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Research paper

Regional integration and African economic development: sustainable development or underdevelopment

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Abstract

The issue of African development through cooperation has been a subject of discourse and a top agenda among scholars and political actors in Africa for more than five decades. The proliferation of regional economic groupings in the early 1970s and the 1980s can attest to the priority given to these schemes by various governments in Africa. However, despite the momentum that regional cooperation as a means to African development gathered, the continent had a little to show for its implementation. This paper examined the dynamics of regional integration programs embarked upon in the continent, especially by critically examining the various regional programs of two leading Africa's sub-regional organizations and groupings that are somewhat formidable in the continent, to wit: the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) whose mandate and objective are development driven and ultimately self reliance. Data for this paper was retrieved mainly from secondary source of scholarly articles and books. Above all the paper submits that there is an association between regional integration and sustainable development in Africa. By this, regional integration remains irreducible minimum desiderata for the continent's development. The paper therefore recommends that participating countries should muster strong political will to make integration functional and funding of development programs should be sourced largely internally.

Keywords:*Regional Integration; African Economic Development; Sustainable Development; Underdevelopment.*

1. Introduction

In Africa there exist crisis of poverty, economic backwardness, political immobilism, and even severe atmosphere of insecurity. By this, the poverty and backwardness of Africa stand in stark contrast to the prosperity of the developed world. The continent has fared very poorly in the world affairs because of slowness in development among other things.

According to World Development Report (2003) sub Saharan Africa has seen its number of poor people increase steadily, in 1998, they accounted for one quarter of the world's very poor people. And those development strategies will need to do better in eliminating abject poverty. Thus, it is significant to note that in the post cold war years, there is a growing recognition that regional integration holds the key to accelerated development of individual African countries, majority of which have small size market and are backward. In the words of Otobo and Obaze (1994) African countries must realize that integration is a matter of strategic importance rather than expediency. This assertion is against the backdrop in which the African region viewed integration especially in the 1960s and 1970s as a supportive measure, rather than as a development strategy (Ake, 1981:168).

Hence, the articulation of the various ECA/OAU Lagos plan and the Final act of Lagos (FAL) in the 1980s where African leaders resolved to adopt a far reaching regional approach to tackle problem of underdevelopment based primarily on collective self reliance, which toolkit, in the words of Brown and Cummings is predicated on regional integration and any attempt to down look it would be devastating (Brown and Cummings, 1985:7 paraphrased).

No doubt, the momentum was not sustained and the envisaged development eluded the continent. The losses of the 1980s and most of the 1990s resulting from the failure to fashion out a collective strategic plan and program for African development and the consequent subjugation to atomistic Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) is a case in point (Onimode, 2000:254). Thus Mander and Goldsmith (1996) opined that regional integration in the world especially the South, remains imperative for advancement which ultimately leads development.

Given the fact that African development has an objective basis in the society, it becomes imperative that any strategy by the continent to address development issues through regional integration should first identify the specificities and capabilities of the countries and stakeholders involved before adopting any operational strategy to resolve the development problem.

As a-contribution to the literature on the subject, this study will attempt to provide a brief survey of perspectives in understanding the dynamics of regional integration towards African development. In this wise the following assumptions were made: first, developing countries, especially Africa have not really appreciated the opportunities that they stand to achieve as a result of their integration; secondly the development of the region could be understood by the various developmental projects undertaken by the sub-regional schemes.

All these shall this study seek to unravel by using evidence on the integration process in Africa, especially, in West Africa (ECOWAS) and Southern Africa (SADC). The data came from secondary sources which are documented works of scholars and other library materials.

2. A review of regional integration in Africa

Regional cooperation has been a common characteristic of the African landscape, dating back to the formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) now African Union (AU) in 1963. The role of regional cooperation has grown steadily in continent-wide efforts to bring economic development and political stability to Africa. The early proliferation of regional groupings through the 1970s was followed by a commitment in the Lagos plan of Action (1980) to strengthen existing economic communities and to establish other groupings that would span the entire continent. This plan, according toOnwuka consisted for the most part, of planks and schemes for the implementation of the Monrovia strategy for the economic development of Africa and establishing a Pan Africa common Market by year 2000 (Onwuka 1984:59).

Commenting on why there was lack of progress in this scheme, Professor Adedeji, formerly of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) who provided the framework for this cooperation alongside OAU argued, that despite the economic challenges that have characterized the continent since 1980 there is no doubt of the intention of the participating states to push ahead its developmental objectives. He contends that as long as commentators on African sub-regional and integration schemes constantly bear in mind that modern Africa is relatively new to the game of international cooperation, we shall understand the rationale behind the hesitation and slow progress (Adedeji, Cited in Asante 1991: 100).

Analyzing Adedeji's position, Asante observed that the former's justification for failure of the integration schemes was not tenable, but rather was seen as oversimplifying the realities of the situation, that lack of progress of these schemes is a reflection of the discontent and aversion of participating governments with the design and results of the ECA sponsored schemes (Asante, 1991:100). It is in the above context that Onwuka (1984) plausibly argued that the objectives of the proposed African community was vague and pedantic in respective to pledges, aims, commitments or convictions. He stressed that only in one page of the draft protocol are attempts made to translate the supposed objectives into action. The orthodox procedure for establishing an African common external tariff and non-tariff barriers among the participating states.However, towards the desired objectives, two sets of pledges were made, one for the 1980s, 'the others for the 1990s, but there were far-fetched.

It could be gleaned from this view point of Onwuka, that the state actors could not work towards achieving the stated goals, because, they did not provide demonstrable benefits to the participants, and for countries to participate in the integration process, the words of Arthur Hazlewood (1987) become apt:

The case of integration for, a particular country.... participation in an integration schemes rests on the benefits that country itself will obtain from integration. The case of integration is not a case for helping others; it is a case for helping oneself.... Integration will not succeed unless every partner benefits because any who think they will not benefit will not participate and there will then be no integration. The benefit is for every one or none (Hazlewood 1987, in Asante, 1991:102).

A negligence of this fundamental issue raised by Hazlewood and other neo-functional theorists like Mattli (2.001) and Ernst Hass (1958) remains a cog in the wheels of various integration schemes in Africa. Put differently, African economic community and eventual political union and the corresponding development of the continent will only be realistic if each member of the regional schemes is likely to be better off inside the community than, it would have been outside.

Similarly, in pursuit of development whose propellant is regional integration, the Abuja treaty signed by the OAU Heads of State on June, 1991 envisaged the establishment of an African Economic Community (AEC) by the year 2025, and the bogus expectations of having the largest economic community in the world, with no fewer than 53 member states representing a combined market of over 645 million people is worth examining. The push towards African wide integration is still far from its stated goals with full realization of political, social, and cultural integration initially set for 2008. To achieve this objective, four sub-regional organizations were expected to spearhead the process with a provision for creation of others where none did exist. To wit: Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS). The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the then Preferential Trade Areas for Eastern and Southern African States (P.T.A) now the Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU). These sub-regional schemes were to consolidate as a prelude to their harmonization at the continental level (Lancaster, 1991:246-267).

Bach (1997) was critical of the implementation and feasibility of this ambitious venture, which are in three main strands: the AEC administrative and institutional features, the choice of development strategy implied by the treaty; and more generally the difficulties encountered when schemes are based on integration through trade liberalization. This first, objection with concern on its administrative and institutional features never exist because of the reluctance of member states to forsake any true measure of their autonomy in designing the ECA's institutional apparatus/the ECA captured this dilemma in this manner:

There is no sub-regional integration process underway at this time. Sub-, regional economic groupings in Africa have not been able to make their impact felt. Were they have had an impact, it has been on balanced negative: (as a result), member - states are providing financial support to agencies that make no significant contribution in terms of improving Africa's economic situation (ECA, 1990:8).

This observation by the ECA does not only affect the Abuja Treaty objective of creating Pan African Parliament, where the participants are not willing but also have great implications on the integration process within the sub-regional groupings in their various localities. For instances, the problem encountered in implementing the promises of harmonization schedule within the ECOWAS and the SADC region could be seen in this light, the existence of parallel regional organizations as West African Economic Community (CEAO) which had more Francophone West African States in its fold, makes integration process to be cumbersome and otiose (Bourgi, 1983). In more lucid terms Bach (1997), observed that none of the signatory states to the Abuja treaty did renounce its membership in intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) that compete with the four large sub-regional communities. The influence of geopolitics and .international clienteles on state behavior impedes successful regional integration (Bach,1997:81).

Another flaw or objection to the Abuja treaty is its adoption of a development model increasingly at variance from the policies applied by member states at the national level. Bundu (1997:37-38) posedpertinent questions on how many member states of ECOWAS have drawn up national development plan or programs with regional consideration or the regional market as their point of reference? What measures have been introduced by government as incentives for their business communities to venture into cross border investments and transactions, and what encouragement is offered to ordering people to think in West African terms? Badie and Smouts (1992) observation is stimulating here, they asserts that, there have emerged IGO model in Latin America region, which is more in tune with the desire of national governments to consolidate and enhance the gains of competitiveness achieved through the liberalization of domestic policies (Bach, 1997:82). The last strand of the objection has to do with the wholesale emulation and adoption of theEuropean model by the Abuja Treaty, without the concomitant panache to itsworkability (Ndidigwe, 2009:20). It is agreed by scholars that Europe's economic power grew due to market liberalization and the increasingly tight co-ordination of national economic and financial policies. This was achieved through succession of institutional steps implemented by strongly motivated member states. What this overlooks is that the steady progress in institution-building that was achieved sanctioned the pre-existing intensification of economic, financial and societal interaction. Conversely, the dynamics at work in sub-Saharan Africa are quite different, due in part to structural constraints generated by cross border trade (Meagher, 1997). It has been observed that sub-Saharan African economies overall have been stagnant with per capita GDP declining by 0.7 percent during the period 1988-99 (UN, 2002:8). Per capital GNP in the continent excluding (South Africa) dropped from & 509 dollars in 1980 to $381 dollars in 1990 and further to just $ 323 in 1999. The

poor performance in production activities had a very negative impact on the welfare of Africans, with per capita consumption declining from $ 324 in 1990 to just $ 281 in 1999.
No doubt, Africa's poor performance does not necessarily imply that it lacks resources, but rather how to harness the abundant natural and human resources for her development. Bundu (1997) opines that, a well articulated and structured approach to regional integration and cooperation holds the promise of accelerated development through the co-ordination and exploitation of the region's human, natural and capital resources (1997:46).

3. Synergy between regional integration and development in Africa

Judging from the challenges that regional integration has encountered in Africa, it clearly indicates that member countries of various sub-regional Integration schemes in Africa have not completely accepted regional integration as a development tool and are yet to accord it the necessary priority. It is important to state that politicians in African countries often find themselves baffled by the sheer magnitude and complexity of development problems as well as by possible choices available to overcome some of these problems (Ndidigwe, 2009:22). This bewilderment would not be far from their misconception of what development means and the toolkit for achieving it. The view of development with focus only within the context of economic growth with trends in income per capita taken as the primary indicator of the rate of progress raises some contentious issues about the nature, causes and objectives of development, as was as its empirical validity and the value basis of its propositions and models.
This view point was repudiated by the writings of Andre Gunder Frank and other radical economists as Michael Todaro who insists on the consideration, of social justice and human satisfaction as essential components of any adequate definition of development, (Frank 1972:8-9; Todaro, 1977:98). Adedeji (1979) repudiating the orthodox assumption of development stressed that economic and material growth by themselves should not be viewed as sufficient condition of development, however, important they may be: growth must be brought about in ways which actively promote the self reliant capabilities of developing countries in order to be of lasting value. He concluded that development cannot be reduced merely to capital accumulation, economic growth and economic restructuring. To do so is to confuse what may constitute the basis for development with development itself, hence, he admonished that the conventional gross domestic product (GDP) by which the rates of growth are measured should be regarded with caution when dealing with economies such as those in Africa. For what is germane is not simply growth but the complete restructuring, transformation of economies from dependence to self-reliant, ones (Adedeji, 1979).
In a nutshell, the conventional GDP as an indicator of growth is according to developmental scholars the most pervasive of development illusions and this illusion and the confusion they cause are primarily responsible for the retardation that has been made so far in the developing countries. Thus, in the overall development process, the developing countries should not jettison the importance of such non-quantifiable factors as free mobility and horizontal and vertical social mobility, the establishment of the right type of social and economic institutions and the abolition or reform of those that inhibit development and modernity.
On the interface between regional integration and development in Africa, Adedeji shared this key aspect with Paul Prebisch of the Economic Commission for Latin American Countries (ECLAC) as a development strategy. In other words, Adedeji like his Latin American counterpart recognized the dynamic potential of regional cooperation and integration whereby developing countries can break out of their narrow markets and form regional groupings as an instrument of economic independence. Both intellectuals attribute the causes of failure of different development policies in the Third world to the series of independent efforts carried out in isolated compartments. In their views since they achieved their independence from outside the continent. These theories of economic growth, which were developed during the colonial and neo-colonial periods, were to rationalize the colonial pattern of production in Africa. These foreign theories reinforced the economic dependence of. Africa (Adedeji, 1982).
In the past, there was an implicit proposition in Africa that sustained socio-economic change will not come from within and that the processes required will depend on external trade, aid and foreign investments and can be promoted in the face of numerous and increasingly dysfunctional relations. This was the effect:

1) Directing attention away from the need for internal structural changes, evaluation of real resources availabilities and their sectoral distribution.
2) (2), Reinforcing the neglect of the role of domestic African markets; and
3) Inhibiting effective action to bring about development of economic cooperation among the large numbers of relatively small and weak economies of Africa (Asante, 1991).

African efforts towards development, based primarily on the transferred theories of development and economic growth have been dismal. For during the last quarter century, global economic growth has soared, but Africa continued to lose ground. Indeed, poverty increased in the continent, despite the emergence of an integrated $30 billion US dollars global economy by the end of the decade (UN, 2002:8). The continent's growing poverty is simply a result of insufficient investment aggravated by poor management. For example, Africa's capital saving as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has been decreasing since the 1970s. The period 1975-84, it average 22.9 percent of GDP, 19 percent for the period 1985-89 and 16 percent in the 1990s (ADB, 2002:20).
This poor performance was matched by a steady decline in OfficialDevelopment Assistance (ODA) from wealthy countries. The ODA to Africa decreased from 28 percent of total global ODA in 1993 to 24 percent in 1998/1999 (ADB, 2002:8). As such, there was a simultaneous decline in economic activities in the continent, the ODA for economic prosperity and this trend is sustained till this moment. Developing countries have inadequate resources or the technical capacity to compete with the relatively more developed ones in the same underdeveloped regions, much less with the developed areas as could be seen, for instance, in the then frontline states combined together remained underdeveloped in comparison to that of the then apartheid South Africa, precipitating the formation of Southern African development Coordinating Conference (SADCC) was seen ,as one strategy to bridge the gap (Abegunrin, 1984; Ravenhill, 1984).
Thus, Adedeji (1976) is apt on regionalism and development as inseparable in this manner: Economic cooperation among African States is a sine qua non for the achievement of national socio-economic goals, and not an extra to be given thought to after the process of development is well advanced. It is significant to note that there is a congruent between development and regional integration. For in no area - whether it is in the internationalization of development process or international trade negotiation, debt, policy or adjustment with transformation - can much progress be made without cooperation amongst African countries.
Nonetheless, regional groupings in Africa are in a crossroad, in that participating countries are not on an equal level of development. An important requirement for a successful economic integration is that member countries must be at relatively equal stages of industrial development, with similar market sizes with a strong interest in coordinating and rationalizing their joint industrial patterns (Todaro 1994:272; Salvatore, 1990:294). This scenario is well captured in the findings of the World Bank (2003) estimates of 2001, Gross National Income (GNI) per capita, the Southern, African countries, in the sub-Saharan region, have relatively good income. In terms of development indicators South Africa has developed financial markets, including a sophisticated banking system that is at par with any in the world. The country has also a relatively virile industrial base, and a generally stable infrastructure (Ilorah, 2004:232). While the major powers in the West African and

East African sub-regions, such as Nigeria arid Kenya, respectively among others, are on their way to improving their basic infrastructure, including their banking system, there has been tremendous stride in that sector presently. Countries north of the Sahara, such as Egypt, Morocco and others have relatively high per capita income and better infrastructure than most countries in the sub-Saharan region.
In spite of the fact that, these inequalities in development among member states could constraint economic integration, but it should not deter the purpose and emergence of such efforts. As Mattli (2001:51) surmise; these constraints are not peculiar to Africa alone, rather it is a phase which other successful integration efforts have passed through in the past. This could be gleaned from case of hitherto underdeveloped economies of South East Asia. More so the Post World War II ravaged European economy appreciation of integration efforts, as a development imperative is another example. Therefore, Africa must rise to the challenge of the 21st century rather than shy away from them through its defeatist postulations.

4. African development and underdevelopment

Africa is not only the largest regional sub-system in terms of territorial size and number of states (Gordenker, 1973:105-119), it is also the least industrialized and one characterized by most inequality. As Harris (1975:10) succinctly noted, that the structure of underdevelopment in Africa stems from the incorporation of the continent into the expanding capitalist system over a period of some four centuries. Under colonialism the basic features of the present political economy of Africa took form. Colonialism provided the context within which the development of underdevelopment borrowing Andre Gunder Frank's phraseology took place. It was during this period that the dynamic sectors of the colonies were aligned with the interests of dominant classes in metropolitan countries.
In the first two decades since independence African economies as were not only extremely open and exposed to the vicissitudes of international- economic changes, they were also excessively dependent on external trade and other external stimuli foreign technology and expertise. Indeed, the strategy and theories of development which they have been pursuing decline in economic activities in the continent, because of over-dependency on the ODA for economic prosperity.Moreover, Africa's share of world total Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in 1970 and 1990 were about 5. 5 percent and 1 percent respectively, in 2000 it still hoveredaround 1 percent (OECD/ADB, 2002:13). The problem of decreasing FDI could be attributed to political instability in some African countries. Such instabilities in political, infrastructural and armed conflict scared away foreign investors and thereby aggravating unemployment and underdevelopment in the continent.
However, from the statistic above, it shows that under the-present international economic order Africa has very insignificant economic power as such effective African integration can provide a buffer against the negative effects of globalization, and lessen the continent's dependence on the developed, countries. Hitherto, the ECA and the OAU, had initiated some programs such as the Lagos plan and the Final Act, whose main planks include: the deliberate promotion of national self-reliance; the acceleration of internally located and relatively autonomous growth and diversification; the achievement of a self-sustained development process; the progressive eradication of unemployment; a fair and just distribution of income and the benefits of development among the people, and finally, the acceleration of economic integration through cooperation (Kapungu,1990:47). But this effort only helped to highlight the problems, without achieving itsobjectives. However, it demonstrates that despite the prevailing formidable constraints presented by external economic environment, African governments themselves as having some choice in the matter of development strategy.
There exist other development programs for the continent, spear-headed by the OAU which include: the Africa's Priority Program for Economic Recovery (APPER) that was supposed to run from the years 1986-90. However, this purpose was defeated because the continent lacked the fund and commitment to make itwork. Consequently, in June 1991 a Treaty for the establishment of African Economic community (AEC) was adopted in Abuja by the OAU Heads of Government, with a plan to create an economic union of the whole continent. The plan laid down detailed stages for the continent's economic integration that will start at the existing sub-regional levels and later extend to a much broader regional or continental level.Though, it is often said by commentators, on regional integration, that past economic initiatives by African leaders have had little or no success, what remains clear, is the fact that its leaders have placed regional integration high on the political agenda, which explains the reforms seen in major regional organizations; such as ECOWAS and SADC which have placed them on the pedestal for continental development and as such worth examining critically.

5. Bridging the underdevelopment gap by ECOWAS and SADC

According to Mattli (2001:42) a successful integration requires that the Heads of States of member countries implement a promise to tie not only their economies,but their future together. This fact entails a lengthy process of establishing common rules, regulations and policies that are either based on specific treaty provision or derived from the principles and objectives within the integration treaty. The observation of Altaf' and Yusuf (2004:8) is apt in the sense that for integration to yield its widely shared gains and to contribute to the economic growth of any region, a sustained attention to policies and programs will be necessary. In ECOWAS and the SADC, they found cooperation in the infrastructure sector as strategic to their regional development, (ECOWAS Treaty, 1975). As the 1980 Lusaka Declaration establishing the SADC as a coordinating conference noted that without the establishment and development of an adequate regional transport and communication system other areas of cooperation become impractical.' This infrastructure! aspect according to Lavergne (1997:12-13) is widely recognized in literature on regional integration and cooperation as strategic to a region's economic development as such provides an opportunity for collaboration to proceed along project-driven lines that are less likely to encounter political difficulties than other schemes provided that fund can be found.
In the Southern African Development Community (SADC), priority was given to the improvement of road and railway services into Mozambique, so that the landlocked countries of the region could transport their goods through Mozambican ports instead of the then apartheid South African ones. To achieve this, forty percent of the total development budget went to Mozambique for development of Beira and Maputo harbors, and the upgrading and improvement of the railway links between Mozambique and Zimbabwe (Abegunrin, 1984:194). This is vital for the success of the medium and long term strategy to re-unite the region's goods to and from the SADCC countries. And to undertake activities in this sector, an institutional framework was established which is known as the Southern African Transport and Communications Commission (SATCC) in Maputo Mozambique. The interregional development of a network of roads among the SADC states is a pre-requisite for effective movement of capital goods and peoples among the cooperating states. The effective movement of capital, goods and peoples is an important variable in forging regional economic cooperation and development.
However, to position the sector for the future challenges the policies and strategies for the transport sector which forms part of the SADC protocol on transport, communications and meteorology, signed in 1996 and effected, in 1998 provides the frame work for cooperation (SADC, 2003:31-32). As a result of this, significant progress has been made in reforming the institutional and funding arrangements for the regions transport systems. In this regard the majority of member states now have Road Agencies or Funds, and there is increasing separation of ownership and operations in seaports and the railways. To measure successes achieved in. the infrastructure sector in the SADC, the statistics on infra-

structural cooperation in the community shows that in 1996/97 out of the 407 development projects financed by sectors, 174 were in the transport and communication sector, amounting to USD $6,474 Billion or 80 percent of total project financing. It therefore stresses the priority attention given to infrastructure development as pivot to the region's economic integration anddevelopment.

Similarly, the implementation of the transports protocols has been somewhat successful in the West African region. The program for the development of an ECOWAS integrated regional road network was adopted in 1980. Under the program two major trans-regional roads were to be completed: the trans-coastal Highway, linking Lagos - Nigeria, with Nouakchott-Mauritania (4,767km) and runs through Nigeria Benin, Togo, Ghana, Senegal and Mauritania; and the trans-Sahelian Highway, linking Dakar-Senegal with N' Ndjamena, Chad (4,633km). By mid 1998 about 83 percent of the trans-coastal route was completed and about 87 percent of the trans-Sahelian route (Bundu, 1997:35; Europa, 1999:22). In addition to these two important highways, that are strategic in the sub-region for effective movement of capital goods and peoples among the integrating states, is the construction of interconnecting roads for the purpose of opening up land-locked countries. These projects comprise a total of 48 roads that add up to a total of 7,591km spread over fourteen member countries of the community (Odock, 2003:71).

In the area of communications, great improvement has been made in West Africa. In August, 1996,. it was reported that the initial phase of a program to improve regional telecommunications have been completed. Some US dollars $35 million was granted for project financing in eight ECOWAS countries,(Europa , 1999:112), This is in tandem with the ECOWAS telecommunication priority development program to obliterate the colonial .structure and legacies, that-made West Africa to be dependent on London, Paris and Lisbon to connect outside their clime. The ECOWAS priority development program had three objectives:

- to provide the member states with reliable and regular means of communication in order to promote interstate trade;
- to reduce the regions dependence on the outside world by developing interstate communications links; and
- to assist member states improve upon their national telecommunications networks.

The measures implemented as part of the telecommunication program of ECOWAS, according to Odock (2003:72) include, the completion of the remaining portions of the panatela network, the establishment of international transit centre; the expansion of existing facilities and the establishment of satellite earth station at Praia in the Cape Verde. By this the objective of development in the communication sector has been accomplished, especially dismantling the bottlenecks associated with connecting outside one country. To this end improving communication is one of the basic aims of the ECOWAS and the SADC, since developing communication systems will transform their regions into an information-based economies.

Cooperation in the energy sector in the SADC has made a major in road, especially in. the electricity subsector through the Southern African Power Pool (SAPP) whereby all member states were to be linked into a single electricity grid. Several grids are already integrated, and others are being rehabilitated. The progress made in this, resulted in the introduction of short-term energy market which has turned SAPP into a competitive pool. By this_ encouraging progress has been recorded in the establishment of a Regional Regulatory Association (RERA) (SADC, 2003:30).

The energy sector is receiving urgent attention in the West African region. A step towards the creation of the West African Power Pool (WAPP) a unified electricity market covering the ECOWAS sub-region is in progress though the initiative was mooted in 1997 it gathered momentum recently as could be seen in the funding of Ghana and Benin Republic power project to the tune of 45 percent on Ghana and 1Q percent in Benin by the African Development Bank (ADB) (Daily Sun, 2007: April 16 :41). The project as in the Southern African region seeks to reduce poverty in the ECOWAS region through increased access to modern energy services by investors. The project also aims at increasing transmission capacity between Nigeria, Benin, Togo and Ghana for trading of electricity which will improve reliability of supply, reduce production costs and during drought periods meet short falls in out-put of hydro power stations it should be noted that this interconnectivity in regions: (ECOWAS/SADC) through Hydroelectric schemes would serve as a-catalyst to political and economic unification of the region.

Far more fundamental, the ECOWAS region has made some significant progress in monetary cooperation whose target is the emergence, of a single monetary zone for the region. It has been able to put in place the basic institutional framework required to facilitate monetary integration. The ECOWAS Monetary Cooperation Program (MCP) adopted in 1987 to full monetary union. This program was in line with the community's objective that monetary union is necessary to encourage investment in the region since it would greatly facilitate capital transactions within the region and foreign countries. In 1992 as part of efforts to enhance monetary cooperation and financial harmonization in the region, the West African Clearinghouse (WACH) system was put in place which was a cooperation arrangement between the various central banks in the region (Odock, 2003).

However, on December 15, 2002, six nonmembers of the Franc Zone: the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone established the West African Monetary Zone (WAMZ), as cooperative platform, designed to achieved monetary union with a common central bank to be sited in Ghana. And a single currency called "ECO" (The Guardian, September 2003; The Punch, November 24:2005). However, efforts to achieving this objective have stalemated severally, but the process is still on course especially in recent time in 2019 (CNN.com July 9:2019).

6. Discussion of findings and conclusion

From the cases validated in this study it is necessary to state the following:

- Regional integration requires agreements on standard and the removal of obstructions to cross-border relations.
- Deeper integration will need the harmonization of policies that are beyond the border, in contrast to shallow integration which pays lip service to theintegration initiatives.

As the evidence in this study shows, that the two regional schemes in Africa (ECOWAS and SADC) are development driven, as could be seen in the priority attention given to their region's infrastructure as a prerequisite to other sectoral development and integration. Therefore, integration in the infrastructure sector of these communities as adumbrated has been viewed as the pivot to the continent's development and prosperity.

One striking approach to integration adopted since year 2000 by these schemes is the fast-track approach to integration process, which has impacted positively on participating states that are much more willing to advance towards deeper integration. This approach is more pragmatic and incremental, allowing two or more countries to move forward whenever opportunities arises (Obasanjo, 1999; Abubakar, 2001:24). This view is in consonance with Onimode's (2000) argument that, the pace of integration should be dictated by the faster integrating countries, with the slower one's joining later. The integration of the West African Gas Pipeline Project (WAGPP) is a complete departure from what was obtained in the past, where there was lack of commitment by member states to the integration process. The agreement according to the former Energy Minister of Nigeria-Edmund Dakoru had the "take or pay" clause, which made sure that both parties (supplier and buyers) pursue a project that affects their development with absolute seriousness and sense of commitment. By this clause when the buyer is ready before the seller, the seller is obliged to pay the buyer and vice-versa. (The Punch, February 13, 2007:19). The WAG PP is likened to the initial cooperation by six West European countries. With this strategy in force, the parties involved in an integration venture are committed to the realization of the objectives by meeting the target time and date.

Furthermore, with regional cooperation in progress it was discovered that in 2004 intra African trade accounted for only 9 percent of the total volume of the continents exports, while trade with European countries accounted for 67 percent of the total volume of exports from Africa. It is worthy to note that despite, this low level of intra-African trade as a result of underdevelopment the 9 percent of this trade emanated from the SADC, ECOWAS and the COMESA as against other sub-regions without deeper cooperation, which depicts the relative success of regional integration for Africa's economic prosperity (Mkwezalamba and Chinyama, 2007:5).The question remains why this low result and achievement by these regional schemes in advancing development?

The reasons are not farfetched - both the SADC and the ECOWAS member states depend largely on foreign capital aid and economic assistance to finance projects thereby lacking the inward-looking approach to pursuing economic development. Development as articulated cannot be achieved on the platter of over-dependence on Official Development Aid (ODA) alone, but requires the funding of development by the participating states in the integration process, Olukoshi, (2003:11) surmised that ODA is set for a course of long terms decline as evidenced by the decline in the foreign aid receipt flowing to the continent from 17.2 billion USD in 1990 to 12:3 billion in 2001. Even at that, the assistance on offer was increasingly accompanied by a host of ever more stringent and complex conditionality as reflected in the World Bank, IMF and the EU sponsored development assistance to the regions. This has, made development otiose, as evidence in the over 100 billion dollars needed for SADC projects which is not forth coming (Makumbe, 2010).

Given the growing popularity of .new paradigms of regionalism and development as articulated by Hettne (2000); in the treaties of ECOWAS 1993 and SADC 1995, .mention was only made of the involvement of the private sector and the civil society in the instruments, but there was no conscious implementation of the treaty provision as such the people were not recognized in the process (Shutt, 1998; Maltosa, 2006). The regional schemes only see integration as an elite-centered policy and action which is at variance with regional integration theory and the concept of development, which stresses the involvement of all and sundry, for the private sector are the triggers of economic growth, whereas the reverse is the case among these schemes.

7. Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it is clear that regional integration remains high on the agenda of African leaders to escape the underdevelopment scourge. However, the approach shows both traces of economic solidarity and certain weaknesses at the same time.

Apart from setting out taxonomy of processes and policies for responsive integration in ECOWAS and the SADC regions it is clear from their examples that what can be gathered from the general trend across the continent is that regional economic communities are largely viewed as engines for socio-economic development. As such the ambitions of African integration often surpass mere trade liberalization of shared economic policies to touch on other sectors and fields such that the terminal point is development.

8. Recommendations

The following framework may suffice:

1) The participants in the integration schemes in Africa should as a matter ofurgency channel all that it takes to see that protocols and agreements are honored and implemented by various national governments. For the rhetoric of African leaders alone will not propel integration and economicdevelopment, but their commitment and concrete actions.
2) The funding of development programs within the integrating schemes shouldbe sourced largely internally, then depending totally on external sources which are barely enough for regional projects but rather leave them in the underdeveloped state.
3) The national economics of the integrating states should be strengthened through diversification as against their mono-cultural posture in order to increase trade among regional states and increase the export earnings of members, in which favorable balance of trade could be achieved.

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