AFRICA AND REGIONAL INTEGRATION: THE CHALLENGES

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ABSTRACT

This study interrogates the regional integration in Africa with emphasis on the challenges. Data was obtained from secondary sources such as academic journals, books and official reports. Content analysis method was also adopted for the research. It was explained from the prism of the Regional Integration Theory. The study concludes that regional integration in Africa will serve as a vehicle for Africa's socio-economic development. However, poor human development (human capital), poor infrastructure and the overlapping membership of Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in Africa are the challenges of regional integration in Africa. In order to realize the potentials of regional integration in Africa, this work recommend that, the African Union (AU) countries should ensure counterpart funding on education, health and informal economy should be encouraged among nation-states of AU. The establishment of joint border patrol between and among member states of RECs to curb the incidence of trans-border criminal activities; the deepening of internal democracy within AU member states so as to make citizens to be civil in their dealings, imbue in leaders and security agencies greater respect for people's rights and freedoms. The construction of power plant for energy; good roads and railroads among states of Africa should be *encouraged. Counterpart funding among AU member states should be institutionalised. The member states of the AU should rationalise their relations with states in Africa and others. This is to allow synergy in terms of policies for the common development of Africa.*

Key words: Africa, Challenges, Regional Integration

INTRODUCTION

Independent states come together to form regional communities on the basis of common language, history and culture, collective security and self-preservation for the well-being of their citizens. Obviously, the European Union (EU) has shown that the more integrated regions are (in terms of the size), the more likely it is to lead to economic growth. Also, the stronger the potential economies of scale are, and the more rapid the autonomous productivity advances, the more likely the integration will lead to growth (Ombeni, 2015). This has vindicated the treaty signed in Paris on 18 April, 1951 by Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxemburg and Netherlands that established the European Coal and Steel Company (ECSC) for economic gain. In the same vein, European Economic Community (EEC) now called European Union (EU) was established on 25 March, 1957 to create a common market and harmonized economic policies (Butu, 2013).

In Africa, regional integration is not a novel phenomenon. The African Diaspora- the dispersal of Africans throughout the world, particularly by slavery- laid the groundwork for transforming the idea of integration into an institutional form. Sylvester William, W. E. B. Du Bois, Marcus Garvey, Kwame Nkrumah, Jomo Kenyatta, etc. promoted this idea through a series of Pan-African congresses. Pan-Africanism thus reached continental Africa, where its leaders understood it as the unification of all African peoples, especially in their resistance against colonialism. This aspiration of continental integration- led thirty two governments sign the agreement in 1963 in Addis

Ababa, Ethiopia, to form the OAU (Shepperson & Drake, 2008; Takang & Njuki, 2012) that later transformed to the African Union (AU) in 2002, which significantly strengthened the movement towards the goal of Pan-African political and economic union.

Within the purview of Pan-Africanism, the vision and agenda 2063 of the AU, which state: *"The Vision of the African Union is to become an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena"* (African Development Bank, 2016:4) is an indication of Africa's quest to maximise their gains from the increasingly liberally globalized world and to minimize marginalization from the international economic system (Ricks, 2017).

This paper seeks to unravel the challenges of Africa in the course of regional integration process.

CONCEPTUAL LITERATURE

Regional Integration

There are plethora of definitions on regional integration but no consensus on the definition exist. Notwithstanding, Haas (1968:16) defined regional integration as, "the process whereby political actors in several distinct national settings are persuaded to shift their loyalties, expectations and political activities toward a new centre, whose institutions possess or demand jurisdiction over pre-existing national states. The end result of a process of political integration is a new political community, superimposed over the pre-existing ones". De Lombaerde and Van Langenhove (2007), refers to regional integration as "a worldwide phenomenon of territorial systems that increases the interactions between their components and creates new forms of organisation, co-existing with traditional forms of state-led organisation at the national level" (Sheriff, David, & Adams, 2015:463). Haas (1968) and De Lombaerde and Van Langenhove (2007) suggest that regional integration is political. It demands nation-states to surrender some portion of national sovereignty to a supranational institution or a certain system of rules which consequently takes decisions on matters of common interest of all members.

Balassa (1961), regards regional integration as both a process and a state of affairs. As a state of affairs, it is the "absence of various forms of discrimination between national economies." As a process, it includes "measures designed to abolish discrimination between economic units belonging to different national states" (Balassa, 1961:1). Kahnert (1969) defines regional integration as "the process of removing progressively those discriminations which occur at national borders" (Udoh, 2015:31).Ginkel, Court, & Langenhove (2003) refers to it as the intensification of interactions among countries in a region in respect to economic, political, security and socio-cultural issues. From the definitions of Balassa (1961) and Kahnert (1969), regional integration is economic which involves the elimination of discriminatory measures among countries that consider themselves as a region or are aspiring for regional integration. It involves the removal of national barriers to trade, capital movements, migration and the exchange of information such as tariffs, quotas, Visa etc. (Ginkel, Court, & Langenhove, 2003). It should be noted that regional integration also involves the promotion of cultural ties and heritage, eliminating social and cultural exclusiveness by promoting equal opportunities irrespective of cultural differences, among others (Ginkel, Court, & Langenhove, 2003).

It is crystal clear from the above discourse that regional integration is a process and a state; it is economic, political, cultural, social and institutional but not exclusive. For the purpose of this paper, regional integration is defined as a process that involves separate or individual states that agree to come together to form a single community for the attainment of some shared objectives such as promotion of unity, peace and security, market expansion and economic development, infrastructure development, social and cultural interactions, technology development, etc. through surrendering of some aspects of national sovereignty like the reduction or elimination of some forms of barriers imposed by individual members against outsiders. Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Southern Africa Development Community (SADC); European Union (EU), African Union (AU), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), East African Community (EAC), Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), Economic Community of Central African States (ENCASE), etc. are examples of regional integration.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Regional Integration Theory

Balassa's book written in 1961, titled: "The Theory of Economic Integration" forms the basis of this theory. The main assumption of regional economic integration, as indicated by this theory, include the removal of tariff and non-tariff barriers within the integrated area, having a standard external trade policy that initiates common external trade restrictions against non-members, starting free movement of goods and services, as well as free flow of factors of production across national borders, policies harmonisation, common monetary policies, and acceptance of a common currency. Thus there are four different stages of economic integration. It start with a Free Trade Area (FTA), a Customs Union (CU), a Common Market (CM), and finally an Economic Union which will lead to the highest stage- a Political Union (Balassa, 1961; Hosny, 2013). This theory is succinctly presented in the table below:

Table 1: The Stages of Regional Economic Integration

	No Tariff or Quota	Common External Tariffs	Free Flow of Factors	Harmonization of Economic Policies	Unification of Policies and Political Unification
Free Trade Area	X				
Customs Union	X	X			
Common Market	X	X	X		
Economic Union	X	X	X	X	
Political Union	X	X	X	X	X

Source: Balassa, (1961)

It is important to note that, although various authors approach the theories of economic integration differently, the discussions above clearly show that economic integration is an ongoing process occurring at different stages, including free trade areas, custom unions, common markets, economic unions, and political unions. These stages of integration are models that do not fully describe reality.

The achievement of a political union features as the ultimate objective in many African Regional Integration Agreements (RIAs). The African paradigm is that of linear market integration, following stepwise integration of goods, labour and capital markets, and eventually monetary and fiscal integration. The achievement of a political union features as the ultimate objective in many African RIAs. This process is followed by the various regional economic communities (RECs) in Africa and at a Pan African level, eight of the RECs have been identified as the building blocks of the African Economic Community. However, no one can yet predict when the eight AU recognized regional and economic blocs will reach advanced stages of monetary, economic, and political union for a complete economic integration in Africa.

Africa Regional Integration: The Challenges

The motive of Africa's regional integration under the auspices of the AU has been the coming together of countries to achieve large markets for themselves, reap the benefits of economies of scale, and attain a coherent political cooperation. However, the following are the challenges of regional integration in Africa:

Poor Human Development

A cursory look at the economy of Africa, suggest that Africa's economic performance reflects the perils of the global economy. The region's real GDP growth slowed down to 2.2% in 2016, mainly due to the continued fall in commodity prices and weak global economic growth. East Africa was the fastest growing region at 5.3% real GDP growth, followed by North Africa at 3%. Growth in other regions was anaemic, ranging from a low of 0.4% in West Africa, dragged down by the recession in Nigeria, to 1.1% in Southern Africa, with South Africa, the region's largest economy, posting only 0.3% growth (AfDB, OECD & UNDP, 2017). The UNDP Human Development Report, 2018 revealed that Sub-Saharan Africa was ranked 0.398 in 1990, 0.421 in 2000, 0.498 in 2010, 0.514 in 2012, 0.526 in 2014, 0.531 in 2015, 0.534 in 2016, 0.537 in 2017 (United Nations Development Programme, 2018). In 2019 report, Sub-Saharan Africa 0.541, with life expectancy at birth of 61.2, 10.0 expected years of schooling, 5.7 means year of schooling and 3,443 Gross National Income (GNI) per capita placing Africa as the least amongst other regions of Arab States, East Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and South Asia (United Nations Development Programme , 2019). Africans account for about two thirds of the world's extreme poor. Africa account for nine-tenths by 2030 if current trends persist. 14 out of 18 countries in the world where the number of extreme poor is rising are in Africa (Kamla Foundation, 2018).

The number of people in extreme poverty in Africa (using the $1.90 international poverty line) was projected to reach 425.2 million in 2020 under the no-outbreak scenario, COVID–19 could increase it further, to 453.4 million in the baseline scenario and 462.7 million under the worst-case scenario. In 2021, the number of extreme poor could increase by 34-49.2 million due to the pandemic as GDP growth continues to fall below population growth rates. Nigeria and Democratic Republic of Congo, two of Africa's most populous countries, would record the largest increases - 8.5 and 2.7 million respectively in the baseline scenario in 2020, and 11.5 and 3.4 million in the worst-case scenario (African Development Bank, 2020). These suggest a deterioration in human capital (health, education and standard of living) which is central to development. First, it is an integral part of advancing development (including poverty and inequality reduction), and second, it is a platform for promoting productivity and entrepreneurship. Countries become richer as more positive human capital accumulates. It complements physical capital in production, serve as an input to technological innovation and long-run growth i.e., reduces poverty. Human capital also fosters social capital. The more educated people are, the more trusting of others they will be. This will make people more tolerant of immigrants in the case of free movement of persons a variant of AU agenda 2063 policy for Africa's integration. However, the problem of poverty characterised by poor level of education, poor health and poor standard of living constitute a problem of human capital in Africa. In other words, failing to protect human capital undermines social cohesion thereby making the African continent to be insecure.

To this end, *Afro phobic* outbursts is the end results of poor human capital as witnessed in South Africa i.e. racism, xenophobia, etc. Migrants in countries such as South Africa have increasingly been subjected to violence, resulting in the destruction of property, injuries and sometimes loss of life. Nationwide xenophobic attacks, such as those that took place in

2008, displaced thousands of migrants and resulted in more than 60 deaths. More recently, xenophobic attacks in 2018 led to several deaths, looting and destruction of property belonging to foreign nationals; the violence has extended into 2019 with more lives lost. Outbreaks of xenophobic violence are most common in South Africa's townships and other economically poor neighbourhoods, where residents often blame foreign nationals for high rates of crime and job losses (International Organization for Migration, 2020). This problem is mainly due to poor human capital development, which if in place positively (in terms of quality education, good health and high standard of living), will bring about social cohesion (trust and tolerance). Lack of social cohesion among citizens' of AU member states therefore, is an anathema to regional integration in Africa.

This also suggests that Poor human capital development has a symbiotic relation with insecurity among the nation states of Africa. Socio economic development -the primary goal of every well-meaning government is essentially dependent on the level of economic activities in a member-states; the level of economic activities is in turn enhanced by peaceful co-existence of people. In the absence of security, socio-economic development cannot be sustained as it destroys economic, human and social capital. However, Socio economic development has been retarded by insecurity in Africa. The insecurity in Africa linked to political upheavals, communal and ethnic tensions and terrorism. This meant that most countries in West and Central Africa for example, are affected by internal or cross border displacement, although the magnitude varies dramatically (International Organization for Migration, 2020). To 2020 Global Peace Index report, the overall deaths from terrorism in the region remained stable at 4,635, compared to 4,523 in 2018. Whilst this is still lower than the peak seen in 2014, it is a 200% increase from a decade ago. In total, under 50,000 people have been killed in terrorist attacks in the region since 2002. Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia recorded the highest economic impact at $12.5 and $5.6 billion respectively, with MENA accounting for an additional $4.7 billion. The economic impact of terrorism of the UN 18 focus countries increased from $661 million in 2007, to $12.3 billion in 2019, an increase of over 1,760%. Over the same period, terrorist attacks increased from 288 to 1,577, and fatalities associated with terrorism increased from 1,328 to 5,522 across the 18 focus countries. This increase since 2007 is largely driven by Nigeria characterized by 4,383 terrorist attacks and 23,354 fatalities since 2007 which equal $141,889.4 billion impact (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2020).

Apart from terrorism, organized crime in Africa like drug trafficking, human trafficking, small arms proliferation and armed robbery as hybrid threats confronting Africa in the twenty-first century that led to the loss of lives and the destruction of properties; Health Pandemics in Africa are threats to the public health security of states. It involves the emergence and spread of infectious diseases, the steady and increasing rise in non-infectious diseases. Diseases like, measles, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, Ebola, diarrhoea, etc. has remain a major public health issue because of continued mutation of the viruses and lack of scientific breakthrough in terms of vaccines. The situation is largely a result of inadequate logistics and health infrastructure, prevalent in many African states (Aning & Abdallah, 2016). Of recent, the world's governments faced an urgent imperative to restrict movement in order to contain COVID-19. Flights were banned and/or highly restricted; Governments shut down schools; Businesses were placed under pressure as more people stay indoors; The cost of governance increased, as government has to engage in the production of stimulus packages to support sound business environment and maintain high levels of human capital; Employers allow employees to work from home where possible, but many workers were laid off. Regional trade were reduced as a consequence of lower consumption and the interruption of international travel. This for example, has effectively put trade among Africans out of effect (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2020).

This situation can be ameliorated by a good human capital. However, with Africa as the poorest in Human Development ranking in 1990, 2000, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2015, 2016, and 2017 (United Nations Development Programme, 2018), Africa remains poorly equipped to respond to these evolving hybrids threats and asymmetries of today.

Poor Infrastructure

Infrastructural linkages like roads, railways, air travels facilities, ports, etc. is key for integration. Expectedly, infrastructure facilitates economic development in terms of mobility for both intermediate and final products. With respect to intermediate products or goods, sound infrastructure facilitates the mobility of the means of production (labour (persons), goods and finance), thus improving productivity and reducing cost, which are key factors in competitiveness. It also increases the flow of information, opening new opportunities and reducing asymmetries and other market imperfections. In terms of final products or goods, the consumption of infrastructure services improves easy access to energy for industries and domestic use; safe transportation and reliable communication. However, Sub-Saharan Africa ranks at the bottom of all developing regions in virtually all dimensions of infrastructure performance (AfDB, OECD & UNDP, 2017).

The continent's development is encumbered by a massive infrastructure gap, estimated at about $50 billion per year, has led African countries to ramp up investments in public infrastructure projects. About 645 million people in sub-Saharan Africa lack access to electricity, while only one-third of rural dwellers live within 2 kilometres of an all-weather road, compared with two-thirds in developing regions. Public investments rose by about 3% of GDP in 2014 and are expected to remain at this level for the next five years (AfDB, OECD & UNDP, 2017). According to

Caruthers *et al*, 2010, roads account for 80 to 90% of all freight and passenger movement in Africa. Road density is an effective proxy of how well connected areas of a country are. Africa has a road density of only 16.8 kilometres per 1,000 square kilometres, compared with 37 kilometres per 1,000 square kilometres in other low-income regions. Despite the fact that railways is the most cost-effective mode of transport for moving bulk cargo long distances over land, rail density in Africa is only 2.8 kilometres per 1,000 square kilometres much lower than the 3.4 kilometres per 1,000 square kilometres in other low-income regions (Taiwo & Moyo, 2012:9). According to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, (2010), the African railways carry only 1% of the global railway passenger traffic and 2% of its goods. The poor interconnection of networks contributes to the higher cost of trade. The network is currently estimated to be 89,380 kilometres, and the density at 2.97 kilometres per 1,000 square kilometres. The network situation is as follows: North Africa, 19,931 kilometres; West Africa, 9,717 kilometres; Central Africa, 2,526 kilometres; East Africa, 19,293 kilometres; and Southern Africa, 38, 513 kilometres (UN Economic Commission for Africa, African Union and African Development Bank, 2010:212).

In spite the increase of Africa's road networks from 2,064,613 km to 2,299,070 km between 2000 and 2006 and from 2,299,070 km to 2,803,144 km between 2006 and 2015, Africa still has the poorest road networks (UN Economic Commission for Africa, African Union & African Development Bank Group, 2016). This ugly situation is presented in the table below:

Table 2. Infrastructure Quantity Trends in Africa

Dimensions of Infrastructure		**Region**					**Income**		
		SSA	**SA**	**MENA**	**LAC**	**EAP**	**LIC**	**LMC**	**UMC**
Power									
Electricity generating capacity *Megawatts per 1,000 people (median)*	1990	0.03	0.07	0.25	0.3	0.15	0.02	0.06	0.33
	2012	0.04	0.15	0.4	0.43	0.84	0.03	0.06	0.72

Transport									
Road Density *km of road per sq km of land area (median*	1990	0.11	0.31	0.11	0.13	0.16	0.09	0.12	0.27
	2011	0.09	0.48	0.14	0.19	0.47	0.09	0.08	1.04
Railroad Density *km of road per sq km of land area (median)*	1990	0.004	0.021	0.005	0.003	0.006	0.005	0.002	0.010
	2014	0.002	0.016	0.006	0.007	0.007	0.003	0.002	0.010

Sources: World Bank, 2018

Note: EAP= East Asia and Pacific; LAC= Latin America and the Caribbean; MENA= Middle East and North Africa; SA= South Asia; SSA= Sub-Saharan Africa; LIC=low-income countries; LMC= lower-middle income countries; UMC= upper-middle income countries.

The evolution of road density across income groups in Sub-Saharan Africa over the past two decades shows that road density has declined over time among LMCs (Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Democratic Republic Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda & Zimbabwe). This might capture the fact that the expansion of the road network is not as fast as the pace of urbanization in these countries. The data also reveal a large gap in road density for LICs and LMCs (Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Congo Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Ghana, Lesotho, Mauritania, Nigeria, São Tomé and Príncipe, Sudan, Swaziland & Zambia) relative to UMCs (Angola, Botswana, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Mauritius, Namibia & South Africa), and that this gap has increased sharply over time. Finally, the road density among UMCs in Sub-Saharan Africa (1.04 km per square km of surface area) is larger than the regional median of all other developing regions. The trends observed in railroad density are similar to those in roads: there has been a decline in the density of railroads among the region's LICs and LMCs over the past two decades, which might be attributed to poor maintenance. At the same time, railroad density remained almost invariant among UMCs, and it was outperformed only by South Asia (World Bank, 2018).

Sub-Saharan Africa ranks at the bottom of all developing regions in virtually all dimensions of infrastructure performance. The electricity-generating capacity of the region has changed little in over 20 years and is about 0.04 megawatts (MW) per 1,000 people. That is, less than a third of that of South Asia (with 0.15) and less than one-tenth of that of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Insufficient electricity power–generating capacity in Sub-Saharan Africa is explained by the trends observed in LICs and LMCs. There has been slight or no progress of MW of installed capacity per 1,000 people over the past two decades for these groups of countries; that is, keeping capacity at a low 0.03 and 0.06 MW per 1,000 people for LICs and LMCs, respectively, by 2012. Electricity-generating capacity more than doubled among UMCs, growing from 0.33 MW per 1,000 people in 1990, to 0.72 MW per 1,000 people in 2012. In 2011, Sub-Saharan Africa registered the lowest road density among the developing regions under analysis. Moreover, Sub-Saharan Africa is the only region where road density has declined over the past 20 years. The density of the railroad network is likewise low, at less than 0.002 km per square km of surface area by 2014, and this density has been declining. Although South Asia has also seen a decline in rail density, it continues to outperform other regions in this measure (World Bank, 2018).

Overlapping Membership of Regional Economic Communities Union (RECs)

It is a long cherished ideal of the forbearers of the OAU, now AU to progressively bring independent African states together in order to foster unity. The functioning of the AU lies with RECs who has been interacting with other bodies within and outside Africa even prior to the establishment of the AU. The historical evolution of the various RECs in most cases pre-date the AU and part of the complexity is a direct result of competing colonial interests. Presently, the AU formally recognizes eight RECs across Africa namely COMESA, EAC, CEN-SAD, ENCASE, ECOWAS, IGAD, SADC and UMA in spite the existence of other sub-regional groups like Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC), West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA), West African Monetary Zone (WAMZ) and Southern African Custom Union (SACU) with most of the memberships drawn from states that have the same past colonial ruler, and thus, the same linguistic appellation. This has made regional integration in Africa a sponsored and guided one primarily to consolidate the asymmetrical relation between the centre and the periphery. These types of regional groups maintaining relations with their colonial masters constituted rival and divergent blocs which worked implicitly for destruction of African unity. This relationship is explicit in the table below:

Table 3: Multiple Regional Membership & Colonial Ties in Africa

S/N	Countries	Colonial Masters	Groupings Recognised by AU	Groupings not Recognised by AU
1	Algeria	France	AMU	
2	Angola	Portugal	ECCSA, SADC	ICGLR
3	Benin	France	CENSAD, ECOWAS	WAEMU
4	Botswana	Britain	SADC	SACU
5	Burkina Faso	France	CENSAD, ECOWAS	WAEMU
6	Burundi	German/Belgium	CENSAD, ECOWAS	ICGLR
7	Cameroon	France/Britain	ENCASE	
8	Cape Verde	Portugal	ECOWAS	
9	Central African Republic	France	CENSAD, ENCASE	CEMAC, ICGLR
10	Chad	France	CENSAD, ENCASE	
11	Comoros	France	CENSAD, COMESA	IOC
12	Congo, Rep. of	France	ENCASE	CEMAC, ICGLR
13	Côte d'Ivoire	France	CENSAD, ECOWAS	MRU, WAEMU
14	Dem. Rep. of Congo	Belgium	COMESA, ENCASE, IGAD	ICGLR
15	Djibouti	France	CENSAD, COMESA, IGAD	
16	Egypt	Britain	CENSAD, COMESA	
17	Equatorial Guinea	Spain	ENCASE	CEMAC

18	Eritrea	Italy/Britain	CENSAD, COMESA, IGAD	
19	Ethiopia	FREE	COMESA, IGAD	
20	Eswatini	Britain		
21	Gabon	France	ENCASE	CEMAC
22	Gambia	Britain	CENSAD, ECOWAS	
23	Ghana	Britain	CENSAD, ECOWAS	
24	Guinea	France	CENSAD, ECOWAS	MRU
25	Guinea-Bissau	Portugal	CENSAD, ECOWAS	WAEMU
26	Kenya	Britain	CENSAD, COMESA, EAC, IGAD	ICGLR
27	Lesotho	Britain	SADC	CMA, SACU
28	Liberia	FREE	CENSAD, ECOWAS	MRU
29	Libya	Italy	AMU, CENSAD, COMESA	
30	Madagascar	France	COMESA	
31	Malawi	Britain	COMESA, SADC	
32	Mali	France	CENSAD, ECOWAS	WAEMU
33	Mauritania	France	AMU, CENSAD	
34	Mauritius	France/Britain	COMESA, SADC	
35	Morocco	France	AMU, CENSAD	
36	Mozambique	Portugal	SADC	
37	Namibia	Germany	SADC	SACU
38	Niger	France	CENSAD, ECOWAS	WAEMU
39	Nigeria	Britain	CENSAD, ECOWAS	
40	Rwanda	German/Belgium	COMESA, EAC, ENCASE	ICGLR
41	São Tomé and Príncipe	Portugal	ENCASE, CENSAD	
42	Senegal	France	CENSAD, ECOWAS	WAEMU
43	Seychelles	Britain	COMESA, SADC	IOC
44	Sierra Leone	Britain	ECOWAS, CENSAD	MRU
45	Somalia	Italy	CENSAD, IGAD	
46	South Africa	Britain	SADC	CMA, SACU
47	South Sudan	Britain		
48	Sudan	Britain	CENSAD, COMESA, IGAD	ICGLR
49	Swaziland	Britain	COMESA, SADC	CMA, SACU
50	Tanzania	Britain	EAC, SADC	ICGLR
51	Togo	France	CENSAD, ECOWAS	WAEMU
52	Tunisia	France	AMU, CENSAD	
53	Uganda	Britain	COMESA, EAC,IGAD	ICGLR
54	Zambia	Britain	COMESA	ICGLR
55	Zimbabwe	Britain	COMESA, SADC	
Source: *Scholar Initiative*				

Note: *CFA, French Colonies of Africa (Colonies françaises d'Afrique); CMA, Common Monetary Area; CEMAC, Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (Communauté Économique et Monétaire de l'Afrique Centrale); COMESA, Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa; EAC, East African Community; ECCAS, Economic Community of Central African States; ECOWAS, Economic Community of West African States; IGAD, Intergovernmental Authority on Development IOC, Indian Ocean Commission; SACU, Southern African Customs Union; SADC, Southern African Development Community; UMA, Union of Arab Maghreb; WAEMU/UEMOA, West African Economic and Monetary Union/Union Économique et Monétaire Ouest Africaine; WAMZ, West Africa Monetary Zone*

The manifestation of the above skewed tabulated relationship is in trade relations (import and export) between African countries and the West. It is evident from the above table that all African countries were at one time colonies. This relationship established is still entrenched and consolidated. Thus the table below show the current trade relations pattern in Africa.

Table 4: Export Trade of the Regional Economic Communities by Partner, 2000-2017 Average Per cent

RECs	INTRA-COMMUNITY	CHINA	UNITED STATES	EUROPEAN UNION	AFRICA	REST OF THE WORLD
ECCAS	2	34	15	20	4	25
SADC	19	20	8	20	3	30
UMA	3	5	8	63	2	19
ECOWAS	9	3	12	29	7	40
COMESA	9	12	4	37	8	30
IGAD	14	21	3	16	12	34
CEN-SAD	7	5	9	40	5	34
EAC	20	5	4	19	18	34
Africa average	10	13	8	31	7	30

Source: United Nations Economic Commission for Africa et al., 2019

Table 5: Import Trade of the Regional Economic Communities by Partner, 2000-2017 Average Per cent

REC	INTRA-COMMUNITY	CHINA	UNITED STATES	EUROPEAN UNION	AFRICA	REST OF THE WORLD
ECCAS	3	34	13	19	5	26
SADC	16	27	8	21	3	25
UMA	3	5	8	64	2	18
ECOWAS	8	4	13	31	6	38
COMESA	9	13	5	38	5	29
IGAD	14	21	3	16	12	34
CEN-SAD	6	5	11	41	4	33
EAC	17	14	5	19	14	31
Africa average	9	17	8	31	6	28

Source: United Nations Economic Commission for Africa et al., 2019

This is an indication that, a part of cultural diversity and language differences, multi-memberships (being a member of many organizations at the same time) has been an obstacle to regional integration. Multi-memberships sometimes have overlapping and conflicting objectives, and this usually leads to duplication of programs and procedures, duplication of functions, costs associated with the membership and the fragmentation of markets. Harmonizing all regional agendas into their national policies and programs especially in the areas of rules of origin and customs procedures is also a challenge. As regards the rules of origin for example, there have been conflicts between Kenya and South Africa over South African goods' penetrating freely into the Kenyan market via other countries, which are simultaneously members of COMESA and SADC, while South Africa imposes tariffs on Kenyan goods entering its market, because Kenya is not a member of SADC (Ibrahim & Obiageli, 2015). In addition, the member countries will be stretched (in administrative and financial issues) but ineffective when they join many RECs. These problems may sometimes result with the shifting (withdrawal or joining) of membership which end up with the floating of blocs and putting the culmination of the African Economic Community into question. By extension, neither the member states nor the organizations will benefit.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the above evidence, this study concludes that regional integration in Africa will serve as a vehicle for Africa's socio-economic development. However, challenges associated with poor human development (human capital) like lack of social cohesion, insecurity, the evolving complexities of hybrid and asymmetric threats like terrorism, transnational organised crime, drug trafficking, human trafficking, money laundering and piracy, small arms proliferation, illicit mineral extraction and wildlife poaching, oil and counterfeit goods, advanced fee and internet fraud, illegal manufacture of firearms, armed robbery, and theft; poor infrastructure in terms of power (electricity generating capacity), poor transportation (road density & rail ways); overlapping membership of Regional Economic Communities Union (RECs) undermines the process of regional integration in Africa.

In the light of the identified challenges of regional integration in Africa, we recommend, counterpart funding on education, health and informal economy should be encouraged among nation-states of African Union. This will help in developing human capital in terms of quality education, quality health systems, and good standard of living. Thereby ameliorating the insecurity challenges associated with poor human capital. The establishment of joint border patrol between and among member states of RECs to curb the incidence of trans-border criminal activities; the deepening of internal democracy within AU member states so as to make citizens to be civil in their dealings, imbue in leaders and security agencies greater respect for people's rights and freedoms. The construction of power plant for energy; good roads and railroads among states of Africa should be encouraged. Counterpart funding among AU member states should be institutionalised. The member states of the AU should rationalise their relations with states in Africa and others. This is to allow synergy in terms of polies for the common development of the African states.

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