DGAPbericht

David Bosold, Kathrin Brockmann (eds.)

Regional Leaders in the Global Security Arena

Interests, Strategies and Capabilities

11th New Faces Conference
31 March–2 April 2008, Berlin, Germany
German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP)
Berlin 2009

DGAP Deutsche Gesellschaft
für Auswärtige Politik e.V.

Peace and Security in West Africa: Supporting Regional Organizations

Till Blume and Matthias Mayr

> *"The large countries should learn that strong
> leadership must induce followership [...]"*
> *David Malone[1]*

Till Blume

Regional Organizations and Peacekeeping in West Africa

West Africa has received far stronger international assistance for post-conflict recovery and statebuilding since the beginning of the 21st century as compared to the 1990s. Regional organizations have been relatively prominent in West Africa as well; globally, the number and extension of regional organizations has increased considerably. The division of labor within nation states, among regional leaders and international organizations is only in its early stages. It is clear, however, that regional organizations, together with international actors and organizations are likely to take over an increasingly important role—especially if international peacekeeping becomes more and more difficult.[2]

In West Africa, regional organizations represented the main actors behind regional peacekeeping interventions before 2003, but their record is not entirely positive in terms of promoting peace and stability. To analyze the contributions of such regional organizations, we shall revisit the regional interventions in Liberia in order to shed light on the weak organizational capacity and control of the operations throughout the 1990s. We intend to re-emphasize the main sources of success for regional organizations: finances, manpower, and political legitimacy. The necessity of these factors in carrying out successful interventions can be evidenced by looking at United Nations peacekeeping operations, which are deployed throughout the region with support from lead countries and other international organizations and have enjoyed considerable success.[3]

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which carried out most interventions in West Africa during the 1990s, is one of the largest sub-regional organizations on the continent. As mentioned, its record of peace-

---

1   David Malone, The African Union: Triumph of Hope over Experience, in: Globe and Mail, 07/06/2004.

2   A. Sarjoh Bah, Bruce Jones, Peace Operation Partnerships: Lessons and Issues from Coordination to Hybrid Arrangements, in: CIC (ed.), Annual Review of Global Peace Operations 2008, New York, NY, 2008, pp. 21–30; Richard Gowan, The Strategic Context: Peacekeeping in Crisis, 2006–08, in: International Peacekeeping, No. 4/2008, pp. 453–469.

3   The lead nations are: in Sierra Leone, the United Kingdom; in Côte d'Ivoire, France; in Liberia—after some hesitation and only in cooperation with many other partners—the United States.

keeping interventions is, at best, mixed. The main conclusion of this paper is that regional organizations must be supported—more than they currently are—by international and bilateral donors. The reason is that interventions in general and by regional organizations specifically, are more likely to be successful if sufficient financial, military, and political means are provided. And, furthermore, if they achieved legitimacy through the management and direction of the respective regional organization's headquarters—not those of its main member states. This has huge influence on the legitimacy and perception of interventions in the respective conflict area. Regional peacekeeping interventions need to be perceived as legitimate and impartial in order to be successful, both on the ground and in the region as a whole.

As stated, the three factors deemed crucial for a successful intervention are political legitimacy, military capacity, and financial funds. Regional organizations could easily provide the umbrella for providing security and peace, if they receive the backing they need—from member states or the international community—in order to develop their own political, military, and economic capacities. We advocate reinforcing the political legitimacy of regional organizations as they assist with conflict management, peacekeeping, and peace-building missions. Agreements between member states for funding and military support and with international organizations for hybrid arrangements should be encouraged. Furthermore, 'lead countries' should be encouraged to hand over the implementation of peacekeeping and peace-building missions to regional organizations.

The case study of ECOWAS interventions in Liberia within the framework of the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) serves to illustrate the difficulties regional hegemonic powers, such as Nigeria, face when involved in implementing peace operations. Nigeria is the most powerful nation in West Africa, but has a shaky reputation among its neighboring states. Though ECOMOG interventions were partly successful in preventing more bloodshed, they also served to create more conflict (at least in Liberia). They ultimately failed to implement their mandate due to lack of diplomatic capacity, funding and equipment. The main problems can be clearly identified as a lack of finances, the lack of political legitimacy among ECOMOG deployments, which resulted in a politically-biased perception of the regional interventions in Liberia besides the lack of proper military equipment and manpower.

After a presentation of the argument and a short history of regional and international interventions in West Africa, a case study on the Liberian conflict and Nigerian involvement will reveal the pitfalls and dilemmas of regional leaders in

conflict prevention. Policy recommendations for the support of regional organizations are given at the end of the paper.

Mapping the Argument: Dimensions for Regional Interventions in Fragile States

Regional organizations in Africa—such as the AU in Darfur or ECOWAS in West Africa—are strongly supported by the international community. There are three ways in which regional organizations need to be supported in order to make the success of regional interventions more likely: Regional organizations need to be perceived as honest brokers (political dimension), they need to have the military means to prevent spoiling behaviour (military dimension), and they need to possess the management and funds to be able to finance interventions (financial dimension).

This, certainly, is never possible without contributions from member states, and it is essential that military and financial support come from these member states. However, regional organizations can improve legitimacy in the political dimension through their own actions. If regional hegemonic powers carry out interventions, they have, by definition, interests in the intervention area; they often do not contribute to a positive perception of regional leaders in the conflict area. If regional organizations use associated secretariats and organizational bodies (like the EU, African Union and ECOWAS) as political support systems, they can be more easily perceived as neutral than in their role as dominant member states.

ECOWAS since 1975

ECOWAS was founded by 15 member states (with Cape Verde joining in 1976 and Mauritania withdrawing in 2000) in 1975 as a result of initial organizational plans drawn by the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in 1960.[4] The founding document highlighted four main goals: to promote trade among member states, to improve physical infrastructure, to strengthen production structures, and to enhance monetary cooperation. ECOWAS is unique in that it transcends the linguistic and cultural divisions imposed by the former colonial powers, that is, the United Kingdom, France and Portugal.[5] The region is considered one of the more ambitious economic groupings in Africa, as it boasts a per capita income that, in 2000 ($ 332), was far higher than East Africa ($ 234) or Central Africa ($ 270).

---

4   Adebayo Adedeji, ECOWAS: A Retrospective Journey, in: Adekeye Adebajo, Ismail Rashid (eds.), West Africa's Security Challenges. Building Peace in a Troubled Region, Boulder, CO, 2004, p. 22.

5   Ibid., pp. 54–55.

The security pillar in ECOWAS gained momentum in the early 1990s, but despite a revised ECOWAS treaty and Nigerian efforts in 1993, functioning security mechanisms in ECOWAS were not developed. In fact, such mechanisms were not developed until the 1997 ECOWAS Summit, where the Nigerian proposal for a Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping, and Security was drafted. Due to a clash between Nigeria and Senegal at the ECOWAS summit in 1998 (which occurred because of francophone concerns about Nigeria's dominating role), the resolution was not implemented until 2000. Nevertheless, ECOWAS has changed significantly since the early 1990s, when Nigeria promoted regional conflict resolution mechanisms to gain political influence in the region, seeing itself at the centre of West African politics.[6] The ECOMOG forces deployed to Liberia in 1990, to Sierra Leone in 1993, and even to Guinea-Bissau in 1999, lacked both political and financial support, and were logistically ill-equipped to carry out their mandates properly.

The problems of ECOWAS interventions in West Africa in the 1990s were mainly in regard to financing, modes of deployment, the composition of the ECOMOG force, the command and control of operations, and the lack of involvement of the ECOWAS secretariat in managing the implementation of the mandate. As one consequence, the commanders on the ground, who had little diplomatic experience, had to manage the missions, and the bulk of staff and funds were largely provided by Nigeria.

The following section details the ECOMOG operations in Liberia and shows how the three dimensions identified above were not addressed properly. Furthermore, political steering from the ECOWAS secretariat was largely absent. Due to a partial cooperation with rebel groups, the perception of Nigerian troops in Liberia was relatively negative. What would have been necessary was a peacekeeping force that was equipped with sufficient funds and logistical capacity. Furthermore, leadership from a political organization independent of Nigeria would have increased legitimacy and political support in Liberia and among other ECOWAS member states.

ECOMOG in Liberia—ECOWAS, Nigeria, and a Failed State

Liberia is a special case in West Africa: the country has experienced 15 years of civil war, in which most neighboring countries were involved. The 1990

---

6   Gani J. Yoroms, ECOMOG and West African Regional Security: A Nigerian Perspective, in: Issue: A Journal of Opinion, No. 1/1993, pp. 84–91.

ECOMOG intervention in Liberia was the first peacekeeping mission of a regional African organization.[7]

The Political Dimension

From the beginning, the Nigerian military contingent was the largest contribution to ECOMOG, especially after a Nigerian General replaced the first Ghanaian Force Commander. Over the years, Nigeria has provided 80 per cent of ECOWAS troops since the first regional peace operations started. Nigeria had a strong national interest in participating in the ECOMOG force in Liberia, but was not the only interested country in the region. Most other countries, such as Burkina Faso, were involved in the Liberian conflict behind the scenes.[8] Due to Nigeria's perception as a regional leader and mounting concerns that the nation was acting only out of self-interest, Nigerian soldiers were never perceived as honest and neutral brokers, neither in Liberia nor in Sierra Leone. This perception worsened, when Nigeria started to support various factions in the Liberian civil war in order to gain control of certain areas. On the one hand, this was due to Nigeria's inability to defeat the rebels and the necessity of restoring some degree of order, which resulted in military stalemates and subsequent appeasement.[9] On the other hand, however, ECOMOG forces were themselves seeking coalitions with rebel factions and were involved in looting the country, at least in Liberia.[10]

One contributing factor was the proliferation of ethnic factions in Liberia. However, ECOMOG was already hampered from the onset: poor diplomatic efforts on the part of ECOWAS member states during the crisis contributed to the failure of the mission.[11] Although the members argued for an immediate intervention to counter economic difficulties resulting from the flood Liberian and other West African refugees into member countries,[12] the conflicting interests of such member states also complicated the negotiation of sound mandates and provision of sufficient equipment. Francophone countries in ECOWAS blocked reasonable and sustainable proposals for force levels within other nations.[13]

---

7   Heinrich Bergstresser, Denis M. Tull, Nigeria als regionale Ordnungsmacht in Westafrika, Berlin 2008.

8   Adekeje Adebajo, Pax West Africana? Regional Security Mechanisms, in: Adebajo, Rashid (eds.), op. cit. (note 4), p. 293.

9   Ibid., p. 292.

10 The acronym ECOMOG was soon translated into "Every Car Or Moving Object Gone". Compare Stephen Ellis, The Mask of Anarchy. The Destruction of Liberia and the Religious Dimension of an African Civil War, New York, NY, 2006.

11 Clement E. Adibe, The Liberian conflict and the ECOWAS-UN partnership, in: Third World Quarterly, No. 3/1997, p. 474.

12 Interestingly, Nigeria and Ghana, the two major powers in West Africa are mentioned here explicitly by the former Ghanaian Foreign Minister Adibe, ibid.

13 Adebajo, op. cit. (note 8), p. 298. ECOMOG consisted of troops from Nigeria, Ghana, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Senegal, Mali, and Guinea.

The Military Dimension

Nevertheless, a military intervention seemed to be the primary choice of action. Due to the first Gulf War, international involvement in the early 1990s was low in West Africa. The international community deferred the responsibility for peace-keeping to regional organizations. For the first time, the international community demanded "African Solutions for African Problems," a framework proposed to excuse the inability to assemble the necessary diplomatic backing and military means to intervene. Led by Nigeria, the original ECOWAS troops were provided by Ghana, Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Gambia. Soon, Nigeria handled the inter-vention alone.[14] While in the beginning of the mission the dispatched ECOMOG troops were by no means capable of ensuring stability and often had difficulties defending themselves properly, the contingents' size was doubled within the first month of the mission from 3,500 to 7,000 troops, and further increased in 1992 to 11,256 soldiers.[15] Nevertheless, troop morale, equipment, and logistics remained inadequate and had to be improved through the presence of UNOMIL, sponsored by American firms (see below).

The Financial Dimension

Nigeria contributed massively, both in military and financial terms, to ECOMOG and ECOWAS achievements. It spent more than $ 3 billion on ECOMOG in Liberia between 1990 and 1996,[16] but even scholars sympathetic to the overall mission argue that a large amount of money spent on ECOMOG went into the pockets of Nigerian generals.[17] The ECOMOG interventions in the early 1990s were financed by the main troop contributors, mainly Nigeria and Ghana.

As a result, ECOMOG and Nigeria largely failed to create peace and stability in the country. The strong personal and economic interest of Nigerian force com-manders on the ground, as well as the perception of the country as a regional hegemonic power, served to damage its reputation during peacekeeping efforts and further jeopardized ECOWAS efforts to act as a regional organization.

Nigeria and ECOMOG

The problem was not that Nigeria was contributing—without its support, noth-ing would have happened. The problem was how Nigeria steered and imple-

---

14 Adedeji, op. cit. (note 4), p. 45.

15 A military failure of ECOMOG already in the early stages would have reduced also the reputation of the two Force Commanders from Ghana, Flight Lieutenant Rawlings, and Nigeria, General Babangida. See Adibe, op. cit. (note 11), pp. 476–477.

16 Adibe, op. cit. (note 11). Both ECOWAS operations in Liberia and Sierra Leone were funded by Nigeria alone, amounting to a total of about $ 8 billion. See Adedeji, op. cit. (note 4), p. 45.

17 Adebajo, op. cit. (note 8), p. 312.

mented ECOWAS and ECOMOG operations. ECOMOG failed due to factors that constrained the fulfillment of the necessary military, financial, and political requirements for success.[18]

In 1993, the added value of impartial interventions became evident when one of the first hybrid operations, the UN Observer Mission in Liberia (UN-OMIL, 1993–1996), which was protected by ECOMOG, was launched. This was partly due to the fact that the conflict parties did not accept the disarmament of ECOMOG. The parties could only agree to disarm under supervision of UNOMIL's military observers, who would then be deployed to observe the process under ECOMOG protection.[19] Following UNOMIL, international and bilateral support and financing of ECOMOG began to play a more important role in its operations; an example is the financial support provided by the U.S. Pacific Architects and Engineers (PAE), which improved ECOMOG logistics.[20] However, rebels also used some internationally-financed equipment that was henceforth provided—for instance, some rebel groups took over ECOMOG vehicles and used them for the transportation of their own material. The basic pattern of cooperation with local warring factions was thus not stopped. After the election of Charles Taylor as Liberian President in 1997, little was done in ECOWAS to promote further peacekeeping instruments. Charles Taylor himself announced that Liberia would no longer need any peacekeepers. Shortly after, ECOMOG began disbanding in November 1997 when the first troops left. The last ECOMOG monitors eventually exited the area in 1998.

The sudden end of ECOMOG was also due to the fact that Nigeria was more concerned with its domestic setup than with regional conflicts, which had calmed down, at least on the surface. The Abacha regime ended in 1998, after which Nigeria embarked onto a political process towards democratic structures. After the consolidation of democratic structures in 1999, the country continued to fulfill a leadership role in West Africa. However, this was not necessarily followed by a coherent concept of how to achieve conflict resolution and regional agendas—which were often watered down by conflicting interests and domestic politics.[21]

Today, Nigeria continues to play a major role and is a crucial partner in promoting security in the region. However, it should accept that leadership rhetoric is not always the best way to ensure support by followers. Others argue that the in-

18 Ibid., p. 296.

19 James O.C. Jonah, The United Nations, in: Adebajo, Rashid (eds.), op. cit. (note 4), p. 327.

20 Stephen Ellis, The Mask of Anarchy. The Destruction of Liberia and the Religious Dimension of an African Civil War, New York, NY, 2006..

21 Bergstresser, Tull, op. cit. (note 7), pp. 11–14.

ternational community should develop a complex dialogue and partnership with Nigeria. And, indeed, these core themes should include regional integration.[22] Nigeria will remain the main regional player in West Africa in terms of economic, military, and political power. Still, it seems to lack a coherent political agenda for the region. Its domestic prerequisites for a leadership role are—despite major improvements—still shaky, and the acceptance of a regional role in the region is far from a given fact.[23] As Adedeji, the former Secretary of UNECA puts it: "No country that is confronted with a long period of political instability, economic stagnation, and regression, and reputed to have one of the most corrupt societies in the world, has a basis to lead others. […] Sadly, there is no other country that is as well placed as Nigeria to play this leadership role."[24] Nigeria has a democrati-cally-elected government only since 1999, and was a crisis state under military regimes before that time. However, the implementation of democratic rules is still questionable. Observers argue that elections are still rigged and results partly predetermined and negotiated among the parties, with the distribution of eco-nomic benefits.

International Interventions in Liberia after 2003

In 2003, international pressure opened the window of opportunity to push for a further peace agreement in Liberia. One of the reasons for the success of the peace agreement was the absence of Charles Taylor during the negotiations fol-lowing his indictment by the Special Court for Sierra Leone.[25] Furthermore, both Nigeria and ECOWAS were strong supporters of the international solution to the Liberian crisis. In contrast to the regional interventions, the subsequent UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) did not suffer from insufficient funds, and the politi-cal dimension—both in terms of support from local populations and diplomatic leverage in the involved countries—was more developed and well-supported under the UN umbrella. The main need for military troops was initially fulfilled by troops from ECOWAS countries, who had served in the ECOWAS Mission in Liberia (ECOMIL) before the arrival of UNMIL and were re-hatted as blue helmets as soon as UNMIL was in place. The mere presence of U.S. marines off-shore and on special patrols during the day in 2003, combined with the successful Nigeria-led ECOMIL force, which was under ECOWAS command, helped to en-sure that hostilities were stopped and the Peace Agreement was negotiated—an agreement which included a clause promising a UN force that would take over for ECOWAS.

---

22 Ulf Engel, Westafrikanischer Hegemon oder Scheinriese? Nigeria in der internationalen Politik, Hamburg 2007.

23 Bergstresser, Tull, op. cit. (note 7), pp. 24–26.

24 Adedeji, op. cit. (note 8), p. 46.

25 Priscilla Hayner, Negotiating Peace in Liberia: Preserving the Possibility for Justice, Geneva 2007.

Today, Liberia provides a good example of the parallel importance and influence of international and regional players. Since 2003, the country has remained stable due to a hefty UN peace operation (UNMIL), strong international support and supervision in finance-related areas (most notably by the World Bank, especially the Governance and Economic Assessment Program, GEMAP), and a capable government since 2006. Despite this international influence, ECOWAS and Nigeria remain important players. After 2003, Nigerians and Ghanaians held senior posts in UNMIL; Nigeria remained one of the main troop contributors. Nigerian enterprises and banks re-opened in Liberia, and a large share of the petrol imports comes from Nigeria. The influence of Nigerian decisions on domestic politics in Liberia has also remained strong. One illustration of this fact has been the initial decision to grant asylum to former Liberian president Charles Taylor from 2003–2006 before extraditing him to Liberia in 2006.

ECOWAS since 1999

In 1999/2000 ECOWAS was reformed by its member states, with Nigeria supporting regional integration and conflict prevention efforts. These reforms were very important, as they added several institutions necessary for consultation and negotiations among member states and as they improved the capacity of the ECOWAS Secretariat—the Mediation and Security Council (political), the Defense and Security Commission (military), the Council of Elders (eminent persons, civil society)—which led to drastic improvements in political decision-making. In terms of capacity,[26] the Mission Planning and Management Cell was established within the Office of the Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS), one of seven commissioners within ECOWAS.[27] Furthermore, in 2007, there were efforts to set up a Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF) designed to strengthen decision-making and intervention capacity.[28] In addition, the Executive Secretary was given the right to propose initiatives to the member states, and the post of a Deputy Secretary was created for operational matters and the coordination of special representatives deployed to the field. An ECOWAS observation centre, given the task of formulating policies and implementing all military peacekeeping and humanitarian observations, was created. Still, EOCWAS funding remains difficult. Member states in the past have often failed to provide both financial and human resources for the organization itself

26 Political Affairs Department - Organigramme, <http://www.comm.ecowas.int/dept/index.php?id=p_p1_commission&lang=en> (28/04/2008).

27 The ECOWAS Commission, ECOWAS Commission on a glance, <http://www.comm.ecowas.int/dept/index.php?id=p_p1_commission&lang=en> (28/04/2008).

28 Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, The Emerging Role of the AU and ECOWAS in Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding, New York, NY, 2007, p. 22.

and for the missions of ECOMOG.[29] Almost all member states still owe large parts of their payments to ECOWAS.[30] In general, however, the capacities of African states for deploying military forces have considerably increased since 2001. ECOBRIG, an ECOWAS Standing Brigade, was deployed to Côte d'Ivoire for the first time in 2003.[31]

Today, Nigeria is incapable of taking unilateral decisions: the francophone bloc in ECOWAS has eight seats out of 15 members, and can therefore block decisions on interventions that require a two-third majority. The important feature of the current ECOWAS set-up is that no member state has obtained a veto power, which ensures that regional backing of the organization's decisions is always a necessity. The outlook for the role of ECOWAS seems good if "governments […] subordinate immediate national political interests to long-term regional economic goals".[32] Furthermore, EOCWAS could serve as an umbrella to streamline the various sub-regional institutions and organizations coexisting in West Africa, which might enable it to create focal areas for the region's development and stability[33]—preferably, through coordination under the African security architecture as proposed by the African Union.[34]

This can only be a starting point for increased capacity of regional organizations in general and ECOWAS in particular. Further work needs to be done, both by the organizations' member states in terms of their monetary contributions and political support, and by the international community in terms of continued and substantial support to regional and sub-regional organizations on the African continent.

The Show Must Go On: Supporting Regional Organizations

There are encouraging developments on the African continent. A new security architecture under the umbrella of the African Union was put forward in 2003,

---

29 Reliable data on the composition and sources of the budget of ECOWAS are difficult to retrieve.

30 Based on own rough calculations using data from the ECOWAS website, the member states owe about 21 million units of account [UA] (UA are equivalent to the IMF's special drawing rights [SDR], 1 SDR = $ 1,625 on 29 April 2008, <http://www.imf.org/external/np/fin/data/rms_sdrv.aspx> (29/04/2008), and 13,912,983 for the ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (created in 2001), about $ 55 million in total).

31 There is little information on ECOBRIG. See Joachim Koops, Johannes Varwick, Ten Years of SHIRBRIG. Lessons Learned, Development Prospects and Strategic Opportunities for Germany (GPPi Research Paper Series, No. 11), 2008, p. 18. For a general overview of African military capacities see Wolf Kinzel, Afrikanische Sicherheitsarchitektur – ein Überblick, in: GIGA Focus, No. 1, 2007. Important is being done at the Kofi Annan Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC) in Accra, which is also supported by German funds and capacity building (GTZ and ZIF).

32 Jeggan C. Senghor, Institutional Architecture for Managing Integration in the ECOWAS Region: An Empirical Investigation, in: Jeggan C. Senghor, Nana K. Poku (eds.), Towards Africa's Renewal, London 2007, p. 175.

33 CEAO, MRU, BCEAO, UEMOA, ANAD, CEAO, AAFC, just to name a few.

34 Chrysantus Ayangafac, An Analysis of the African Peace and Security Architecture, in this volume.

which also pushed for a strengthened ECOWAS Commission. ECOWAS is likely to play an important role in political and economic matters. Regional integration seems to be especially important, as most borders are too porous to control.[35] In order to counter this development and the movement of rebel forces, nations need to cooperate.

Despite improvements in the overall governance structure and mechanisms within the ECOWAS bodies, very few ECOWAS operations run without Nigerian funds and support. Since the domestic changes in 1999, the country is—next to South Africa—the leading nation in Africa in terms of diplomatic mediation and regional integration. Furthermore, it is Africa's largest troop and police contributor to UN peacekeeping missions, and has almost as many soldiers as all other ECOWAS member states combined.[36] However, its soft power remains limited throughout the region.[37] Nevertheless, its transformation from a military dictatorship to a democracy as well as several successful mediation efforts earned it the reputation of a soft power in the waiting and may promote democratization in the region. This might, then, ultimately justify a regional role for promoting peace and security. Together with Ghana, Nigeria could more actively promote the facets of its soft power in relation to diplomacy, mediation and interventions through the ECOWAS framework.

The critical issue remaining is funding. ECOWAS is largely dependent on Nigerian and international donations.[38] The argument at the outset was that regional organizations would be more successful in promoting and supporting security if they are perceived as organizations with own political, military, and financial capabilities, and are not directly influenced by their dominant members.

Regional and international organizations—including the EU and UN—will always be influenced by powerful member states. However, in relation to peacekeeping and peace-building, regional (and international) organizations can provide more legitimate and impartial support than hegemonic powers.[39] This is not to say that the backing and support of lead nations is not needed for these interventions. But the responsibility for the implementation of peace-building missions should be delegated to regional organizations and their military, financial, and political capacities. This article has tried to shed light on the fact that we

---

35 Samuel K. B. Asante, The Travails of Integration, in: Adebajo, Rashid (eds.), op. cit. (note 4), p. 53.

36 In 2003: 78,500 soldiers. Compare Bergstresser, Tull, op. cit. (note 7), p.15.

37 Ibid., pp. 21–22.

38 Several international and bilateral aid agencies are supporting capacity in ECOWAS, such as EU, GTZ and USAID.

39 For an organization-theoretic backing of the argument see Michael N. Barnett, Martha Finnemore, Rules for the World. International Organizations in Global Politics, Ithaca, NY, 2004.

need to support regional organizations, especially as they seek to strengthen their capacity in terms of organizational and normative frameworks for regional action. In practical terms: member states should give money, soldiers, and political support to regional organizations, which in turn will then be able to engage in mediation, implement peace agreements and provide peacekeeping forces throughout the region—without the risk of being perceived as partial and hegemonic.

This is not to say that nothing has been done to bolster regional organizations: the EU, USAID, GTZ, and others are supporting ECOWAS. But there is more to be done: regional leaders should be encouraged to direct some of their efforts, especially those related to conflict management and security, towards regional organizations to ensure that other countries can 'follow' without being and feeling dominated. In turn, regional leaders will only take regional organizations seriously if the latter have the ability to manage funds and political processes adequately.

Nigeria will continue to provide the bulk of finances, diplomatic resources, and troops to support ECOWAS. Nevertheless, strengthening ECOWAS will be helpful in promoting the further political integration of West Africa, which will be crucial for the region's future stability. The resolution of the Liberian conflict already added to the stability and capacity of ECOWAS by bridging the gap between anglophone and francophone (and lusophone) countries. It seems essential for international donors to continue to provide both technical and financial assistance in order to maintain existing capacity, and, even more importantly, to build, develop and strengthen the ability of ECOWAS in addressing regional challenges in West Africa—especially as the United Nations missions in the region downsize over the next few years. International efforts must focus on regional organizations, especially in regions where the immediate attention of donors and the international community is shrinking rapidly.

To prepare for future interventions, hybrid missions between international and regional organizations should be enhanced, especially until the capacities of regional organizations become fully developed.[40] Despite the recent steps taken by ECOWAS, Nigeria, and the international community, a great deal remains to be done—in terms of capacity-building within ECOWAS, cooperation amongst international and regional organizations, democratic consolidation in the region, and the cooperation and coordination between Nigeria and the international community.

---

40 A. Sahrjo Bah, Bruce Jones, Peace Operation Partnerships: Lessons and Issues from Coordination to Hybrid Arrangements, in: Annual Review of Global Peace Operations 2008, p. 10.

Policy Recommendations

A non-exhaustive list of issues that should be addressed in the near future will
have to include efforts by the international community to further support region-
al organizations in terms of their organizational capacity and financial manage-
ment. This will necessitate a change in behavior on the side of regional leaders.
The latter should be encouraged to build up soft power through regional organi-
zations in addition to their economic and military dominance. More specifically,
regional leaders should be encouraged to increasingly hand security and conflict
prevention tasks over to regional organizations. While this still sounds like wish-
ful thinking, one incentive could be the increased deployment of hybrid forces of
regional organizations and UN and EU troops. The experiences gained in such
an endeavor and the financial burden-sharing might then be used as a clear indi-
cation that in regard to ECOWAS as well as the AU, regional leaders will be able
to gain more by engaging in regional organizations' peacekeeping efforts than
initially expected. A good starting point for such a paradigm shift could be joint
training and logistics standards in ECOWAS (ECOBRIG).