

THE ROLE OF SUB-REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN REGIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY: AN ANALYSIS OF ECOMOG MILITARY INTERVENTIONS IN WEST AFRICA

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Abstract

This paper examined the role of sub-regional organizations in regional peace and security. It also analysed the experience of the ECOWAS/ ECOMOG, in conflict management in the intra-state conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone between 1990 and 2000, when ECOMOG's operation lasted. It has been observed, that the study of ECOWAS/ECOMOG as a sub-regional organization involved in conflict management received little or no scholarly attention. This paper therefore, is an attempt to fill this gap. The general objective of the study is to examine the role of sub-regional organizations in regional peace and security, based on the ECOMOG military interventions in West Africa. The paper specifically evaluated the experience of ECOWAS/ECOMOG, as a mechanism of sub-regional security cooperation, and how it conducted peace operations in Liberia and Sierra Leone. The approach is descriptive and analytical and relied predominantly on secondary data sources.

Keywords: Sub-regional, Organization, Peace, Security, Military, Interventions.

1.1 Introduction

Every political system experiences conflict, which is an inevitable element of life. It is a social issue that spans communities, countries, regions and continents and has existed since the dawn of mankind. Opposing views, contrary opinions, different needs and conflicting interests lead to conflict in society (Heywood, 2007). Conflict can be classified into intra-personal, interpersonal, intra-group and inter-group conflicts.

Also prevalent in Africa are ethnic and religious disputes, boundary disputes, civic unrest, civil wars, and genocides. Examples of specific conflicts in Africa include border conflicts (between Ethiopia and Eritrea, Nigeria and Cameroon), genocide in Somalia, and ethnic/religious conflicts that turned into civil wars in Zaire, Sudan, Burundi, Rwanda, Liberia, Uganda, and Lesotho, to name a few. There have also been unrest in Angola, state/rebel conflicts in Serra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire, and Guinea Bissau. International Colloquium Report (2012) noted as well that civil wars have grown throughout Africa after the Soviet Union's fall in 1989/1990, which signaled the end of the Cold War. In Rwanda in 1994, it manifested as a genocide that claimed the lives of roughly 800,000 people. In actuality, fourteen of the sixteen conflicts that were fought in Africa from 1990 to 1997 were intrastate

wars, and in 1992, the African continent hosted 46.7 percent of all civil wars in the world (Collier and Hoeffler, 2004).

Some of Africa's increasing intra- and interstate conflicts are typically explained by internal political, economic, and ideological disagreements. The UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs consequently declared fifteen complex emergencies in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, of which eight were in Africa (Umozurike 2005). Meanwhile, the African Union or its predecessor Organization of African Unity (OAU) lacks the capability and resources for effective peacekeeping interventions, and the United Nations (UN) occasionally neglected its obligations to maintain peace in Africa. The movement that led to the creation of the AU and other sub-regional organizations was driven by the need for a more powerful body that would be able to manage the various conflicts that plagued the continent. During the OAU's extraordinary meeting in Sirte, Libya, in September 1999, this process was initiated (Salim, 2002).

Conflict management and conflict resolution in Africa have proven to be extraordinarily challenging. Justice, peace, security, and political system stability are some of the theoretical pillars of conflict resolution (Akpuru-Aja, 2011). The African Union (AU) has sought to end a number of conflicts in Africa with variable degrees of success (sometimes noteworthy, most of the time not significant). In accordance with Charter 33 of the United Nations, the AU tries to resolve disputes by negotiation, mediation, and inter-mediation rather than by issuing sanctions. Although classical international law, unlike the OAU, allowed the AU to act under a suzerain's consensual arrangement in a protected state and on humanitarian grounds, security concerns in the African region continue to worsen.

According to Deveraux and Maxwell (2005), A new kind of sub-regionalism is currently being driven by the security situation in the ECOWAS member states, which is heavily focused on security. It has been suggested that sub-regional security institutions, particularly ECOWAS, might provide a solution to the sub-management region's of the problem of insecurity.

This research work therefore examines the roles of sub-regional organizations in regional peace and security in West Africa, an analysis of ECOMOG. This research will be conducted using documentary analysis as well as discourse analysis approaches. Relevant portions of documents of ECOWAS, AU and protocols in relation to regional cooperation and conflict management would be analyzed.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Recent developments in African conflict have shown that regional and sub-regional cooperation between organizations is essential to the development and application of conflict management mechanisms. A thorough investigation is necessary given the high likelihood of violent intra-state conflicts in Africa, the evolving character of conflict management in the international system, and the degree to which both West Africa and Africa as a whole have been responding to these developments.

The developed world has been deeply concerned about how conflicts are managed in Africa. This concern was awakened by images of starvation in Somalia and genocide in Rwanda,

which have sparked contentious humanitarian interventions and raised doubts about the ability of the international community to settle complicated intra-state conflicts. The subsequent responses have ranged from the United States' pledge to train African armies for an African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI) to the considerable restructuring of the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO). But the issue of excessive intra-state violence has not yet been adequately addressed in either Africa or the rest of the globe., (Findlay,2002). One of the very first effects of the post-cold War crises in Africa was a particularly brutal civil war that raged from late 1989 to 1997 in the small, coastal nation of Liberia, as well as battles in Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire.

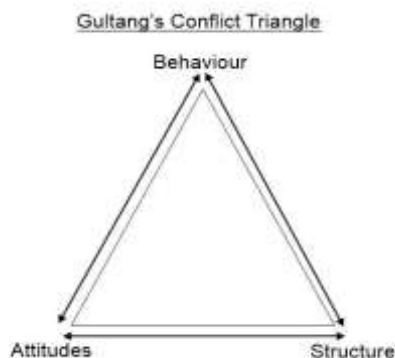
1.3 Research Methodology

This research is intended to investigate the role of sub-regional organizations in regional peace and security: An analysis of ECOMOG military intervention in West Africa. To effectively achieve this objective, the study will use documents review analysis of secondary data to be able to understand what is known about sub-regional organizations, Sub-regional actors and the related issue of conflict management. Furthermore, documents relating to the wars in Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire and Liberia would be of great importance. Specifically, the documents to be consulted will include Text books, journals, conference papers, web pages, reports and articles, published and unpublished papers internal official report of organizations like the United Nations (UN), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the International Crisis Group (ICG) will also be useful.

2.1 The Concept of Conflict.

Conflicts are complex processes with particular components that occur at most levels of man's endeavor. One method to conceptualize the nexus between these components is the Conflict Triangle at Figure 1, which has structures, attitudes, and behaviors at the points, Galtung first put forth this framework for analyzing conflict..

Fig 1:



Source: Johan Galtung. *Theories of Conflict Definition , Di-mention, Negation, Formation.* Colombia University Press, 1958.

According to him, structures are political institutions, processes, and procedures that have an impact on how requirements for identity, security, and welfare are met. Attitudes include

impressions and false beliefs that the parties have about one another and about themselves. These could be good or bad, but in violent confrontations, factions frequently acquire increasingly unfavorable perceptions of their adversaries and increasingly favorable identities within their own group. According to Oche (2014), In analyzing the causes of violence in Africa, contends that social, economic, political, and a variety of other challenges unique to the continent constitute the root of African conflicts. This may be seen in the pursuit of resource distribution, power access, and the spread of SALW, among other things. The reasons of the conflicts in the Congo, Rwanda, Liberia, and Sierra Leone come to mind when considering this conclusion. There was an apparent instance of ethnic rivalry dominance and exploitation in Congo. The main factors contributing to the hostilities in Sierra Leone and Liberia were largely political and the availability of economic riches, notably diamonds. Furthermore, according to a News watch report, 'the fierce struggle for power between Aidid and Mahdi in Somalia has its historical antecedents in the ethnic rivalry between the Abgal Haniye clan located in Mogadishu and Habir Gidir clan whose base is in Central Somalia. 'This research work is of the view that the quest of interest groups for access to power and distribution of resources had largely caused conflicts in Africa, particularly in Democratic Republic of Congo and Central African Republic. This research work also believes that when individuals and groups turn to violence to solve problems, conflict resolution becomes as multifaceted as conflict itself.

2.2 Nature and Goals of Conflicts

Humankind has experienced conflict since the dawn of time. This is due to the fact that each person is unique, and our perception of ourselves varies from that of others. Conflicts frequently emerge from misconceptions caused by variations in perspective. The capacity of humans to resolve conflict determines the extent to which it affects them. According to Ross Stagner (1967) "Conflict occurs when two or more people have competing interests that they believe will only be realized by one of them." This indicates that the majority of disputes occur from an attempt to exert control over certain circumstances where real or imagined dangers would not allow. Therefore, it is important for the parties to the dispute to identify points of convergence so that they can work to address the issue. Therefore, all measures are taken to ensure that peace is not only maintained but also that a recurrence of the conflict is avoided. This can be accomplished by carrying out a number of tasks, such as reforming the government through election processes, fixing the infrastructure, resettling displaced people, and creating mechanisms for conflict prevention (Umaru, 2003).

2.3 Causes and Types of Conflicts

As a necessary component of human existence, conflict evolves over time in the same way that human attitudes, values, and behaviors do. As a result, social, political, and economic issues turn into potentially explosive areas for conflict.. According to Osita Eze (1984) "Socioeconomic privileges provide the material foundation for exercising one's civil and political rights." In a similar vein, we might assert that civil and political rights can determine the course of change. Therefore, forceful opposition may be the only option in situations where people are denied these fundamental rights, whether as a result of some sort of injustice or an unfair distribution of the available resources or of the nation's wealth by government. The right to employment, social security, and other fundamental socioeconomic facilities are some examples of basic rights" (UN 1994).

2.4 Root of Conflicts in Africa

Conflict in the region is primarily caused by Africa's homogeneous political economy. Political channels are required to get economic benefit in Africa's mono-cultural capitalist economic systems. Following independence, African states developed a culture of profit maximization, privatization of the means of production, and excessive commoditization of labor (Ake, 1981). African political leaders have often ignored the demands of the populace in favor of insatiable material acquisition. The majority of the region's elites leverage their position as political power brokers to amass wealth by manipulating elections and oppressing the populace. Despite apparent efforts by African leaders and their foreign allies to democratize and develop the region, the continent is rife with terrible poverty, suffering, marginalization, and political corruption. It makes sense that the majority of conflict situations in sub-Saharan Africa involve a struggle for national identity, which is typically in defense of natural resources such as gold, diamonds, tin, and crude oil.

2.5 The Concept of National Sovereignty

The Westphalian Pact of 1684 marked the beginning of the idea of state sovereignty. Since then, it has posed a significant barrier to the idea of external involvement in states to advance peace and stability. Prior to that, dictatorial rulers (made themselves more sovereign) than the state by misusing the concept of national sovereignty. The United Nations was established shortly after the Second World War with the intention of fostering peace and stability

2.6 The Concept of Responsibility to Protect (R2P)

Based on a 2001 report by the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS), the Canadian government created the "Responsibility to Protect clause (R2P). It was a reaction to a report of ineffective international operations intended to bring about peace and resolve conflicts. The report sought to establish a set of precise guidelines for identifying when an intervention is required, the proper channels via which interventions might be approved, and how it should be carried out. R2P also aimed to promote more transparent rules for intervention as well as a greater reliance on non-military methods. The report argues that the concept of "right to interfere" should be replaced with "duty to protect" in an effort to change the language used to express the issue of intervention. In other words, it should be emphasized that countries have a responsibility to safeguard the citizens of other states when their own state has failed to protect them rather than that they have the right to interfere in the affairs of other states. The R2P entails three stages: to prevent, to react, and to rebuild; it has acquired great support in some circles, particularly among African nations and in some regions of Europe, but has primarily drawn criticism from Asian nations. (Gierycz 2010)._

2.7 Sub-Regional Organizations as Third Party Mediator

It's accurate to say that the concept of "conflict" has been stretched and modified for the objectives at hand. It can be overly comprehensive and is frequently used in place of the words "dispute" and "crisis." The Bloomfield and Leiss analytical model shows conflict as a dynamic process consisting of a number of phases comprising components that generate pressures towards or away from violence, offering a very helpful viewpoint on conflict. This theory holds that conflicts begin as a result of a substantive disagreement, which may concern matters of autonomy, legitimacy, or other values. Both parties may initially fail to see the conflict in a military context. To resolve the conflict, the parties or a mediator may start a

negotiation process. However, a threshold is crossed to a second phase in which hostilities are theoretically likely or at least logically expected if one or more parties propose a military option to settle the conflict. Conflict begins in this second phase, which begins when one or both parties begin to view the disagreement in military terms, is what Bloomfield and Leiss describe as conflict. Based on this viewpoint, "conflict" is defined as a disagreement in which an armed confrontation has been threatened. In a nutshell, conflict is the consequence of attempts to resolve disagreements between parties through the use of physical force (violence) or the threat of physical force; it is a deliberate confrontation over values in which the use of violence has been introduced.

3.1 Theoretical Framework

For the theoretical analysis of sub-regional organizations, This paper focuses on the theories of integration, based on the Non-state-centric models. The non-state-centric approaches emphasize the role and influence of national and transnational pressure groups and supranational organs in explaining the development of European integration. The dominant approach here is neofunctionalism (Haas, 1958, 1968), which was revisited and adjusted many times (for example, Schmitter 1970; Niemann, 2006.) and formed the basis for formation of supranational organizations as main actors for regional cooperation (Sweet and Sandholtz, 1998).

The fundamental theories of integration are as follows:

3.1.1 Functionalism

David Mitrany (1943) developed the functionalism theory, which is arguably the most important proponent of the perspective. In his book, *A Working Peace System*, and other writings, Mitrany expressed the opinion that countries' reluctance to cede their sovereignty to an international organization is the biggest barrier to integration and regional cooperation. Despite the fact that technology is bringing people closer together, politics has persisted in amplifying the irrational division that is present in the majority of countries (Ogbeidi, 2003).

3.1.2 Neo-functionalism

This method emphasizes the importance of having a federal structure. This type of integration should rely more on political intent than it does on functional integration in the social and economic spheres (Vieira-Posada, 2006). The importance of institutions in achieving further integration is also emphasized by neo-functionalism. Several extensions to this method have been suggested (i.a., Haas, 1968; Nye, 1970; Schmitter, 1970).

Neo-functionalism puts forth an effort to analyze regional cooperation on the basis of actual evidence. Neo-functionalist theory views integration as an unavoidable process rather than a desirable outcome that may be promoted by the governments of the involved states. Therefore, neo-functionalism asserts that supranational institutions are a key factor in regional cooperation. Neo-functionalism theory is crucial in the assessment of the beliefs of early proponents of the European Union who believed that European integration is a crucial herald to a harmonious socio-economic relationship in Europe.

3.1.3 The Federalist Approach

Federalism is viewed as a multifaceted concept with different aspects that addresses the issues of concentration, diffusion, and sharing of political power through principles, ideologies, institutions, and processes. The federal concept is a system of power distribution that allows for both coordination and independence between the national and regional governments within a certain geographic area. According to Mally (2005), federation, confederation, and a supranational community are the three conceptual types of federalism.

3.1.4 Pluralist Approach

Conceptually, pluralism describes a situation in which various civilizations live in a society while preserving their cultural distinctiveness. Webster dictionary described it as "a state of society in which members of various ethnic, racial, religious, or socioeconomic groups maintain and develop their traditional culture or specific interest within the bounds of a single civilization" (2015). Since pluralism accepts multiple fundamental ideas or principles, it can refer to more than just a society. For example, it might describe a political system or other type of structure where various groups coexist with one another while maintaining their own identities. This means that pluralism acknowledges a larger number of conflicting interest groups that share the power and resources, as opposed to just one group, subgroup, or culture controlling how things move. The democratic ideal of plurality allows for the free expression of the opinions and ideas of many groups. These definitions associate pluralism with notions like multiculturalism, relativism, prejudice, inclusivism, and more (Longley, E. and Kiberd, D. 2001).

4.1 Summary of Findings

Africa is said to have accounted for more conflicts in the post-cold war era than any other continent (Department for International Development, 2001). Having lost the strategic significance it enjoyed during the cold war, Africa was abandoned by the West and left to deal by itself with the myriad of local conflicts (Dala, 2007). The conflicts and civil wars that have ravaged the continent, particularly in Somalia, Liberia, the Congo, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, the Ivory Coast, and Sudan, have necessitated the development of techniques for conflict resolution on the African continent. The creation of sub-regional organizations like ECOWAS reflects the commitment of African nations to avert and resolve ongoing crises in the area. The 1990s saw a wave of violent conflicts and insecurity that altered the institutional framework and policy priorities of ECOWAS by placing peace and security concerns at the forefront of regional integration initiatives (Cilliers 1999), and the organization since the end of the Cold War have subsequently developed key policies that continue to shape the region's peace and security dynamic. This includes the 1999 adoption of a Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security (ECOWAS 1999).

4.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations are suggested based on the findings of the paper:

- a). The study recommends that there is need to institutionalize conflicts management institutions within sub-regional Organization, so that they do not operate on adhoc basis. Through such efforts they can always be on standby alert to mediate in conflict if and when the time comes that they are needed.

- b). There is need for sub-regional organization to develop a funding strategy to be independent and self-supporting. The reliance on donors can be problematic as either the donors push their own agendas and sometimes not be depended on to provide funds at critical times in the negotiations. This has a potential of destabilizing negotiations at critical moments in any peace process.
- c). When peacekeeping operations are deployed to implement peace agreements, contingency plans for responding to hostile opposition should be an integral part of the mission design. In order to improve the rapid deployment capacity of the military, civilian police and civilian components of peacekeeping operations, the Mission Secretariat must have the capacity to act in a timely manner on the three critical and interdependent aspects of rapid deployment, personnel, material readiness and funding .
- d). Standard procedures should be in place to ensure the timely sharing of intelligence information, both among contingents in the field and between mission headquarters and the Secretariat of the relevant sub-regional organization.

4.3 Conclusion

ECOMOG has a commendable proven record of maintaining and enforcing peace in the sub-region. Although ECOMOG's presence in the Liberian civil war prolonged the battle, the intervention force's efforts ultimately brought it to a close and established the conditions for the 1997 election. Although ECOMOG's operation in Sierra Leone did not have the same effect as it did in Liberia, it did give the country's legitimate government the essential support and offered its citizens safety from the brutality and savagery of the rebels. Due to the ECOMOG contingent's weakness in Cote d'Ivoire, it was unable to fulfill its responsibility of putting an end to fighting between rival factions. The oscillation of ECOMOG activities between peacekeeping and peace-enforcement in Liberia and Sierra Leone were largely attributable to imprecise mandates. In all cases, logically, ill-equipped and poorly funded peace-keeping missions were unable to defeat rebels in guerrilla warfare and a military statement forced political accommodation and appeasement of local warlords.

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