeing this effort by the sub-regional forces, the United Nations could not help but send in their own peacekeepers who worked together with the sub-regional forces. ECOMOG forces also worked together with the UN observer missions in Liberia and Sierra Leone. The ECOWAS missions to Liberia and Côte d’Ivoire worked under the auspices of the UN. Both the regional peacekeepers as well as those of the United Nations worked cooperatively despite the fact that they had different assignments,
coordination, logistics as well as differences in cultural orientation. Each group was given the chance to make the best use of its ability and expertise as they worked together to achieve a common goal, the resolution of the conflicts. As such, through the lessons that they learnt, they were able to come up with mechanisms on how to work together in the future when the opportunity presents itself (Kabia, 2011).

4.9 Summary/Conclusion

The history of post-independent West Africa has been fraught with bitter conflicts. At the dawn of the 1990s, when the world witnessed significant changes, Africa was not impervious to these spectacular swings in the economic and political order. The end of the Cold War particularly had a major impact on the continent, including a significant increase in peacekeeping interventions. These military interventions were special because they were carried out by African states, with the support of sub-regional groups as against the conventional military involvement of foreign powers in Africa with connections to the African state that obtained during the Cold War period, but this new type of sub-regional peacemaking intervention is not without challenges. One of which is the obvious contravention of the international legal principle of “non-interference in the affairs of sovereign states”. This principle features prominently in the OAU charter. Interventions have been carried out practically by the RECs whose directives were initially limited to promotion of support.

The establishment of ECOWAS as a regional economic community was initially aimed at promoting economic cooperation among member states through free market policies, however, the region began to grapple with setbacks as the region plunged into civil wars. These conflicts are of varying magnitude, durations, levels and intensities. The factors responsible for the
conflicts also vary from historical enmity and colonial legacies, to deep seated issues of post-colonial realities, forces of globalization and global domination, external organizations and the vagaries of the ecological system. Some of these wars were so deadly that they threatened to wipe out whole nation groups. As a result, millions of lives were lost, and many people displaced out of their habitations. Some of the reasons given for these civil wars lie in the fact that the colonial powers that dominated the region earlier carved out territories along ethnic divide in order to easily dominate their subjects, and with their exit came the problem of political leadership which became linked to ethnicity. Consequently, each of the ethnic groups desired to be in charge of the new country. Moreover, corruption and bad governance as well as border disputes are some of the other factors that created tension in the region.

The ECOWAS mandate has grown to include the development of the most highly structured conflict prevention, management and resolution mechanism in Africa. With the collapse of states through the conflicts that engulfed the region in the early 1990s to the early 2000s, ad hoc bodies were instituted in prompt response to the emergency situations with the emergence of ECOMOG as the sub regional peacekeeping force. Subsequently, the sub regional body engaged in humanitarian intervention in the conflicts in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau, Guinea and Cote d’Ivoire. They also undertook the task of safeguarding the lives and properties of vulnerable civilians as well as implementing peace building programs including organizing elections and enthroning democracy in the crises riddled areas. The peacekeeping mission realized a number of successes in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Cote d’Ivoire but failed awfully in their mission in Guinea Bissau. The missions encountered a number of challenges including lack of funding, logistics and political disagreement amongst the forces. There was also a lack of coherence with regards to the peacekeeping and humanitarian strategy.
Nonetheless, notwithstanding the depiction of West Africa and indeed the entire continent as ‘hopeless’, the conflict management and peace building intervention of ECOWAS is worthy of praise. This reveals that Africa is taking ownership and accountability for its conflicts. The ongoing efforts at institutionalizing peace and security response mechanisms are steps in the right direction as are efforts to promote good governance and economic development in the sub-region.

4.10 Recommendations

The AU charter on continental government and should therefore be revisited with a view to establishing one government as initially suggested by the Pan-Africanists. This will lead to both economic and political integration with one head of government, one army, a single market and a common currency. Moreover, visas and passports should be abolished to enable a free flow of people, capital, goods and services from one part of the continent. African people should be able to freely choose any part of the continent to settle. When these are implemented, the issue of border and cross border disputes will not arise as all African people will be regarded as one with the right to live anywhere on the continent.

One of the major barriers to integration in Africa is the lack of basic infrastructure such as roads that link different parts of the continent together. This should be accompanied by the provision of proper transport and communication systems, as well as information and communication technology (ICT). This will enable easy movements of people, capital and goods from one part of the continent to another. The implementation of all policies with regards to the provisions of the basic amenities will also lead to increased economic activities, thereby empowering African people to become self reliant.
Furthermore, the disarmament and demobilization programs which were carried out by both ECOMOG and the UN forces should be continued by the various national governments. The disarmed and demobilized youths should be properly integrated into the society through positive initiatives at the grassroots levels. These could include, the establishment of trade learning centers to enable the demobilized youths acquire skills that will aid in job creation. Additionally, where possible, some of the youths should be recruited into the armed forces of their countries and should be given proper military training. These will help reduce the presence of armed youths on the streets thereby and making the continent safer for its people. It will also provide the youths with a means of sustaining themselves thereby reducing the rate of crimes.

The heads of national governments should also intensify efforts at fixing the infrastructures that have been destroyed by the wars in addition to creating new ones, in order to aid economic recovery in the war-torn nations. The governments should also operate open door policies and inclusive governance by embracing people of different ethnic backgrounds. This can be achieved by involving ethnic leaders at the grassroots level in governance. The leaders understand their people better and their people trust them explicitly. Working with the leaders will boost the confidence of the populace in the governments and help to restore peace and stability in the region.

Finally, ECOWAS should also work with the AU to improve the relationship between the Francophone and Anglophone countries of the region. This will help them to be more successful when working together in the future. The setbacks experienced during the interventions in Liberia and Sierra Leone were partly due to the fact that this rivalry caused a division among the forces where some of them began to side with the rebels. This made the task of intervention difficult for the regional force. However, ECOWAS can sponsor workshops and trainings in
relationship building and teamwork. This will integrate the forces into working together as one. ECOWAS needs to continually work with the United Nations and the United States not only during crisis intervention but also during the times of peace. This will enable the regional organization’s forces to develop better techniques of intervention which will serve as a safeguard in case of future reoccurrences of conflicts in the region.
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