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## **The Evolution of Economic Integration in ECOWAS**

### **I. Introduction**

Since gaining political independence in the 1960s, African leaders have consistently reaffirmed their desire to forge mutually beneficial economic and political linkages in order to enhance the social and economic development of Africa's people. Their desire to achieve greater economic integration of the continent has led to the "creation of the most extensive network of regional organizations anywhere in the world<sup>1</sup>." Regional networks in Africa are not a recent phenomenon, but have an historic roots as the historian Stanislas Adotevi states that "those who deny that Africans have much to trade among themselves ignore the history of precolonial trade, which was based on the exchange of good across different ecological zones, in a dynamic regional trading system centered on the entrepot markets that sprang up at the interstices of these zones<sup>2</sup>." He argues that colonialism disrupted these linkages that could have resulted in commercial centers of regional integration. These historical networks were rekindled in 1975, when fifteen nations, mostly former British and French colonies formed the regional organization, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) with the objective of increasing regional trade, improving free movement of labor, and developing policy harmonization<sup>3</sup>.

Throughout the 1980s the regional community struggled to create a coherent policy of integration until the early 1990s, when political cooperation increased as a result of a joint

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<sup>1</sup> Buthelezi, xiv

<sup>2</sup> Lavergne, 72

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 133

regional peacekeeping operation in Liberia and in 1993, member states signed a revised treaty with the goal of accelerating integration. Political integration was further deepened in 2000 with the establishment of a regional parliament that would address issues including: common defense, economic, financial, energy, and environmental policies. Despite the deeper political cooperation, ECOWAS continues to face significant impediments to economic integration as a result of political and economic constraints including logistical, institutional, and linguistic differences within the region<sup>4</sup>. This paper will consider the evolution of economic integration in West Africa under ECOWAS through both the neorealist and constructivist paradigms and endeavor to determine which model can best explain the reasons for integration's uneven progress as well as the policy implications that can be concluded regarding the potential for further deepening regionally.

In general, existing research focuses on the extensive political deepening within the Community. This is largely due to the fact that the region's most significant successes have occurred in the realm of security cooperation. For example, in the 2003 World Bank study, "Regional Integration and Development," states that by creating an actual defense pact to bolster security, ECOWAS enabled the development of cooperative behavior that has gone farther politically than even the EU<sup>5</sup>. The same study goes on to discuss the pressures of globalization that have forced countries to seek a new method of maintaining sovereignty by pooling it with in the realm of economic cooperation, the study found a critical lack of commitment from member states.

Despite significant regional efforts to integrate economically in the past decade, including the creation of a second monetary zone, the West African Monetary Zone (WAMZ),

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<sup>4</sup> Maurice Schiff and L. Alan Winters, 192-3

<sup>5</sup> Maurice Schiff and L. Alan Winters, 193 Regional Integration and Development, The World Bank, 2003

encompassing the region's Anglophone countries in 2001 to compliment the CFA franc zone established by France's former colonies as well as significant reductions in tariff levels, substantial challenges remain. For example, of the 15 member nations, only Cote d'Ivoire and Senegal conduct more than 50% of their trade regionally<sup>6</sup>. Further challenges include the differing levels of development between national economies, which drive weaker states to protect themselves against stronger neighbors. In addition, countries face informational asymmetries within the region as a result of inefficient or non-existent transport and telecommunications services, under-developed infrastructure oriented towards extra-continental rather than regional trade, a lack of uniform regulatory and customs systems, and finally, non-convertible currencies and problematic exchange rate systems<sup>7</sup>. In spite of these daunting challenges, the possibility of regional cooperation exists and would likely result in a considerable increase in member countries global competitive advantage.

## **II. Theoretical Approaches**

The interaction between neorealists and constructivists has focused on critiquing the theoretical assumptions and approaches put forward by both groups of theorists and has been applied to the cases of European and Asian integration, however, far less of the literature seeks to compare the utility of the two approaches in Africa. Writing on the subject of the neorealist-constructivist dialogue, Sterling-Folker calls the debate "superfluous" and writes "it is striking how little cross-paradigmatic dialogue has been generated among practitioners of these two approaches<sup>8</sup>." To an extent, both theories are concurrently relevant: without some degree of realist structuralism, constructivism risks becoming too focused on what some refer to as "presentism," but, without some level of constructivist historicism, realism in turn, hazards

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<sup>6</sup> Buthelezi, 145

<sup>7</sup> Buthelezi, xv

<sup>8</sup> Sterling-Folker, 74

falling prey to a “trans-historical complacency in which nothing is new<sup>9</sup>.” Realists have been criticized by both fellow realists as well as non-realists for seeking to specify behavioral patterns solely on the basis of a zero-sum environment<sup>10</sup>.” The role of groups, a major aspect of the constructivist paradigm, Sterling-Folker argues, has always occupied a “venerable” place in the realist model as well. She highlights the fact that many realist theorists list the existence of groups as the first core assumption of the realist paradigm, even before the assumption of anarchy, that humans do not interact with one another primarily as individuals, but rather as members of groups that command their loyalty. In so doing, they provide numerous examples highlighting the existence of the behavioral patterns within groups plays a significant role in forming group behavior<sup>11</sup>. A brief overview of the fundamental features of the two models follows as well as an analysis of each paradigm’s approach to the process of integration and the West African context.

### **A. Neorealism and Regional Power Politics**

Neorealism’s framework is based on the assumptions that states are key units of action that act in a rational manner and seek power as an end in itself<sup>12</sup>. These assumptions do not create a testable paradigm, but rather the structure on which to build such a tool. A key development of neorealist theory is the concept of the balance of power and is integral to the neorealist paradigm, begins with further assumptions about states: States are unitary actors who, at the very least, seek their own preservation, and at a maximum, drive for universal domination. States, or those who act for them, try in more or less sensible ways to use the means available in order to achieve the

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<sup>9</sup> Sterling-Folker, 74

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 80

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 82

<sup>12</sup> Keohane, 7

ends in view<sup>13</sup>. Morgenthau, writing at the end of World War II, characterized the international political system as in a constant struggle for power and argued that the system could be understood through the assumption that statesmen “think and act in terms of interest defined as power.” Kenneth Waltz takes a different approach than Morgenthau, to the balance of power in the international system, in his publication Theory of International Politics. He argues that the “balance of power is seen by some as being akin to a law of nature; by others, as simply an outrage. Some view it as a guide to statesmen; others as a cloak to that disguises their imperialist policies<sup>14</sup>.” A key weakness in the neorealist’s concept of power is the inability to distinguish between power as a resource that is based on tangible assets and power as the intangible ability to influence other states’ behavior<sup>15</sup>. This weakness is key in analyzing the power dynamic within ECOWAS.

### **Realism on Regional Integration**

Waltz states, “Although the integration of nations is often talked about, it seldom takes place<sup>16</sup>.” This occurs, he argued, despite the fact that nations could mutually benefit from further division, not just of labor for the production of goods, but also many other tasks states perform, such as political management and military defense. Waltz argues that this inability is due to the inevitable fact that certain states will gain more relative to other states as a result of integration. Despite the potential for significant absolute gains, Waltz contends that the disproportionate relative gains, prevent serious integration of states<sup>17</sup>. In addition, “the condition of insecurity – at the least, the uncertainty of each about the other’s future intentions and actions...” works counter

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<sup>13</sup> Waltz, 118

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 117

<sup>15</sup> Keohane, 11

<sup>16</sup> Waltz, 105

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 106

to states' efforts to cooperate<sup>18</sup>.

Waltz offers a second reason, the fear of dependency and loss of self-sufficiency, for which states should not be expected to integrate, writing that, "A state also worries lest it become dependent on others through cooperative endeavors and exchanges of goods and services...The more a state specializes, the more it relies on others to supply the materials and goods that it is not producing<sup>19</sup>." He does, however, allow an exception for "small and ill-endowed states." In response to criticism regarding the balance of power theory's inability to describe states' interests and motives, Waltz argues, "Any theory covers some matters and leaves other matters aside. Balance of power theory is a theory about the results produced by the uncoordinated actions of states." He argues that the theory should not be judged on how it explains state interests and motives as this not the focus of the model, rather the paradigm makes assumptions about the interests and motives of states and explains instead the constraints that confine all states. He concludes that this difference provides as useful tool as the clear perception of state constraints provides many useful clues regarding the expected reactions of states<sup>20</sup>.

The current wave of economic regionalism, Gilpin has argued, is of great significance for the global economy and has spread in recent years as a result of political, economic, and technological developments. Writing in 2001, in the midst of the rapid integration within the Euro Zone including the adoption of the Euro, development, which neorealists like Waltz had thought to be near impossible, Gilpin attempted to adjust the neorealist model to compensate for the increasing regionalization of the world. He argues, "Regionalism at the turn of the twenty-first century entails increased regionalization of foreign investment, production, and other economic activities..." and each regional arrangement could be explained as a cooperative effort

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<sup>18</sup> Waltz, 105

<sup>19</sup> Waltz, 106

<sup>20</sup> Waltz, 122

of “individual states to promote both their national and their collective economic and political objectives,” simultaneously<sup>21</sup>. He further contends that economic regionalism entails a response by nation-states to the present day’s shared political problems and competitive interdependence of the global economy. The increasing integration of the international economy has sparked the regional groupings of states in an attempt to improve their bargaining positions as well as promote their other foreign policy and economic objectives<sup>22</sup>. Thus, to Gilpin, regionalization does not represent an alternative to the nation-state or a falsification of the neorealist paradigm, as some contend, but instead, embodies the efforts of individual states to improve their power position in relation to other regions through the collective promotion of their vital national interests and ambitions.

### **Neorealism and its Application in West Africa**

Neorealist theory operates under the ordering principle of anarchy in which states interact without rules as unitary actors in an international system that is structured based on a uni-polar, bipolar, or multi-polar distribution of power. If the neorealist paradigm applies, the expectation would be that as multi-polarity increased in the system, cooperation would decline as emerging states competed for dominance; however, in the case of West Africa, today, this is not the case. Although Nigeria remains the most powerful regional actor, Cote d’Ivoire’s rapid recovery following a civil war in 2005 and Ghana’s substantial and sustained economic growth, the region is experiencing the emergence of two more regional powers, yet the recent surge in integration efforts has not slowed. The newly elected president of Ghana, John Evans Atta Mills, who took office at the beginning of 2009, has decided to make regional integration the flagship of his

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<sup>21</sup> Gilpin, 11

<sup>22</sup> Ibid

foreign policy platform, according to the Minister of Foreign Affairs<sup>23</sup>. In addition, the Nigerian Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Bagudu Hirse, reiterated his country's commitment "to an accelerated implementation of regional integration programs for the benefit of the people of West Africa" and promised that the ECOWAS Council of Ministers would work to block all remaining loopholes within ECOWAS agreements that have slowed the integration process<sup>24</sup>.

By itself the neorealist theory has trouble predicting state actions with certainty, especially regarding regional integration. This is partially the result of the fact that state reactions can be argued to depend not only on international constraints, but also individual states' characteristics as Morgenthau argued in the 1970s<sup>25</sup>. This calls into question the practicality of the neorealist model as other theories have strived to understand and describe both the constraints and characteristics of individual states internationally as well as internally.

## **B. Constructivism: Culture and Identity in Economic Structures**

The constructivist paradigm acknowledges that the international system is in a state of anarchy, but holds that this anarchy is a socially constructed state and interactions are based on the distribution of power as well as norms and identity. The system is constrained through rules developed by international institutions and preferences based on identity. In addition to states, actors include international organizations, non-governmental organizations, multi-national companies, and individuals. Alexander Wendt, defined the two major tenets of constructivism in his work, *Social Theory of International Politics*, as first, instead of materialistic factors, shared ideas shape human structures and secondly, human identity and interests are constructed as a

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<sup>23</sup> Ghana News Agency March 27

<sup>24</sup> Obayuwana, 1

<sup>25</sup> Waltz, 62



result of shared ideas rather than a product of nature<sup>26</sup>. According to Gilpin, constructivism represents one of the most important contemporary critiques of realism, especially in addressing the weaknesses of neoclassical theory's emphasis on individualist rational-choice methodology and realism's consideration of solely material factors such as technological forces, physical circumstances, and other<sup>27</sup>. Restated, "realists contend that anarchy and the distribution of relative power drive most of what goes on in world politics. Constructivists counter that structural realism misses what is often a more determinant factor, namely, the inter-subjectively shared ideas that shape behavior by constituting the identities and interests of actors<sup>28</sup>." In addition, constructivists contend that realism is overly deterministic and portrays a global order in which humans lack control<sup>29</sup>.

The constructivist model does not focus on levels per se but on underlying conceptions of how the social and political world interacts. Like neorealism, it does not represent a complete theory, but rather an approach to social inquiry that is based on two core assumptions: the environment in which states interact is social as well as material and this setting can furnish states with an understanding of their interests. Constructivist scholars question the materialism and methodological individualism upon which much contemporary neorealism has been built<sup>30</sup>. According to Wendt, whether a system or region is in a state of conflict or peace is a function not of anarchy and power as the neorealist paradigm contends, but of "shared culture created through discursive social practices...." Because each actor's conception of self-interests as well as identity is a product of the others' diplomatic gestures, states can reshape the system structure by process; through new gestures, they can reconstitute interests and identities toward more other-

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<sup>26</sup> Wendt, 1

<sup>27</sup> Gilpin, 19

<sup>28</sup> Copeland, 1

<sup>29</sup> Gilpin, 20

<sup>30</sup> Checkel, 325-6

regarding and peaceful means and ends<sup>31</sup>. This concept offers an interesting method of analyzing a way forward in ECOWAS, especially in terms of monetary integration, a process that has been handicapped by the creation of colonial structures and have to be “reconstituted” in order for monetary convergence to occur<sup>32</sup>. In sum, constructivists focus on the idea that social structures that are learned and can be unlearned.

Constructivist theory rejects the basic assumption of neorealist theory that the state of anarchy is the inherent structural condition of the international system. Rather, it argues, in Alexander Wendt's words, that 'Anarchy is what states make of it'. That is, anarchy is a condition of the system of states because states in some sense 'choose' to make it so. Anarchy is the result of a process that constructs the rules or norms that govern the interaction of states<sup>33</sup>. The condition of the system of states today as self-helpers in the midst of anarchy is a result of the process by which states and the system of states was constructed. It is not an inherent fact of state-to-state relations. Thus, constructivist theory holds that it is possible to change the anarchic nature of the system of states.

### **A Constructivist Approach to ECOWAS**

Wendt argues that “constructivism is not a theory of international politics...[thus] before we can be a constructivist about anything we have to choose...‘agents and ‘structures’ in which they are embedded<sup>34</sup>. In this paper, the agents considered are the member states and their representatives within ECOWAS. The structures in which ECOWAS member states are embedded are numerous, but most importantly the remnants of the colonial experience, which continue to fundamentally effect interactions within the region. The evolution of integration

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<sup>31</sup> Copeland, 3

<sup>32</sup> See Case Study A

<sup>33</sup> Wendt, 63 (1992)

<sup>34</sup> Wendt, 7 (1999)

within West Africa may, in fact, be better explained in terms of identity and societal constructions. The Western world has often viewed the economic difficulties and political instability of developing countries through a cultural or identity-based paradigm. This paper will seek to investigate this assertion in the culturally diverse region of West Africa. A study by the Brookings Institution argues that national diversity has often been “slighted in the normative judgments of those who endorse further economic integration” and asserts that the tension within international institutions “will persist in a world of deepening economic integration and continued political fragmentation.” West African nations have struggled since independence with artificially constructed borders as well as language and institutional differences as a result of different colonial experiences. March and Olsen described the disintegration of states noting that states seem to be experiencing increasing fragmentation, especially in the developing world. Such countries “...have lost critical elements of statehood as their central governments have broken down... making the state ‘centerless’ or multi-centered.” Ethnic, religious, linguistic, and regional, identities have created allegiances that do not necessarily coincide with nation-state boundaries and perhaps the state seems to be evolving into a less coherent and less tightly coupled unit.

### **The Creation and Legacy of Colonial Structures**

The borders drawn by the colonial administrations in Africa that suited their own purposes, but “often divided, subsumed or assumed indigenous identities - they left a devastating legacy<sup>35</sup>.” In West Africa, this is especially relevant in Nigeria where the borders span “a mosaic of ethnic groups which provided little cultural basis for a united nation; simultaneously, ethnic groups spanned the post-colonial states<sup>36</sup>. Aside from the tangible geographical constructions,

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<sup>35</sup> Groves, 1

<sup>36</sup> Ibid

colonialism left significantly different intangible legacies and constructs in West Africa. The impact of France's *mission civilisatrice* "left indelible marks on its former territories...Through a web of connections, links, agreements, and pacts, France succeeded in granting an 'independence' that continues to haunt African states."<sup>37</sup> Le Vine states that the former French colonies share more than a shared past, but also social, political, and economic linkages born of common and sometimes shared post-independence political experiences. In addition, ties to France remain resilient and durable, with serious implications for their economic and political development.<sup>38</sup>

Significantly, for francophone states, when nationalist leaders "spoke of independence, what they meant was autonomy within some form of French political community, not complete rejection of France"<sup>39</sup>..." The overriding theme in the French colonies' political discourse was the quest for the fullest realization of *French* political values...it was only after World War II that the assertion of an African identity mingled with the earlier theme, and even then it was expressed in integrative rather than mutually exclusive terms<sup>40</sup>. "They felt themselves to be part French...but they were also African" and could not fully reject the "political and social culture whose language, ideas, and mores they had, to varying degrees, made their own"<sup>41</sup>. This identity conflict as a result of the colonial experience is not nearly as acute in former British colonies, as a result of Britain's decision to utilize a system of indirect rule.

Despite these lasting linkages, the African studies scholar, Stanislas Adotevi "urges Africa to ground the regional integration process in its own historical and cultural roots." He maintains that the idea of fixed geographic boundaries is "profoundly alien to Africa's historical

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<sup>37</sup> Hounnikpo, 212

<sup>38</sup> Le Vine, 2

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, 122

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 123

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 123

and cultural traditions...” The boundaries of the post-colonial state “contrast sharply with the fluid areas of sociopolitical and cultural integration that existed in the pre-colonial era.” This is the most difficult challenge facing ECOWAS as it seeks to reach its goal of full economic integration. Adotevi considers ethnic loyalties, based on pre-colonial connections to represent a “wellspring of social identity” that must be tapped to facilitate regional integration “while reasserting Africa’s historical social and cultural values” that transcend national borders. He faults the slow process of African integration on the confines of the constructed nation-state because “the foundation was unsound to begin with<sup>42</sup>.”

### **III. Testing and Expectations**

This paper will focus on the process economic integration and seek to explain the motivation behind the integration process within the Community and the largely unsuccessful attempt to increase regional trade and economic cooperation using the analytical framework of the two paradigms, neorealism and constructivism, described above. Case examples will serve as the major method of analysis and will look at the issues of monetary convergence, common agricultural policies, free movement of labor, regional telecommunications and transportation development, and regional coordination of Chinese investment. In addition, published statements, press releases and policy briefings by member states’ governments and ECOWAS institutions will be analyzed. Simple empirical data will serve as a compliment to the cases above and including levels of regional and global trade based on IMF, UNCTAD and ECOWAS Commission surveys.

The creation and evolution of ECOWAS offers valuable insights into the regional power politics; factors that decisively influence the nature of economic co-operation in West Africa<sup>43</sup>.

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 66

<sup>43</sup> Bach, 616

The division between Anglophone and francophone countries has led to a dual power structure with Cote d'Ivoire and Senegal seeming to vie for dominance within the francophone CFA zone and Ghana seeking to catch up with Nigeria's expanding economy. In addition, member states' acute awareness of relative gains, especially regarding agricultural commodities such as cocoa, coffee, cotton oil, and timber can be argued to have hindered the reduction of trade barriers<sup>44</sup>. Within ECOWAS, Nigeria comprises almost 71% of the region's GDP and represents just over half the region's population<sup>45</sup>. As Buthelezi notes, Nigeria plays a "crucial role in the sub-regional economy"<sup>46</sup>. Nigeria has taken an active role in promoting political integration and led the region's military intervention in Liberia and Sierra Leone; however, Nigeria has not emphasized economic integration to the same degree, which could offer an explanation for the relatively low level of economic and financial integration within the region. Thus, the dynamics within the Community as a result of Nigeria's political and economic dominance could offer an excellent example of regional hegemonic behavior, or perhaps such an analysis is overly simplistic.

The acknowledgement, however, must be made that not all assumptions of the neorealist paradigm fit the West African case. Neorealism analyzes the international system under the assumption that states are unitary actors, however, in Africa and West Africa in particular such a perception is overly simplistic. In certain member states including Liberia and Sierra Leone, rebel groups maintained equal if not greater control of the national economy than the 'sovereign' government. "...In the West African states of Liberia and Sierra Leone, control over the diamond trade has been a critical part of the insurgent economy"<sup>47</sup>. The existence of states as a unitary

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<sup>44</sup> Buthelezi, 144

<sup>45</sup> IMF World Economic Outlook Database

<sup>46</sup> Buthelezi, 129

<sup>47</sup> Vandersluis, 38-9

actor in Africa should not be taken for granted. “They are themselves engaged in a struggle for survival...” not only with secessionist rebel groups, but also international non-governmental organizations<sup>48</sup>. The Post-Cold War global order, especially in Africa, is not crisply divided into entities, which do, and do not, count as ‘state’. Instead, it consists of “...a mass of power structures which, regardless of formal designation, enjoy greater or lesser degrees of statehood<sup>49</sup>.” Thus, perhaps a more accurate portrayal of the region can be found through constructivism’s broader definition of actors within the international system. However, a major weakness of the constructivist paradigm is that it “lacks theoretically proscribed guidelines for when to anticipate stasis or change in human social activity and institutions<sup>50</sup>.”

In much of the reviewed literature expectations for greater integration within the region were quite low and highlighted the inconsistent manner in which the governments of member countries treated the subject. Thus, the general prognosis was highly pessimistic in nature. In the last few years, however, the integration process has accelerated significantly. In mid-2006, ECOWAS transformed its secretariat into a Commission allowing for a much more structured and powerful executive authority and established the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS) in which there is free movement of persons and goods, can compensate for the loss of foreign markets for goods caused by shrinking global demand<sup>51</sup>.” The Commission’s first president, Dr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, of Nigeria, has pushed for a stronger regional integration process. In cooperation with the regional Parliament and Council of Ministers, the President has worked in earnest to build a regional market towards a functioning customs union and a network of cross-border infrastructure-transport, energy and telecommunications. Ultimately, the

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<sup>48</sup> Vandersluis, 45

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 46

<sup>50</sup> Sterling-Folker, 93

<sup>51</sup> Obayuwana, 3

Commission is hoping to increase intra-regional trade and establish a regional common market of nearly 250 million people.

The region seems to exhibit an element of duality in regional trade as informal, non-state interactions continue to function as they have historically. “Cross-border activities have been high in African and informal movements of labor and goods are still significant...<sup>52</sup>”. Formal trade has not enjoyed such success and in the recent past been severely limited. One cause of this divide, the paper argues, is the differing legacies of colonial structures, including governing style, legal systems, language, and many other factors. However, can it truly be concluded that social constructs are largely responsible for the slow process of integration or is it something much less complicated and convoluted? Could it be that relative power concerns do in fact dominate the region, especially since each West African economy is based on the exploitation of commodities and in many cases the same commodities, cocoa, cotton, and oil. These goods are not generally traded regionally as consumer demand is not strong enough and thus are traded globally. Therefore, West African nations are actually competing with their supposed regional partners for access to American and European markets. The realist would argue that easing trade barriers to facilitate cooperation would be counterintuitive as well as counterproductive. The development and seeming commitment to the ECOWAS Common Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP), however, seems to discredit this method of analysis<sup>53</sup>.

A further expectation can be developed through the neorealist paradigm maintains that access to information is a form of power and as such, another expectation based on this model predicts that states would seek to withhold information. The fourth case study, regarding regional efforts to improve the free flow of information by improving existing and developing new

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<sup>52</sup> Metzger, 3

<sup>53</sup> See Case Study B



regional transportation and communication channels discusses and ultimately falsifies this expectation as member states are actively seeking to increase the level of communication between states. Using the constructivist model several expectations can be determined. First, if socially constructed norms do in fact impact state interactions, it would be expected that greater bonds should exist between states that have shared common experiences in the recent past, notably colonialism. A prime example of this issue is presented and analyzed in the first case study, which discusses the struggle towards monetary integration. Because two sets of structures exist in the region (pre and post colonial), the expectation is that policy coordination would be constrained.

The expected result of this study is that the while relative power structure has played a significant role in the development of ECOWAS, social constructions, especially those leftover from the colonial experience preferences cannot be ignored and may instead provide a greater avenue for the analysis of the organization's evolution and prediction of how the Community will continue to evolve. The dramatically different colonial experiences of French assimilation and British indirect rule constructed substantially divergent social norms within a region that historically had been much more homogenous. Legal systems and business practices established under colonial rule do not converge a cross borders. In addition, the colonial experience created an identity crisis, especially within francophone Africa in which the citizen concurrently rejected and embraced the ideals and systems of the former colonizer. A former Senegalese foreign minister, Doudou Thiam, wrote that "Nationalism...arose much earlier in English-speaking African countries. This is because British colonial policy did not pass through the detour of assimilation. African leaders in British territories knew, very early, that it would be a vain hope to seek to invade the House of Lords or the Commons. They knew that they could not recover

their dignity or exercise their liberties except within the framework of independence: in contrast, French-speaking Africans reasoned in terms of ‘French dignity,’ ‘French liberty,’ and ‘French equality’<sup>54</sup>.

#### IV. Case Study Examples

##### A. Regional Monetary Convergence

The African continent is full of regional agreements pertaining to many subjects including: trade, development, or security relations, however, very few organizations have experienced consistent positive performance and function in the manner in which it was intended. Ignoring the economic costs, which will be discussed below, the CFA (Communauté financière africaine), franc zone has “the merit of being fully operational, in contrast to the many overlapping regional integration projects whose existence is largely theoretical<sup>55</sup>.” Most African currencies have been sharply devalued and struggle with deteriorating the terms-of-trade, corruption, kleptocracy, political interference, and financial inefficiency<sup>56</sup>. However, francophone West Africa has experienced relative monetary stability due to the CFA franc zone, the longest unaltered nominal exchange-rate peg (originally with the French Franc and currently with the euro) that is deeply embedded in the colonial past<sup>57</sup>. According to the African studies scholar, Real Lavergne, “the reason for the success of both the West and Central African CFA currencies is their grounding in historical reality and a cultural reality supported by a common language of business, elites case in the same educational mold, and similar traditions of public administration and fiscal management<sup>58</sup>.”

Established in 1945, the currency is currently tied to the Euro (formerly tied to the French

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<sup>54</sup> Le Vine, 125

<sup>55</sup> Lavergne, 70

<sup>56</sup> Riddell, 181

<sup>57</sup> Metzer, 2

<sup>58</sup> Lavergne, 70

franc until 2000) and includes the member states of Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Togo, and Guinea-Bissau (the only non-francophone member). Member states have declared their long-term goal to be a full economic union with a common market, macroeconomic convergence, regulatory harmonization, and a common investment policy. Additionally, member states set up a preferential tariff arrangement in 1995 and established a customs union with a common external tariff of 22% in 2000. While the UEMOA countries have achieved a relatively high degree of integration, it has been reported that intra-member trade has not greatly expanded<sup>59</sup>. In fact, the Brookings Institution found that growth within the zone was virtually the same as neighboring countries<sup>60</sup>. As in other areas, regional conflicts have interrupted the consolidation of economic gains. However, the West African CFA franc zone has been hurt by political unrest in Cote d'Ivoire that has disrupted regional production and supply chains<sup>61</sup>. Until the mid-1990s, trade remained low within the CFA zone—intra-CFA trade was only 7 percent of total trade, however, after declining substantially, intraregional trade recovered and expanded, during the years 2003-2005, intraregional exports exceeded 13% with Togo and Senegal increasing their share of regional trade to 40 and 25%, respectively<sup>62</sup>.

As a further step towards regional monetary integration, the West African Monetary Zone (WAMZ) was established through the Accra Declaration in 2000 with the ultimate goal of merging with the West African CFA franc zone to produce a single currency for ECOWAS. A Task Force on monetary convergence under ECOWAS was set up in October 2008 is to help address the challenges associated with trade-related matters which impede the progress on the

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<sup>59</sup> CRS Report: U.S. Trade and Investment Relationship with Sub-Saharan Africa: The African Growth and Opportunity Act and Beyond, 32

<sup>60</sup> Masson and Milkiewicz, 4

<sup>61</sup> Masson and Milkiewicz, 6

<sup>62</sup> Metzger, 18

common currency program<sup>63</sup>. After being postponed twice, WAMZ member states are due to introduce a common currency by the end of 2009. The target date for a merger with UEMOA, has yet to be determined<sup>64</sup>.

A second monetary union to compliment UEMOA has been a goal of ECOWAS since 1975, but not until the 1999 elections in Nigeria, touted as “the most important political transition in Africa since the end of Apartheid” that saw the return of democracy to Nigerian government did the necessary political will develop<sup>65</sup>. The Nigerian presidential administration of General Olusegun Obasanjo made a serious commitment to regionalism, which helped bring about the creation of WAMZ<sup>66</sup>. However, within WAMZ, and ultimately in ECOWAS, Nigeria could make a difficult partner for the rest of West Africa. As the largest country in terms of area, GDP, and population as well as, consistently large state budget deficit, undisciplined fiscal policies, and an oil export-oriented economic structure that differs greatly from that of its neighbors, Nigeria could significantly influence and alter monetary policies in ways that other regional partners in a monetary union would find undesirable. Without an effective discipline mechanism to control countries’ fiscal policies and in the absence of similar shocks to the prices of countries’ terms of trade, a single currency for ECOWAS, according to the Brookings Institution, would not seem advisable<sup>67</sup>.

A potentially fatal obstacle to monetary convergence within ECOWAS, the CFA franc has only been revalued twice: first in 1948 and then currency remained pegged to the French franc at the same rate until 1994. At this time, the currency was devalued by 50% and this led to the formation of two sub-groupings UEMOA (West Africa) and CEMAC (Central Africa), each with

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<sup>63</sup> ECOWAS Commission Press Release N°: 092/2008

<sup>64</sup> Metzger, 23

<sup>65</sup> Phillips, “Africa Analysis: Democracy Returns”

<sup>66</sup> Metzger, 25

<sup>67</sup> Masson and Milkiewicz, 4

its own central bank<sup>68</sup>. The two currencies maintain parity, but do not circulate outside the sub-grouping. UEMOA and CEMAC have signed a convergence agreement with the intention of deepening integration and harmonization, but both groups belong to separate regional organizations, creating contradicting monetary commitments<sup>69</sup>. The performance of the CFA currency has been strong compared to other African currencies; however, this creates a significant hurdle to achieving monetary convergence with WAMZ, one of the main goals of the ECOWAS Community. This is due to the fact that annual inflation averaged merely 1.7% from 1999-2003, whereas within the five members of WAMZ, inflation ranges from just over five to nearly 30%<sup>70</sup>. In addition to highly divergent inflation trends, UEMOA and WAMZ use different base currencies with the CFA formally tied to the Euro and WAMZ countries all informally tied to the \$US. This difference has major implications for the two groups' terms of trade with UEMOA generally experiencing currency appreciation, hurting export growth and WAMZ members generally experiencing significant levels of depreciation, which aids the promotion of exports<sup>71</sup>.

When considering regional currency convergence through the neorealist paradigm, the expectation can be made that if a regional hegemon exists, as Nigeria can be argued to be in ECOWAS, the decision to converge currencies would be based on an analysis of power politics. Nigeria would be able to control much of the region's monetary policy more so than at present, however, it would face the tradeoff of losing total domestic monetary control. Yet, with the establishment of WAMZ through Nigeria's own efforts, the tradeoffs seemed to not have been serious enough. The key constraint on monetary convergence, however, is not the issue of

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<sup>68</sup> Metzger, 17

<sup>69</sup> Ibid

<sup>70</sup> Metzger, 25 (UEMOA) and Balogun, 9 (WAMZ)

<sup>71</sup> Metzger, 22

balance of power, but as evidenced above, the remaining colonial structures.

### **B. Integration of Agricultural Policies: ECOWAP**

The improvement of intra-regional trade through greater cooperation on agricultural issues, has been a goal of ECOWAS since in its inception but not until the beginning of the new millennium did significant steps begin to be taken. Projects aimed at increasing productivity as well as access to information and inputs began to be regionally funded. ECOWAS Executive Secretary, now Commission President Dr. Chambas, criticized the extremely low intra-regional trade volume and blamed the low rates, primarily on the limited access to accurate and timely information on prices, market information and supply and demand conditions.

In 2005 the \$15 million MISTOWA (the Regional Market Systems and Traders' Organizations in West Africa) project was established. MISTOWA initially focused on the member states: Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria and Senegal and sought to increase access to information regarding the demand and supply situation, market trends and intelligence for both producers and traders in order to allow for informed decisions that would ultimately increase trade<sup>72</sup>. This program represented a major achievement for regional economic interaction as member states overlapped production of the same agricultural products and competed for access to the same international markets. Unlike mineral commodities like aluminum, gold, petroleum, and timber whose production is generally concentrated in one member country, most ECOWAS states produce and export similar agricultural goods including: cocoa, coffee, and cotton<sup>73</sup>.

The Council of Ministers has used the 2008 food crisis and its impact on the regional economy as a catalyzing factor for increasing the speed of agricultural cooperation. This issue

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<sup>72</sup> ECOWAS Commission Press Release N°: 16/2005

<sup>73</sup> ECOWAS Commission Trade Database 2001, see annex

has reignited integration efforts in the region for adoption of the ECOWAS Common Agricultural Policy, a regional strategy for investment in the agricultural sector and food security<sup>74</sup>. The President of the ECOWAS Commission described last year's food crisis, which created shortages and resulted in huge prices spikes of foodstuffs as "a wake up call for regional agricultural revival" and the called for the rapid implementation of the ECOWAS Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP)<sup>75</sup>. The program, financed by the European Union, seeks to address the issue of the "sustainable intensification" of agriculture production. The joint initiative between the EU and ECOWAS, entitled "Improvement of Productivity and Competitiveness in Agriculture" divides the program into five key components: 1) Modernization and securitization of farm enterprises; 2) Promotion of agro-food chains; 3) Management of shared resources; 4) Prevention and management of food crises and natural disasters; and 5) Financing agriculture<sup>76</sup>. As a part of the third component on management of shared resources, ECOWAP calls for the creation of an Alliance for Water Management in West Africa a key strategic resource. Importantly, ECOWAP will help improve food security through the creation of a regional information markets system, an efficient processing network, storage and marketing value chains and the consolidation of regional food stocks<sup>77</sup>.

An additional action taken by ECOWAS through its Bank for Investment and Development (EBID) in response to the food crisis was the creation of a \$100 million annual fund for the support of agricultural productivity in West Africa in the form of input support for small family farms that account for the majority of agricultural production in the region. ECOWAS member states' Ministers of Agriculture and Trade established the fund in May 2008. The EBID

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<sup>74</sup> ECOWAS Commission Press Release N°: 062/2008

<sup>75</sup> ECOWAS Commission Press Release N°: 012/2009

<sup>76</sup> "The Regional Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP) and the Offensive for food production and against hunger," 3

<sup>77</sup> ECOWAS Commission Press Release N°: 048/2008

contribution represented one of several regional, short-term measures carried out by the ministers. Additionally, the Council instructed the ECOWAS Commission to mobilize and coordinate international support to raise the \$2 billion needed in emergency food support for the most vulnerable groups in the region. As a more long-term solution, the ministers outlined the elimination of existing barriers to intra-regional trade that they would concentrate on easing in order to counter the rapidly increasing cost of foodstuffs through improved access to commodities produced regionally. Additionally, member states agreed to co-invest in the local production of fertilizer and seed multiplication as well as to strive to improve infrastructure necessary for increased agricultural production<sup>78</sup>. In addition, they called for a reorientation program for Community citizens to change their taste for imported foodstuffs in favor of the consumption of locally produced foodstuffs to reduce reliance on imports. Finally, the Council of Ministers suggested that ECOWAS assist in the coordination of the basic bulk food purchases for the group of Member States in the short-term, in order to take advantage of discounts for larger purchases.<sup>79</sup>

These numerous and in many cases concrete endeavors to integrate a common policy towards agriculture development and a regional approach to the challenges of food security seem to indicate that colonial structures have not created indelible divisions between Anglophone and francophone states. In addition, such cooperation points more to a concern with a common social identity and interest regionally that is willing to make decisions based on absolute gains rather than relative gains as the neorealist paradigm would expect. Thus, ECOWAP presents a case in which the constructivist model seems capable of explaining state interest, action, and the resulting outcome.

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<sup>78</sup> ECOWAS Commission Press Release N°: 048/2008

<sup>79</sup> ECOWAS Commission Press Release N°: 048/2008



### **C. Regional Free Movement of Labor: ECOWALP**

Early on in the development of ECOWAS, the free movement of labor was considered to be a key issue in securing regional integration. In 1979, a protocol calling for the free movement of persons and their right of residence and establishment was placed “at the heart of the regional integration process<sup>80</sup>.” According to official numbers, 7.5 million West Africans, or more than three percent of the regional population, live abroad within the region<sup>81</sup>. Despite these early efforts, truly free movement of labor has yet to be attained. The ECOWAS Council of Ministers has spent several years calling for the implementation of the Protocol regarding the Free Movement of Persons and Right of Residence and Establishment. Nevertheless, problems continue to persist regarding the security of travelers.

Labor mobility reemerged as key issue on the ECOWAS agenda in September 2005 when the Commission developed a draft recommendation to improve the free movement of workers throughout the 15 member nations. The process has proceeded slowly, but recently has accelerated significantly. In March 2009, ECOWAS put in place a Free Movement Pilot Monitoring Team (FMPMT) with the goal of checking illegal activities and abuses along the borders of several Member States including: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d’Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria, and Togo. The Director of Free Movement and Tourism for ECOWAS, Mr. Sanoh Fally, called for the dismantling of “all forms of roadblocks, barriers, and artificial impediments” and the maintenance of “only skeletal security operatives consisting of Immigration and Customs operatives” along the highways and some states, for example, Burkina Faso, have already taken unilateral action to meet these demands<sup>82</sup>. Finally, on April 9, 2009, the Ministers of Labor from ECOWAS member states met in Cote d’Ivoire and finalized and adopted the draft ECOWAS

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<sup>80</sup> Adiorho, 3

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, 4

<sup>82</sup> Adiorho, 2

Labor Policy, known as ECOWALP, and an accompanying plan of action. ECOWALP covers several priority areas to which member states are committed, including: human capital investment, equal opportunities in the workplace, poverty eradication and the tackling of social exclusion. The ministers' adoption of the policy and its 12-priority program plan of action has added an element of concrete action to a process that has long been a series of declarations without formal agreement<sup>83</sup>.

In addition to the approval of the new regional Labor Policy, small, but sustained progress has been made on the ground. Nigeria and Niger, which have both embarked on joint projects to facilitate the movement of citizens across their borders. In addition, Nigeria's Minister of Foreign Affairs has committed the Nigerian government to "the implementation of the Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons"<sup>84</sup>. The Council of Ministers, urged member states to emulate this example by developing bilateral projects, which will complement the new regional policy<sup>85</sup>. The promotion of the free movement of goods and services is not being based on newly constructed interests, but rather simply formally recognizes the everyday reality of informal West African marketplace. For in spite of all the linguistic, economic, and legal barriers, within the region in the Sandaga market in Dakar, Guineans are found buying products from Niger sold by a trader from Mali<sup>86</sup>."

Free movement of labor is a key aspect of full integration, one that even the European Union continues to struggle with. Thus, the ability of ECOWAS to establish a common policy is an accomplishment, however, the policy is new and the true test will be to see how day-to-day life changes for migrant workers throughout the region. As was the case in the adoption of

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<sup>83</sup> "ECOWAS Ministers Meet to Adopt Labour Policy"

<sup>84</sup> Obayuwana, 2

<sup>85</sup> ECOWAS Commission Press Release N°: 046/2008

<sup>86</sup> Lavergne, 7

ECOWAP and the cooperation in the agricultural sector, ECOWALP presents another example of the subordination of concerns regarding relative gains and can be better understood through constructivism's emphasis on social networks that contribute to the development of state interests.

#### **D. Regionalization of Telecommunications and Transportation**

Integration within ECOWAS suffers from the serious challenge posed by obstacles to effective information dissemination that must be mitigated in order to facilitate improved intra-Community trade. In April 2008, ECOWAS conducted a Regional Road Transport Facilitation Program to review the transport facilitation program. The meeting, jointly organized by the ECOWAS and UEMOA Commissions, addressed the transport sector's multitude of problems, which obstructs regional integration, hinders development and undermines the competitiveness of the economies of the countries of the region in the global market. The project is financed by the European Union through the European Development Fund and aims specifically at improving regional transport services and minimizing costs, abolishing trade barriers, facilitating free movement of persons, goods and services, promoting inter-regional traffic and trade, and ensuring regional integration in West Africa. The project includes the: construction of border posts to expedite customs and immigration formalities at borders, setting up of observatories to reduce corrupt practices on regional roads, organizing sensitization programs on regional regulations on free movement of good and people. In addition, the program seeks to improve the safety of air navigation, institutional support to the ECOWAS Transport Division and rehabilitation of the Gambia-Senegal road<sup>87</sup>. Additionally, in the last few years there have been many successful unilateral actions of member states to improve border access and crossing. For example, the Nigerian Government was "roundly commended for initiating a public private

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<sup>87</sup> ECOWAS Commission Press Release: N°: 025/2008

sector partnership to expand the Lagos Badagry Seme road” that leads to Benin, which will facilitate the free movement of goods, persons, and services<sup>88</sup>. In addition, ECOWAS member states are near completion of the regional West African Gas Pipeline project that is project to begin operations in the near future. Furthermore, an ECOWAS Railway Master Plan has been completed and is scheduled to begin the planning an construction phase<sup>89</sup>.

Similar to its efforts in transportation, ECOWAS has worked to improve the competitiveness and regional scope of the telecommunications market, through the promotion of greater regulation of the market and has sought to attract more investment into the sector. This project was begun in late 2006 as a joint project of the Commissions of ECOWAS and UEMOA and the Government of Togo. The end goal is the interconnection of networks and services, the establishment of a legal regime for operators, the management of numbering plans, the spectrum management and the provision of universal access and services<sup>90</sup>.

As discussed in the “Testing and Expectations” section of the paper, seeking to directly increase the level of information sharing across national borders falsifies neorealism’s consideration of information as a tool states use to gain power over a competitor. The model could be reconfigured to analyze the increase of information sharing as a way in which the region as a whole could gain relative to other regions, but this could represent to great of a stretch of the stated assumptions of the paradigm.

### **E. Foreign Direct Investment: China’s regional presence**

As a result of the rapid expansion of its economy and an increasing demand for natural resources, China has become a significant player in Africa, especially West Africa. Chinese public and private loans and investments now account for a significant portion of the region’s

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<sup>88</sup> Obayuwana, 2

<sup>89</sup> ECOWAS Commission Press Release N°: 046/2008

<sup>90</sup> ECOWAS Commission Press Release N°: 011/2008

available capital. President of the ECOWAS Commission, Dr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, stated that Chinese involvement in the region offers mutual benefits and is based on a history of improving relations between China and African countries, including the country's important role in the struggle for independence<sup>91</sup>. The first ECOWAS-China Economic and Trade Forum, was held in September 2008, in order to improve the existing bilateral relations between China and ECOWAS Member States<sup>92</sup>. Commission President Chambas signed a comprehensive agreement with the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT), one of China's main trade and investment promotion agencies, with the goal of attracting Chinese private sector investment into strategic sectors of the West African economy.

As a follow-up to last year's successful China-Africa Summit where the ECOWAS Commission and the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade The purpose of the MOU was to provide capital to be used to intervene in the development of regional infrastructure, agro-industries, trade promotion and other private sector activities. Dr Chambas also signed other MOU's during the four-day forum, including one with Chinaways group, a Chinese company engaged in livestock development. The MOU allows the company to participate in the development of West Africa's agriculture in order to contribute to enhance regional food security and the realization of the Millennium Development Goals of reducing by half those who suffer from hunger by 2015. Additional agreements were made with the China Optimization Society of Capital Construction, the China Major Bridge Engineering Company and the China Gezhouba Group for the constructions of roads, railways, harbor, airport building and civil works development<sup>93</sup>. Dr Chambas also signed an agreement with the Nanjing Municipal Peoples Government for the establishment of an ECOWAS official market to

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<sup>91</sup> ECOWAS Commission Press Release N°: 096/2008

<sup>92</sup> ECOWAS Commission Press Release N°: 095/2008

<sup>93</sup> ECOWAS Commission Press Release N°: 095/2008

facilitate trade in goods produced by Member States in China. The agreement also calls for the reciprocal establishment of a Chinese wholesale market in Member States to enhance trade and investment between China and West Africa<sup>94</sup>. Additionally the ECOWAS commission has announced plans for an ECOWAS Investment and Trade Center in China to serve as a platform for regular contacts between West Africans and their Chinese counterparts in trade and business promotion<sup>95</sup>.

A further example of regional cooperation in attracting Chinese investment involves the West Africa Power Pool (WAPP), an ECOWAS project working to create a stable, reliable and affordable electricity supply in the region. WAPP agreed to collaborate with Sinohydro, a Chinese company in order to develop West Africa's electricity infrastructure through the construction of four power stations and a dam to boost electricity supply to Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. The power scheme across The Gambia River will supply electricity to the four Member States of The Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau and Senegal. Additionally, Sinohydro has agreed to provide technical assistance that will enable WAPP develop expertise in hydropower development, design, operations and power system planning<sup>96</sup>.

In addition to a formal investment and trade relationship, the Sino-African bond involves a level of social and developmental transaction as well. For example, the Chinese government donated (albeit a token amount) \$100,000 to the ECOWAS Peace Fund in 2008, in recognition of ECOWAS' efforts in regional integration, according to the Chinese Ambassador to Nigeria, Mr. Xu Jianguo. With the donation, Mr. Xu also highlighted the similar challenges the two parties face and declared that China would not hesitate to assist the regional institution.

## **V. Conclusions and Policy Suggestions**

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid

<sup>95</sup> ECOWAS Press Release N°: 123/2008

<sup>96</sup> ECOWAS Commission Press Release N°: 007/2008

The artificial structures created under colonialism and maintained upon independence, especially in formally French colonies, has lead to linkages and divisions that had not existed prior to the Berlin Conference. It is for this reason that West Africa offers an excellent format in which to test the constructivist paradigm. Constructivism offers a better explanation than that of neorealism as to why certain integration endeavors have not worked well, especially regarding monetary integration and infrastructure development. Neorealism and its emphasis on power politics cannot be taken for granted, but based on the cases provided above, especially in the areas of agriculture, labor movement, and promotion of Chinese investment, absolute gains take precedence.

Based upon this conclusion, how can the region move forward? If interactions are based on learned social structures and in the case of West Africa on learned colonial structures, how can these structures be unlearned? Obviously, certain policies, notably ECOWAP and ECOWALP have been relatively successful, but how can the key issue of monetary convergence be addressed? Can and should francophone West African nations revert back to pre-colonial cultural and economic bonds and converge with the Anglophone countries of WAMZ, or would it be more productive to continue with the financial network established under French rule and seek to converge with fellow CFA franc countries in Central Africa? Another question to consider is what and if a base currency or exchange rate peg should be used. Metzger suggests that “a peg to a regional currency seems to offer more advantages than a peg to an international key currency,” but this would require member states to pick which currency should be used<sup>97</sup>.

In conclusion, many issues have yet to be addressed, especially regarding outstanding issues on the Common External Tariff (CET) that have yet to be resolved<sup>98</sup>. Furthermore, the

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<sup>97</sup> Metzger, 26

<sup>98</sup> ECOWAS Commission Press Release N°: 046/2008

current global economic climate has created several new complications, particularly for the developing world. However, the slowing of aid and investment from the developed world seems to be spurring regional action to increase integration as it is seen as a method to improve self-sufficiency. The Chairperson of ECOWAS' Council of Ministers, Mrs. Minata Semate-Cessouma, stated that the international economic crisis was seriously affecting West Africa and "considering the gravity of the crisis, only solidarity and consultation at the regional level, rather than the short-term emergency measures taken by Member States, could help find appropriate and lasting solutions to the situation"<sup>99</sup>. Based on the increasing interests of member states within ECOWAS, the opportunity exists for a sustained regional deepening. This paper has endeavored to show that the interests and choices made by ECOWAS member states follow the constructivist model and that in order to attain the stated goals of the regional agreement, the remaining social constructs of the colonial past, must be unlearned or adapted to new regional West African based structures.

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<sup>99</sup> ECOWAS Commission Press Release N°: 046/2008



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