Impacts of Regional Integration on Peace and Security: A Case Study of ECCAS

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Abstract : The purpose of this study is to assess the role of regional integration in promoting peace and security in Africa. It was conducted in the Economic Commission of Central African States (ECCAS) as a case study with the following specific objectives: To find out the challenges to peace and security in ECCAS, to examine the impact of regional integration on peace and security in ECCAS members, and to identify various strategies introduced by ECCAS to promote peace and security. This study used only secondary data to assess the relationship between regional integration in ECCAS and peace and security. To obtain secondary data, books, online books, articles, reports, conference papers, journals, and other research related to ECCAS were reviewed. The study found that there are some challenges to regional integration and the promotion of peace and security. For example, it found that some states are not sufficiently committed to regional peace and security policies. In addition, some states have failed to resolve wars between tribes within their borders. It was also noted that lack of resources and training is one of the challenges to peace and security in ECCAS. In addition, regional integration was found to have the following impacts on peace and security: strengthening of national peacekeeping bodies through regional cooperation, financial support for members to maintain peace and security, and easy access to support from non-member states in times of crisis. In addition, this study found that ECCAS has introduced several measures to promote peace and security in Central African states, including COPAX (Peace and Security Council for Central Africa). To assist COPAX in achieving its objectives, MARAC (Multinational Peacekeeping Force in Central Africa) and the Early Warning, Monitoring, and Surveillance System for Central Africa were established.

Keywords: Regional Integration, Peace, Security, ECCAS

Background to the Study

The past decades have been marked by violent conflicts that have resulted in enormous loss of life and material. The new millennium is marked by violent wars like civil wars. Armies fight for independence, secession, or political control and these conflicts have led to the insurgency of rebels, gangs, and organized crime. While the Cold War and the other two wars were characterized by clear objectives, the current wars have no significant objectives. In addition, the current forms of wars are not easily addressed by traditional forms of conflict resolution between individual societies. In past decades, conflicts between states were resolved through diplomacy and military means, but today these means of conflict resolution have failed to resolve dramatic conflicts that have destroyed various states.

According to William (2011), the causes of current wars and other types of conflicts can be attributed to social, economic, and political factors. These causes generally include social and economic inequalities, injustice, unemployment, natural resource management, human rights violations, political exclusion, and corruption. William argues that conflicts and wars can be triggered by both national and international actors, although the causes and main roles of these actors are difficult to identify (William, 2011).

The study conducted by Global Citizen in 2017 showed that current conflicts around the world have made it difficult to access basic needs such as water and food. They have also hindered the development of economic activities that would help society move forward. Thus, wars have become catalysts for extreme poverty because they consume resources that could be used by individual states to develop their citizens. For example, since the Democratic Republic of Congo's (DRC) independence, the country has been affected by violent conflicts that have challenged the provision of basic services to citizens and the development of people's lives. According to the Global Conflicts Tracker, the world currently faces 27 violent conflicts: Ukraine-Russia War, Yemen War, Syria War, Ethiopian Civil War and others. UN and other regional peace organizations have warned their members that these wars are very violent and destructive, more so than other wars in the past. furthermore, a quarter of the world's population now lives in a conflict situation, so at least 47 million people have been displaced by conflict, such as the Syrian crisis, the Ethiopian civil war, the Afghan war, and others. In addition, the UNHCHR shows that at least 274 million people around the world are in need of humanitarian assistance.

In his book titled Regional integration and conflicts managements in Africa, Ebbaye (2010) shows that African states have more violent and ongoing conflicts than any other continent in the world. This study also shows that these conflicts have led to extreme poverty in various states and have caused various governments to become unpopular or to fail to serve their citizens. For example, since the independence of African states, the continent has been characterized by massive human losses and huge destruction of property caused by a variety of wars, armed conflicts, and security threats. This has resulted in most of the world's

less developed countries being found in Africa, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. This has encouraged academics in political science, peace and security, development studies, and other related disciplines to recognize the link between regional integration and peace and security. Focusing on regional integration and peace and security will lead to a better understanding of the extent to which regional integration can be a tool for containing peace and conflict.

The inextricable link between economic regionalism and security integration highlights the impossibility of achieving economic growth and the development goals of integration in an environment of wars, armed conflicts, and perpetual regional political instability. The catastrophic and violent wars in Africa have attracted various academics in different social science disciplines such as political science, development studies, peace and security studies, and sociology. However, Africa presents a number of challenges and opportunities for understanding the conceptual, policy-relevant, and empirical understanding of the nexus (Francis, 2006).

The Cold War wars between USSR, the U.S. and its allies negatively affected Africa's development. In fact, the post-independence period was characterized by tensions between African states. As a result, African states were unable to strengthen their economic activities and implement policies that would help their states develop. The vicious cycle of poverty, underdevelopment, disease, and intertribal conflict was widely cited as the main reason for the aggressive efforts of the architects of regional integration and the establishment of an African peace and security mechanism. This concept traces its roots to regionalism, which involves cooperation among states in geographically proximate and demarcated areas to achieve mutual benefits in one or more problem areas. In most successful cases of regionalism, states that are already partners in sound political processes transfer collective decision-making, based on shared and complementary values, to structures that complement rather than replace national institutions. Although regionalism may lead to the creation of new political organizations over time, regionalism and state strength should not be at odds, as states remain the essential building blocks from which such arrangements are constructed (Aboagye, 2007).

In his work on regional integration in Africa, Carbaugh (2011) defines regional integration as the process of reducing trade barriers, factor mobility, and intensifying economic activities among member countries, and goes on to state that regional integration cannot be achieved without free movement of goods and services. In this regard, countries that are in the same blocks should eliminate or facilitate the exchange of goods and services in the same institution.

Some scholars compare regional integrations as an engine of development that helps member nations achieve what a single nation would not. For example, regional integration can help member nations build common regional infrastructures that can lead to shared sustainable development among member nations. In addition, it increases interactions among its components and creates new forms of organization that coexist with traditional forms of state-led organization at the national level. They also show that it leads to strengthening trade integration in the region, creating an appropriate environment for private sector development, developing infrastructure programs to support economic growth, developing strong public sector institutions and good governance, reducing social exclusion and developing an inclusive civil society, contributing to peace and security in the region, building environmental programs at the regional level, and strengthening the region's interaction with other regions of the world (Philippe and Langenhove, 2007).

If we recognize the role of regional integration for sustainable development in Africa, we must recognize the widely recognized interests that are also relevant to Africa: lower transaction costs for business, lower risks in investment, expansion of markets, pooling of regional resources, better use of economies of scale in production, and more efficient allocation of resources. However, it is undeniable that strong national economic policies are needed to achieve some of these benefits. In addition, regional integration can help provide a framework for coordinating policies and regulations. Regional economic integration can also help prevent and resolve conflicts by strengthening economic ties among African countries. Regional initiatives can also pursue a number of non-economic goals, such as promoting regional security and political contacts among members (Uwimana, 2013).

In its restrictive form, economic integration refers to the increase in trade and factor flows between neighboring countries as a result of trade liberalization or economic policy coordination and harmonization). In general, regional integration results in countries recognizing that by joining together in regional blocs they can achieve common goals such as economic interdependence, productive capacity, and the promotion of peace and security in the region. In general, regional integration does not mean that only countries in the same geographic areas integrate and exchange potential. Countries that are not neighbors or are not in the same geographic areas can also integrate. For example, the United States, which is located in the northern part of the Americas, is a member of the North Atlantic Organization, which is composed mainly of European countries (Biswaro, 2003).

Despite hard work done by various regional blocs in Africa, regional institutions in Africa have not achieved their goals as initially expected (Johnson, 1995), Lyakurwa, 1997), Foroutan and Prichett (1993). Among the reasons for failure are poor governance in many African states, insecurity problems, the influence of foreign states, and lack of infrastructure development.

However, there is still a vision that what has not been achieved will be achieved in the coming decades. Other reasons for the failure of the African vision of regional integration include the unwillingness of governments to: (i) surrender sovereignty of macroeconomic policy making to a regional authority; (ii) accept potential consumption costs that may arise from importing from an expensive member country; (iii) accept unequal distribution of gains and losses that may result from an integration agreement; and (iv) sever existing economic ties with non-members.

In Africa, and especially in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), regional integration has received high policy priority. The idea of integrating countries and regions has long been promoted by political leaders in Africa for varying reasons. Throughout the 1990s, regional economic integration was the catchword in African politics and way seen as the answer to all social and economic problems facing the region. According to MINEAC (2011), it is not a surprise that many African countries especially in sub–Saharan Africa are integration into trade blocks. They have known different advantages attached to the economic integration. For example, when countries come together, trade barriers are removed. This encourages the development of trade either national or international.

Kaya and Cooke (2002) show that different countries adopted the policies of international trade as the tool of boosting their economy. There would not be quick development without the cooperation with other countries in the same region. Different countries are joining different trade organizations than any other time in the history. This is because they found that one person can't satisfy himself for everything without support from others. In its research, World Trade Organization shows that since 1994, at least now 100 trade organizations have formed. It continues by showing that at least one third have been formed during five years ago. This shows that countries around the world have experienced the benefits attached to the international trade and economic integration.

Can and Maigari (2019) points out that the treaty establishing the Economic Community of Central African States was signed in 1985 with the main objective of adopting, coordinating, and harmonizing policies to promote the development of member states through the removal of trade barriers and the creation of common markets. According to Ndomo (2009), the establishment of ECCAS was associated with some mandates, including the development of the physical, economic and monetary integration of the sub-region, the improvement of the regional capacity for promotion and security.

Promoting entrepreneurship and also promoting sustainable communication and negotiation among member states to achieve inclusive growth of member states. In addition, ECCAS consists of the following members: Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Rwanda, São Tomé and Príncipe, with Gabon joining in 1999 (Aniche et al, 2009). The study conducted by NEPAD in 2015 showed that this region has greater quantities of minerals, oil woods, and other industrial raw materials. According to this study, 28 percent of Africa's natural resources are located in ECCAS. 60 percent of continental water density is found here, while 14 percent of sub-Saharan economic potential is also found in the ECCAS. Therefore, some authors such as Can and Maigari believe that the high natural resource endowment of minerals is one of the main reasons why more wars are fought in ECCAS states than in other African states. In addition, some authors relate the resource endowment of ECCAS to the idea of resource curse, where many countries with many natural resources have experienced a high level of insecurity in the world.

Statement of the Problem

The rise of conflicts and wars in Africa have led to the emergency of different peace and security measures around Africa .In addition to that , international donors and other development partners have been seeking to cooperate with African states as the ways of understanding them(Conflicts) , identify their challenges and opportunities that are behind them . Generally, different regional institutions like ECCAS adopted different structures that would help them to deal with the issues of security in their area. African Union adopted African Peace and Security Architecture as the tool to promote security, manage conflicts and post conflicts reconstruction after conflicts .In the same way, APSA has established also African Standby Force and Continental Early Warning System (Bah et al, 2014).

According to Elowson and Wiklund (2011), other systems that were adopted by different regional institutions copied from African and Security Arichecture. The role of regional integration on promotion of peace and security in Africa can't be explained and understood without evaluating the role of mechanisms taken by different RECs at regional level. This study was conducted as the way of obtain and promoting knowledge of regional integration and peace and security in central African states especially through ECCAS (Economic Community of Central African States). It also has an aim of rising awareness about ECCAS in the field of peace and security. Lastly, it will also provide different measures that were taken by ECCAS members in promoting peace and security, challenges and possible measures that would be taken to promote peace and security in ECCAS.

Research Questions
1. What is the role of regional integration in ECCAS for promotion of peace and security in central Africa?
2. What are the policies established by ECCAS to promote peace and security in central Africa?

3.   What are the challenges that hinder ECCAS members for promotion of peace and security in central African states?

Research Objectives

General Objective
To find out the relationship between regional integration and peace and security in Africa, a case study of ECCAS.

Specific Objectives

1.   To find out challenges that hinders promotion of peace and security in ECCAS.
2.   To examine the policies established by ECCAS in promotion of peace and security.
3.   To find out the role of regional integration in promotion of peace and security in ECCAS.

Hypothesis
1.   There is no relationship between regional integration and promotion of peace and security in ECCAS.
2.   Challenges of peace and security in ECCAS include: lack of political commitment, lack of enough resources and poor infrastructures development.
3.   Factors that lead to the integration in ECCAS includes desire to have infrastructures, to promote security and to exchange goods and services.

Literature Review

Defining concepts

Peace

The concept of peace and security has been on international agenda of different academicians and practitioners. Earlier researchers on peace and security have found that sustainable development and economic growth are impossible without having peace and security. However, before we define what peace is, we should firstly illustrate what type of peace we are talking about especially for whom and for which purpose. Generally, peace as concept had attracted international attention for development policies since it was found that either regional integration or sustainable need peace and security as main pillars to achieve them. According to the Swedish author Galtung ,J (1996),peace consists absence of war ,fear ,conflict ,anxiety ,human suffering ,violence and about peacefully coexistence . He also identified three types of peace:

- **Direct violence** (: this involves physical, emotional and psychological).
- **Structural violence** (deliberate policies and structures that causes human suffering ,death and harm to the people
- **Culture violence** : Galtung (1996) defines culture violence as cultural norms and practices that creates discrimination ,injustice and human suffering

In addition to that, Galtung(1996) Also identified different between negative and positive peace . According him, their clarity is useful in building peace and security in society.

- **Negative peace**: According to him, negative peace simply means unavailability of direct violence, war, conflicts and feat at individual, national, regional and international level.
- **Positive peace: Galtung** shows that positive peace simply means unjust structures, unequal relationship and justice ,and inner peace at individual level

In summary, we can say that different societies and cultures all over the world have different meanings they give to the peace according to their politics, civilizations, history and benefits

According to Freedman and Poku (2005),in Great lakes region peace means unavailability of wars and conflicts while in southern part of Africa ,peace means absence of harsh or depressing social and development indicators like poverty and AIDS pandemics . They also say that however while individuals trying to define what peace is, they should also consider security and their impacts to development of people.

Security

The world security appears in daily life of people for example, it appears in daily conversation, world newspapers, and stories about different cultures and events and in different policies about national interests. The word security came in English around 16 century. It is derived from Latin word called ''Securus '' means freedom from anxiety. (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2017).

Se: without

Cura: care or anxiety

In his research Fast (2002) displays that national security ,world security ,international security and other terms have attracted attention in different fields of social sciences for instance in political science ,conflicts resolution , international relations ,development studies and others .While, it is given different meanings by different authors according to their domains of studies ,security is defined at state level (national level) ,and it is not explained at many times at individual level . According to the researchers in the field of peace and security, national security also covers individual security. In classical period, security studies were focused on military security however, studies that have been conducted since few decades ago have started defining security in relations with other dimensions of social life like political security, economic security, social security and environmental security.

According to the Oxford dictionary of English, the term security range from a verb '' secure (meaning untroubled by danger or fear) condition or feeling to the safety of state, company .etc. Against espionage, theft, or other danger to the economic notions of providing security. Different definitions of security confirms that security range from individual ,states ,regional and international levels and the lack of security can also challenges development to all of those levels .

Regional integration

The concept of regional integration was given different meanings by different authors in domains of regional integration, international relations and diplomacy. Regional: simply means what is done at regional level (what is done by regional actors) Integration: this means to bring the parts of object together into a complete whole. In narrowest terms, regional integration means coordination of political, economic, social and environmental activities by regional actors with the purpose of achieving shared goals. Regional integration means the process of integration of various economies in a given area or region to a single unit for the purpose of regional economic development. In other terms, regional integration succeeds when individuals states take initiative of cooperation with the purpose of achieving shared objectives that would not be achieved individual's states. However, when those activities are economical oriented in the nature, this concept can be named "economic integration "(.Muthalika, 1972).

According to Haas (1971), Regional integration has been defined as the process through which independent national states "voluntarily mingle, merge and mix with their neighbors so as to lose the factual attributes of sovereignty while acquiring new techniques for resolving conflicts among themselves." It is also defined as worldwide phenomenon of territorial systems that increases the interactions between their components and creates new forms of organization, co-existing with traditional forms of state-led organization at the national level.

Theoretical Framework

Theory of Hegemony

Hegemony theory has been developed as the best approach to explaining why countries band together to achieve common goals. Keohane (1980) and Kondeberget (1981) show in their work that there is a relationship between strong regional cooperation and the provision of regional security by national agencies, but it depends on strong leadership at the regional level. According to these two authors, we can call this hegemony theory. According to this theory, regional peace and stability are more likely when one state (hegemon) is dominated by others because the subordinate actors in the subsystem depend on the luck of the hegemon. In this way, the hegemon provides international or regional goods that help a system function better. According to various researchers of this theory, even the Dutch were hegemonic in Europe in the 17th century; the British Empire became hegemon later in the 19th century, while the United States and Russia became hegemons in the 20th century.

Even though equality and equity are good principles for international relations and regional relations in general, contemporary labor capitalism is characterized by the dominance of some actors over others in the distribution of resources and decision-making. In this way, some actors find themselves forced to follow and accept the rules and regulations established by other, stronger states at the international level. Thus, in reality, international relations have never been characterized by equality and equity in the distribution of resources. This theory also shows that the hegemonic state (the stronger one) facilitates international relations and promotes stability by forcing others in the same institutions to accept the rules and principles it establishes. This prevents states from deviating from rules and regulations through sanctions and other measures that force them to abide by them. The presence of a hegemonic state at the regional level helps other states at the regional level to accept rules and regulations and develop the community as expected without jeopardizing security and peace at the level. In addition, the hegemonic state can use its power to finance, promote, and lead the development of regional infrastructure and regional security, which would require states with the same power in the region in the long run. Finally, a wealthier state can finance and help less developed countries through its

hegemonic dominance by using its developed economy. This helps the less developed countries to boost their economies and thus achieve sustainable development (Hermann, 2017).

Criticisms of Hegemony Theory

Different critics were raised by different authors about the theory of Hegemony in international relations .For example, its pioneer Robert Keohane (1984) experienced new institutional economics and he argued that international system can even remain stable without the influence of one hegemony .furthermore, in his book called embedded liberalism john Ruggie (1982) argued that post second war period was not held together by material power but with legitimate material purpose. According to him, government got created support for international order through social policies that curb down impacts of globalization According to Ikenbery (1998), hegemony is not precondition for international stability rather to dependency and stickiness of institutions.

Standard Trade Theory

Another theory that explains regional integration and international relations is standards trade theory. According to this theory, a free trade area in international relations is more important than other dimensions of cooperation like political and social cooperation. In that way, countries should promote free trade areas and sign treaties that promote trade among member's states. According to Viner (1950), the promotion of free trade among members state can lead to the development of other dimensions of cooperation when there is better terms of trade and when there is positive net of foreign exchange. Lastly, this theory mentions that regional integration doesn't guarantee improvement of welfare of member's states but it should promote trade creation to the member's states and discourage trade diversion to the member's states.

Custom Union Theory

Another theory that explains the cooperation of states is a custom union theory. According to this theory states may either loss or gain on cooperative relationship because of the following reasons: specialization, economic of scale, changes in terms of trade, changes in terms of trade, and forced changes in efficiency, owing to increased competition and due to the change in rate of economic growth. This theory of custom dealt with four first issues while or doesn't deal with the last issues and it works on the assumption that production and exchange of goods and services work efficiently and effectively through this theory of custom union. One element makes this theory very unique than others which is developing the economies of others (Lipsey, 1987).

Centre periphery theory

Pioneers of this theory, such as Krugman (1991) and Venables (1996) show that regional cooperation can play a crucial role in reorganizing the productive capacities of states at the regional level. It can also lead to the development of economic policies such as infrastructure development at the regional level. Strengthening production capacities and developing infrastructures can lead to economic growth and the development of exports over imports (Te Velve, 2011).

According to Marino (2014), there is a possibility that the economy will be dynamic instead of static. The reason for this is the strengthening of states through stronger states at the regional level. Moreover, in Africa, where countries are not at the same level of development, this theory may lead to the destruction of economies rather than development, as some states that are at a higher level of development may use their stronger economies to exploit the economies of less developed countries in the region.

Critics

In his work on center-periphery relations, Simon (2011) shows that center-periphery relations, which are unequal and cause the periphery to lose out, can also be seen in the context of national borders rather than relations between developed and undeveloped states. In Nigeria, for example, Abuja and Lagos are well developed compared to their neighboring regions. Thus, we can say that the dependency of these major cities on the parties has caused these parties to lose resources and therefore be underdeveloped According to this theory, unemployment in the periphery can be contained by capital-intensive industrialization, but this is not true because it can lead to the decline of handicrafts and industry, which in turn increases unemployment.

Empirical Review

The presentation by Dr. Marcel Leroy, entitled 'Division of labor in African security: the African Union and sub-regional groupings in Eastern and Southern Africa'. He presented that the end of the Cold War helped the different blocs in Africa to network more easily, to share experiences and that it helped the different states to work together as their differences became smaller. According to him, however, the end of the Cold War in early 1991 led to the rise of the United States as a superpower and promoted the idea of democracy throughout the continent. As a result, rebel groups emerged in African countries during this period and began to fight for their rights. This led to the review of peace and security committees in different blocs of the continent (Wachira, 2003).

The study of ECOWAS conducted by Francis (2006) showed that despite its main objective of promoting interregional trade among the members of the group, it has not achieved its goals, as neither the expected economic growth nor the easy exchange of goods and services have materialized, despite its attempts to promote market integration and free movement in the region. After realizing the impact of the Cold War on West African countries and after a long period of transition from colonialism, ECOWAS members have been marked by violent conflict. Consider Boko Haram in Nigeria, political instability in Liberia and Sierra Leone, and jihadist movements in some parts of the Sahel. This has led to the creation of peace and security in the region and the establishment of regional armies to promote peace and security. Nigeria played a leading role in the formation of the regional peacekeeping and intervention forces. In addition, ECOWAS has the Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), which enabled it to promote and implement its foreign and security policies. ECOMOG was an ad hoc coalition of 'willing states' deployed in Liberia in 1990 to stabilize and manage the civil war. Its experiments in the region.

In contrast to West African countries, East African countries face different development challenges. These countries include Eritrea, Uganda, Kenya, Somalia, Ethiopia, and Djibouti. Persistent droughts and famines in the region have led to the rise of various tribal wars and rebel groups. Despite the implementation of various structural adjustment programs in their states and varying degrees of success, countries in the Horn of Africa remain dependent on agriculture and livestock. Continued insecurity in the region led to the creation of IGAD (Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development). Its main objective was to combat desertification, famine and drought. Increasing instability in the region during the 1990s prompted the members of IGAD, to revitalize the Union's goals (IGAD, 2020).

According to Fanta E. (2009), ECCAS failed to restore peace and security in the region. There have been tensions among the member countries of ECCAS. According to him, ECCAS has enlisted the support of other organizations such as the European Union and the African Union to solve the problems of insecurity in the region. This has made ECCAS one of the weakest players in restoring security in Africa. This means that the level of cooperation among ECCAS members is still low compared to the other blocs on the continent. ECCAS has played a minimal role in the tensions in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Burundi. Instead of supporting members in war, ECCAS has deployed armies from UN, the African Union, and other states.

In response to international pressures or local dynamics that forced the organization to intervene, ECCAS's peacemaking capacity was limited to monitoring elections. Fair and free elections are among ECCAS's priorities, and since 2005 one of the divisions (Elections and Good Governance) within DIHPSS has been dedicated to this issue. Since mid-2000, ECCAS has sent more than ten election observation missions to its member states. It has been argued that ECCAS is becoming increasingly effective in election observation and assistance. An example cited is the Democratic Republic of Congo, where ECCAS has established a special office, headed by a special representative, to monitor the elections and the political transition process. ECCAS also seeks to provide technical assistance to national electoral commissions in countries where elections are to be held (Fanta, 2009).

In the EAC, by promoting cooperation in the field of security, the Internal Security Sector was established to monitor the implementation of security objectives throughout the region, as elaborated in the EAC Regional Strategy for Peace and Security. Through this policy, intergovernmental decisions were made to promote security, which were successful. In cooperation with the Regional Center for Small Arms (RECSA) (based in Nairobi), military and police weapons are controlled and registered in all five member countries. Partner countries receive direct assistance in light weapons control. In accordance with the 2002 Nairobi Protocol guidelines, all national light weapons control plans include a gender mainstreaming component and are designed to promote civil society participation (EAC, 2022).

Methodology

During this study, an author used a case study design .In addition to that, this study used only secondary data to evaluate the relationship between regional integration in ECCAS and peace and security. To get secondary data, this research reviewed books, online books, articles, reports, conference papers, magazines other research papers that are related to the ECCAS. Finally, this study also used different views from diplomatic scholars in the field of international relations, peace and security and other related disciplines.

Source: ISS (2023)

Findings and Discussions

Regional Integration in ECCAS and Promotion of Peace and Security in Central Africa

Central Africa Republic

Central African Republic has ongoing civil wars between government, rebels from Seleka coalition and Anti Balaka militia since 2012. The conflicts started in 2012 when coalition rebel group called Seleka was accusing the central government to fail to be bound by the peace agreement. They captured many towns in Central African Republic in 2012 and later in 2013 they captured the capital city of Bangui. Francois Bozize who was on the power fled the country and later new coalition rebel group called Anti Balaka started to fight against Seleka (Upsala conflicts data program, 2013).During the meeting, which took place on June 3-4, 2020, the

ECCAS Council of Ministers stressed the importance of a peace agreement between the hostile groups in Central Africa as a means of creating a peaceful society and a step towards free and fair elections in the Central African Republic.

On September 21, the Special Representative of UN and the ECCAS Commission on Political Affairs, Peace and Security again analyzed the situation in the Central African Republic and examined what should be done to resolve the problems in Central Africa. From Dec. 27-30, a high-level commission from UN, the AU and ECCAS met with Central African leaders in Bangui to find solutions to the problems in Central Africa. According to the report, the agenda included creating a peaceful society and a peaceful atmosphere that would later lead to fair and peaceful elections (UN Security Council, 2020).

Chad

Since 2016, the Republic of Chad has been in violent conflict with the Front for Change and Concord in Chad and the Military Command Council to Save the Republic, which are based in the Republic of Libya. According to these rebels, they wanted to overthrow the government led by Marshal Idriss Derby Itno, who had been in power since 1990 following a military coup. The ECCAS Special Representative and United Nations Coordinator in Chad played a critical role in building peace through an agreement between the government and rebel groups, and through collaboration with other actors, ECCAS and the United Nations worked to establish a national steering committee for peace building. They also worked with UN and the World Bank to assess the nature of conflict in the Republic of Chad and design preventive measures (UN Security Council, 2020).

Equatorial Guinea

Data explosions have destabilized the Republic of Equatorial Guinea. The incident occurred on March 7, 2021, when a series of explosions took place in different barracks in the district of Bata, the capital of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea. 107 people died, while 600 others were injured, it said. In addition, Equatorial Guinea suffered infrastructure losses as various infrastructures were damaged in the city of Bata. In response to this incident, the Government of the Republic of Guinea requested humanitarian assistance from various friends and other development partners. The Disaster Assessment and Coordination Team Mechanism and the United Nations Security Team were dispatched to respond to the crisis and provide immediate support. According to the United Nations Security Report in Central Africa, the deployed team was tasked with looking for the cause of the incident, managing the crisis, and making recommendations for future prevention.in response to the incident, ECCAS, in collaboration with UN, sent a team of technicians who had the necessary knowledge of the incident. According to the report, the team was to assist the government in repairing the damage, make recommendations, and implement Security Council Resolution 1325(2000) on Women, Peace and Security UN.

Other Activities of ECCAS in Peace and Security

ECCAS, in collaboration with UN, provided technical assistance to the Republic of Sao and Principe in preparing national measures to implement UN Security Resolution 1325(2000) on Women and Peace and Security. ECCAS and UN played a critical role in exchanging views with Gabonese President Ali Bongo Odimba and other opposition parties on constitutional reforms, Central African development, and the response to the crisis in the Central African Republic. In addition, on March 18, 2020, ECCAS, ECOWAS, UN and other partners met to find a solution for the Gulf of Guinea. Participants agreed to establish high-level mechanisms to restore peace and security in the Gulf of Guinea.

Mechanisms of ECCAS in promoting peace and security

Background of APSA (African Peace and Security Architecture)

The growing number of peace and insecurity crises in Africa has led the African Union to introduce the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) as the best tool for conflict management, prevention, and post-conflict reconstruction support, which has since gained popularity among African states and other development partners. As a result, several states in Central Africa have established a standby army and a Central African Early Warning System. One of the African regional economic communities that have successfully implemented APSA is ECCAS, which, however, does not have a recognized body of experts to deal with regional peace and security issues. This is considered one of the weaknesses and reasons for the failure of its activities (Swedish Defense Forces, 2011)

COPAX (Peace and Security Council for Central Africa)

With the increase of conflicts in Central Africa and through the African Union agenda, ECCAS is one of the recognized regional economic communities in Africa that has established a mechanism for conflict management, prevention and resolution known as the Peace and Security Council for Central Africa (COPAX).Objectives of COPAX include: address, manage and resolve conflicts, reduce the causes of conflict and prevent it before it occurs, build self-confidence in the development policies of central African

states, improve conflict resolution measures among member states and assist in the mediation and negotiation of conflicts between member states.

Historically, COPAX was adopted in ECCAS in 1999 and the treaties were signed and ratified by the governments of the member states in 2000. According to the protocol establishing COPAX, COPAX had two main objectives: The establishment of a Defense and Security Commission in ECCAS in which each member country would have a voice in regional security issues. For this reason, MARAC (Multinational Peacekeeping Force in Central Africa) and the Early Warning, Monitoring and Surveillance System for Central Africa were established to support and enable COPAX to achieve its goals.

MARAC was established as an observatory, monitoring, and conflict management tool primarily responsible for collecting and analyzing data on conflicts in Central Africa and to assist ECCAS in addressing conflicts among member states.According to Article 2 of the MARAC establishment, the following structures of MARAC can be identified:

- The headquarters of MARC is located in Libreville in Gabon and has three main departments, namely:

➢ office, which is responsible for the collection and monitoring of information on peace and security in each member state
➢ Office, which is responsible for the analysis and monitoring of data collected between member states
➢ Decentralized structures called national offices for each member state to collect and analyze data at the national level for each member state

Regarding Article 12 of the MARAC establishment, the monthly report should cover political, economic, social, military, health, and environmental aspects that may directly or indirectly affect peace and security in the region. In addition, the report should be submitted to the MARAC Chairman and the ECCAS President. In addition, Article 12 of MARC states that it should cooperate with other actors at both the national and international levels: AU, UN and other relevant organizations. Recently, MARAC has had difficulties in achieving its objectives due to lack of sufficient financial and human resources, as well as logistical problems. In addition, MARAC does not function as an espionage instrument. It only makes recommendations on peace and security issues at the regional level. To achieve its goal, information is gathered and reports are produced on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis (Cilliers, 2005).

Challenges faced by ECCAS in achieving its objectives

In his work entitled Peace and security in central Africa, Meyer (2015) identified several challenges that have disrupted ECCAS activities: First, according to Meyer, ECCAS activities have been hampered by member states not paying their dues. For example, there is a problem with overlapping membership of ECCAS states. Here we can take an example of Burundi, which is not economically strong but is a member of ECCAS, CEPGL, EAC, and SADC. This weakens Burundi's strength to pay dues on time. According to Meyer, this problem also led to the failure of activities from 1992 to 1998, when ECCAS activities almost came to a halt.

Second, this study shows that a high level of conflict in ECCAS interrupted its activities. For example, the period from 1990to 2003 was characterized by a high level of conflict among member states. For example, Rwanda, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola, and Uganda were at war in the DRC. This led to mistrust, economic crisis, and lack of political commitment among member states. Moreover, ECCAS still has security problems today. Take the Central African Republic as an example, which has experienced a political crisis with military coups and civil wars since independence. Other examples include Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the Republic of Chad. In its report titled African Integration Paper, the World Bank (2011) outlined that poor infrastructure development is one of the main obstacles to ECCAS development. For example, countries such as the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and CHAD are still so remote that it is not possible to develop economic activities. In addition, the lack of sufficient infrastructure has hindered the attraction of foreign investors and the regional exchange of goods and services to meet the challenges of integration. In 2017, ECCAS member states adopted a strategic integration vision for 2025, which aims to create a competitive regional environment to attract private investment in growth areas (UNECA, 2016).

Conclusions and Recommendations

In summary, regional integration is a crucial element for the development of countries and for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. For example, it promotes the exchange of goods and services, the development of infrastructures, the promotion of governance, and others. In particular, the issue of security in integration in Africa was not given much attention initially. However, over time, the various regional blocs in Africa have realized that sustainable development is impossible without promoting peace and security. Currently, various regional blocs have security committees that are responsible for monitoring issues in the region. For example, regional peacekeeping bodies exist in the Sahel, Mozambique, and other parts of Africa. ECCAS, in particular, has established various mechanisms such as the Peace and Security Council for Central Africa (COPAX), which is subdivided into an early warning system, and MARAC, which is anchored in the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), as a means of promoting peace and security in the region. However, the lack of commitment by member states has led to the failure of ECCAS to promote peace and security in the region.

Suggestions for further research

The study recommends that further research be conducted on the impact of governance in the EAC on promoting peace and security in the region, as poor governance has been found to be a major factor in insecurity and lack of peace in the region. The study also recommends the establishment of a regional body responsible for peace and security with full decision-making authority.

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Appendices

African Countries Generating the Largest Share of Forced Displacement
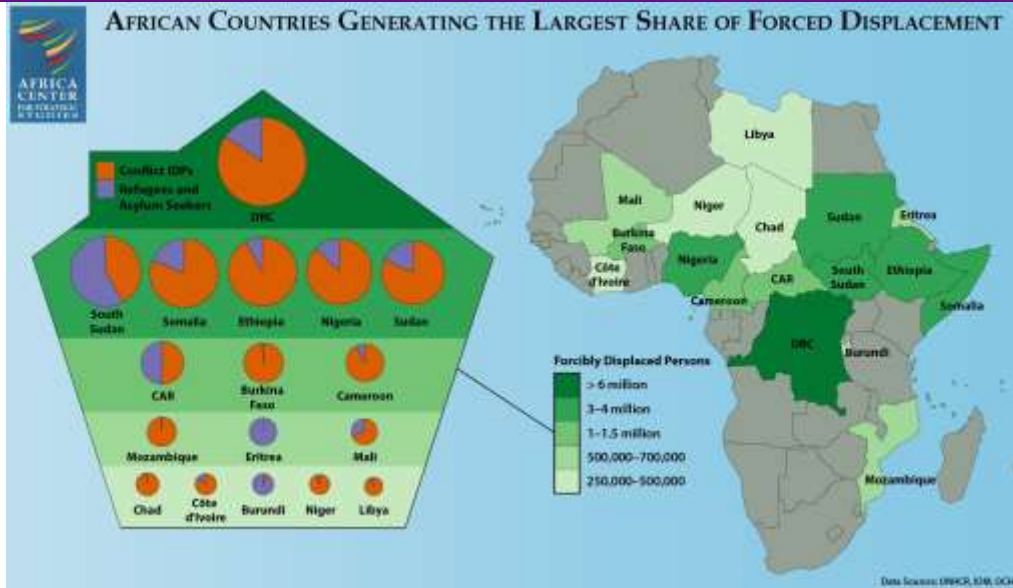
Major Multilateral Peace and Security Operations in Africa