ECOWAS Interventions in Cote D'ivoire: The Dynamics of Nigeria's Contributions

Itam Nnaghe Obono, Eugene T. Aliegba & Mohammed Bello Baban'umma

Department of Political Science,
Nasarawa State University, Keffi, Nigeria.
Corresponding author: oyiga35@yahoo.com

Abstract

ECOWAS has identified political and economic mismanagement of member states by political elites as the major cause of conflicts in the sub-region and has developed protocols and ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework for constructive engagements in crisis situations. The reluctance by Nigeria to lead ECOWAS military interventions to restore political stability between 1999 and 2012 in Guinea, Guinea Bissau, and Cote d'Ivoire, reverberated in the continent and global discourse and many scholars described it as a sign of fatigue and withdrawal by Nigeria from peacekeeping. This thesis examined Nigeria's leadership role and ECOWAS interventions in Cote d'Ivoire. Through a descriptive qualitative case study design, in depth oral interviews of fifteen (15) selected respondents were reviewed as primary data and extensive documented sources in the case study as secondary data, were analyzed and utilized. The regional leading power theory was adopted to evaluate the strategies adopted in the sub-region to establish order and the nature of interactions between the member states. The results show that, the root cause of the crisis in Cote d'Ivoire was the politics of exclusion based on ethnicity, and with the French involvement, Nigeria opted for diplomacy, mediation and electoral assistance as measures to resolve the crisis. ECOWAS coordination was weak. However, with the region still plagued with internal security challenges, terrorism, smuggling, illicit cross border trading and political instability occasioned by bad governance, only dialogue and domestication of ECOWAS good governance protocols can ensure the attainment of ECOWAS goals.

Keywords: Leadership, Intervention, Good governance, Mediation and Electoral Assistance.

Introduction

ECOWAS member states are different in size and stages of development but are cooperating to develop on a large scale, through institutionalized integration. The development of regional trade infrastructure, free movement of peoples and common security governance architecture have been the greatest achievements of ECOWAS integration to Nigeria. ECOWAS was set up deliberately to facilitate cooperation towards regional economic integration. While there are no direct threats or aggressions, the influence of colonial powers on the independent states of West Africa make political actors to behave as if they were puppets of colonial masters, only interested in holding on to power without doing anything to develop the living standards of the people they governed especially in the Francophone states (Aworawo, 2016).

ECOWAS collective quest for self-reliance, economic development and perceived linkage between regional integration to regional development, and national stability, has led ECOWAS to evolving a sophisticated peace and security architecture that has been globally accepted and leveraged successfully with other regional and multilateral organizations. From the new treaty, five conditions could trigger intervention by ECOWAS in a member State: incidents of external aggression; conflict between two or more member states; internal conflict in a member state that

may lead to a humanitarian disaster or seriously threaten regional peace and security; incidents of serious violations of human rights and the rule of law; and removal or attempts to remove a democratically elected government (ECOWAS,1993 Treaty). The Authority of Heads of States and Government has a rotational Presidency that initiates actions once there is a violation of the treaty or protocols regarding unconstitutional change of government by condemning the action, mandating the committee of the wise to intervene. This could be followed by sanctions and other actions provided in enabling instruments.

The violent ethnic mobilization of the northern consciousness for political relevance against the "discredited and illegitimate government" of the longtime opposition party led by Laurent Gbagbo (who is himself from a minority ethnic group) created the political instability and civil war that necessitated ECOWAS interventions. Once agreements on peace and elections were reached ECOWAS election management strategy was activated. Pre-election fact finding missions on election preparedness and voter education. Interfaced with the electoral commission during preparations, training and funding of civil society organizations. Deployment of observers and collation of reports on the entire process. All in a bid to ensure the elections are credible, free and fair. ECOWAS recruited nationals of other countries to guarantee neutrality and fair reporting.
The crisis in Cote d'Ivoire erupted at the same time the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF) and Protocols on Democracy and Good Governance were being developed and because the crisis persisted, it provided an opportunity to test the instruments. Clearly the root cause of the crisis was the politics of exclusion based on ethnicity and religion that resulted in the amendment of the constitution and electoral codes, just to exclude Allasane Quatara from becoming or contesting the presidential election in 1993, 1995 and 1999, respectively.

This seminar highlights the challenges posed by combining diplomacy, mediation, economic integration and military projects in managing conflicts arising from politics. The plethora of destabilizing factors that can lead to unconstitutional changes of government in the sub-region even in Nigeria itself, make the need for a sub-region led by consensus, sacrosanct. To address the root causes of crisis, there must be a common definition of good governance among ECOWAS member states and national institutions to promote its attainment. The institutionalization of norms for cooperative hegemony in ECOWAS still requires a Nigeria, that is willing and able to lead the sub-regional pact in partnership with Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana and Senegal, if the goals of the organization are to be achieved.

Literature Review

The ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF) and platforms for cooperation between ECOWAS, AU, EU and UN; are reviewed as part of the intervention mechanisms adopted by ECOWAS to facilitate, mediate and manipulate the processes to achieve peace. Attempts by ECOWAS, France, AU and UN to achieve a political solution through peace accords, sanctions, coercive Security Council resolutions clearly failed. Nigeria's non-participation in military deployments in the initial efforts to resolve the Ivorian crisis and non-coordination of mediation efforts created a leadership vacuum that the belligerents feasted on to perpetuate the situation of no war no peace that existed between 2002 to 2011 during the crisis (McGovern, 2008). The 1999 ECOWAS Protocol dealing with the 'Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping, and Security' called 'The Mechanism' and the 2001 Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance constitute a comprehensive normative framework

for security governance to deal with the entire conflict chain from pre-crisis tensions, conflict management, to peace-building. The protocols represent ECOWAS formal commitment to address security governance issues and create a 'security community' (ECOWAS, 2002).

By the Ouagadougou peace accord, presidential elections were initially scheduled to be held in 2009 but were postponed severally until October 31, 2010 when it was finally conducted. While the Independent Electoral Commission had the mandate to conduct the elections, the UN Security Council mandated the UN Special Representative to certify the election results. Also the Ivorian Constitutional Council had responsibility to mediate in electoral disputes. The entire process was monitored and observed by the UN, EU, AU, France, USA, ECOWAS and other International partners.

Different Nigerian governments may have pursued the objectives of sub-regional integration with different passions but what is undeniable is that ECOWAS provides the Nigerian government the platform to promote the country's socio-cultural, economic, and political interests and Nigeria's leadership has enabled ECOWAS respond decisively to many intra-state conflicts in the sub region. Aworawo (2016) by tracing the history of Nigeria's participation in ECOWAS, submits that it is not illogical for Nigerian leaders to adopt multilateral approaches and minimal involvement because of the need for political stability in Nigeria itself. That the numerous internal security/terrorism challenges in Nigeria in the last two decades, have challenged Nigeria's foreign policy actions. Ebegbulem (2019) in his work 'Nigeria's Leadership Role and Conflict Resolution in West Africa', also argues from conflict resolution perspectives, that the notion of relying on 'Afro-Centrism and manifest destiny' as the basis for Nigeria's roles in West Africa is a poor conceptualization. That there should be properly defined objects of national interest and a consensus of the utility of Nigeria's leadership roles.

Kode, (2016), in his work The Complexities of Democracy-Building in Conflict Affected States: The Role of ECOWAS and The African Union in Cote d'Ivoire', utilizing the theory of third-party interventions, argued that in intervening in Cote d'Ivoire, AU and ECOWAS were better equipped and had legal backing to intervene because for him, ECOWAS mechanism is the most advanced and sophisticated conflict resolution framework in Africa. That legalization is not enough, there are still divisions among member states in supporting the decisions of the body because despite several peace agreements that were signed by warring parties there were no enforcement mechanisms to compel the belligerents to respect their agreements and this was why it took eight years to conduct elections and the reason for the intermittent eruption of violence during the intervention period (Kode, 2016 p. 22). That the inability of implementing eight peace agreements between 2002 to 2010 was due in part to the fact that they did not address the issues at the center of the conflict 'the ethnic question of who was a true Ivorian and who was not' but focused on traditional issues of 'disarming, demobilizing, and re-integrating rebels and government militia' and the desire to conduct elections or form national unity governments (Kode, 2016). It is also instructive to note that Laurent Gbagbo stoked anti-colonial sentiments through-out the crisis, questioning the objectivity of French and UN intentions.

Omotola, (2011) argues that ECOWAS is still confronting national sovereignty issues as well as the Anglophone-Francophone divide that slows down progress. Internal human and financial resource constraints, poor, fragmented, import dependent, and predominantly commodity market

regional economy, with very little volume of trade among member states. Citizens are not treated as stakeholders in the process of democratization, things that dampen popular interest in democracy and feed mass apathy, retreat to ethnic and identity politics, and often lead to military coups, challenges of separatist agitations, insurgency, and militarization of society because of intra state conflicts, are all still prevalent within ECOWAS member states (Omotola, 2011).

The works reviewed on the roles of countries in ECOWAS and Nigeria in the sub-region are agreed on the pervasive influence of Nigeria in West Africa, some even describing Nigeria as a 'hegemon' providing benign leadership. Nigeria's leadership in ECOWAS is unquestioned but Nigeria's absence in ECOWAS military adventures between 1999 and 2012, created a vacuum that cannot be filled by any other state in West Africa. Those years were utilized to develop consensual norms to strengthen ECOWAS supra-national status. This is to ensure that actions taken by member states on behalf of the regional body are not considered or construed as unilateral or hegemonic.

Theoretical Framework

The theory adopted for the work, is the 'regional leading power theory' as espoused by Destradi (2010), but developed by Nolte (2010). Regional Leading Power theory's: main assumptions-indicate that the states considered as part of a geographical region: (i) actually belong to the region considered; (ii) they display a superiority in terms of power capabilities-the leading state possesses the largest power share in the region; (iii) that they exercise some kind of influence on the region; and (iv) demonstrate ideal-typical foreign policy that could be cooperative, benevolent or coercive (hegemon or leader) (Destradi 2010).

It is in understanding how regional order is created and sustained not just the structure of power and its relationships, that regional powers can be identified and described:
What strategies are they adopting to secure allegiance and following by other states: one must differentiate more clearly between the strategies of regional powers, the reactions of other actors in the region and the final outcomes. That regional orders are the result of the interaction between states that aspire to regional leadership and other states in the corresponding region (Nolte, 2010).

As a toolbox for analyzing the inconsistent, and confusing courses of action, sometimes using their power resources and at other times not bringing to bear their power regional power strategies are conceived by Destradi (2010) as existing in a continuum of empire, hegemony and leadership. That regional powers follow a wider range of strategies, not just cooperative or benevolent in their foreign policies. From a unilateral, highly aggressive and coercive strategy described as 'imperial', to an extremely cooperative one aimed at reaching common goals referred to as 'leading'. In between the two extremes are different kinds of 'hegemonic' strategies. The idea of a continuum is to accommodate the varied contextual classification of the terms: empire, hegemony and leadership in international relations discourse. By analyzing the goals pursued, the means adopted as well as the degree of legitimization or 'self-representation' by the dominant state, the essential features of empire, hegemony and leadership are described (Destradi, 2010). Leadership and hegemony lie in a continuum from hegemony to leadership. Both arise as a result of mutual or reciprocal relationships, depending on the goals pursued, the means adopted, degree of legitimization and the self-representation of the States' involved.

ECOWAS mechanism and protocols have both hegemonic and leading norms. Leveraging on them members of the organization can achieve homogeneity of strategies and actions with legitimization, whether in the use of force or cooperation.

Table 1. Main Features of Leadership in ECOWAS and relevance of Leading Power Theory as a frame of reference.

S/NO	GOALS PURSUED	MEANS ADOPTED	DEGREE OF LEGITIMIZATION	SELF REPRESENTATION OF STATES INVOLVED
1	Democracy And Good Governance	Advocacy/Institution Building/Peer Review/Electoral Assistance/ECOWAS-NEPAD/Civil Society Organizations/Human Rights/ Youth/Gender Empowerment.	Legitimate/Willing Followership/Apart From The Leading Power Other States Initiate Leadership Projects To Avoid A Lack Of Coordination Where There Are Threats Or Crisis.	Cooperative/ Willing Followership
2	Security Governance	Early Warning/ Preventive Diplomacy/ Mediation/ Sanctions/ Standby Force/ Practical Disarmament/ Peace Keeping/ Enforcement	Legitimate/ Council of The Wise/ Defence And Security Council	Cooperative Hegemony/ Joint/Willing Participation.
3	Economic Integration	Treaties and Protocols/ECOWAS Administrative Institutions/ Commissions.	Legitimate/Develop Common Trade Infrastructures/ Free Trade/Free Movement of Peoples/Customs Union/Community Levy/Common Currency/Common Market	Cooperative/ Willing participation/ Full ratification And adoption of Protocols.

Source: Author's compilation March, 2024.

Nation states have conflicting national interests and capabilities, achieving homogeneity and rationality in their foreign policy, also depends on the statesmen who personify them, who think and act to either increase, conserve, consolidate or demonstrate state power depending on the

conditions pre-requisite to maintaining order and peace in international society. The structure, behaviour and reactions to the relations of member states of regional blocs can be understood and explained, by also taking into consideration other regional influences like the global economic and post-colonial relations, continental and sub-regional geo-political alliances and even domestic pressures in each state of the region.

Methodology

The qualitative descriptive case study design was utilized to allow for collection of sufficient data on the characteristics of leadership interactions between states in the sub-region. While the regional leading power theory was adopted to evaluate Nigeria's actions and indeed other member states during the interventions in Cote d'Ivoire as leading along the continuum of empire (imperial) to the follower-initiated leadership (absence of leadership). The method established the relevance of Nigeria's leadership in ECOWAS, allowed for evaluation of its effectiveness, identified the challenges within Nigeria, the sub-region, as well as ECOWAS processes limiting the achievement of its goals using the interventions in Cote d'Ivoire political crisis as a case study.

Interview questions were deliberately structured to elicit information that strengthened documentary sources until saturation. The answers were grouped into 1-4 response category and their frequency of occurrence assigned as percentages. Those interviewed included past and present Nigeria Charge d' Affairs to Cote d'Ivoire; Nigeria's Permanent representative to ECOWAS and staff of Nigeria-ECOWAS Permanent Mission, created in 2012 and served in mediation teams; Director and Deputy Directors, Political Affairs Department, ECOWAS Commission; Experts on ECOWAS Affairs in Nigeria's Institute of International Affairs; and representatives of the Cote d'Ivoire Constitutional Council, Ivorian Electoral Commission, and executives of Cote d'Ivoire Civil Society Coalition. The case study is presented in narrative format. While the content analysis focused on organizing data around the theoretical themes for ease of validation.

Data Presentation/Analysis

Table 2. Responses on the specific roles Nigeria played in the ECOWAS interventions in Cote d'Ivoire.

S/N	RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
1	Funding of Interventions	3	20%
2	Leading Mediation Teams	2	13.3%
3	Electoral assistance/Monitoring/ Observation	6	40%
4	Preventive Diplomacy	4	26.7%
	TOTAL	15	100%

Compiled by the author during field work in December, 2023.

The responses to the question of what particular role did Nigeria play in the mediation and electoral assistance measures were quite revealing. While 40% said Nigeria led effectively in election and electoral success, 26.7% gave it to Nigeria' s diplomatic initiatives. The belligerents in the Ivorian crisis initially, rejected Nigeria's mediation which was why Nigeria practically did not lead any

mediation even where they were represented and some factions insisted, they do not want Nigerian troops, because of the allegations against them in Liberia and the large number of Nigerians in Cote d'Ivoire. Apart from the language barrier and suspicions that Nigeria may not be impartial, the fear of reprisal attacks on the huge Nigerian population in Cote d'Ivoire was high.

ECOWAS has not achieved 'real supra-nationality to manage the loyalties in the sub-region to bring large and medium states in line with the provisions of the protocols that they have ratified' with regard to political governance matters and local internal conflicts. The ECOWAS representative in Cote d'Ivoire observed that even the Ivorian President, Laurent Gbagbo in a letter to the UN Secretary General then, said: I would like to express in advance my rejection of ECOWAS involvement in Ivory Coast because of the direct involvement of some of its member Countries in the organization of the conflict in Cote d'Ivoire (UN Report 2002)
At the time he alleged that rebels from Burkina Faso and Mali were backing the forces fighting against his government.

From the responses of those interviewed, 40% said Nigeria was only visible in missions for electoral assistance, voter education programmes, election monitoring and observation. The assessment on preventive diplomacy at 26.7% was attributed to Obasanjo's invitation as Chairman of AU at the time of all AU presidents to Cote d'Ivoire to broker peace and interface with the UN, EU and other development partners to end the crisis without bloodshed. This was achieved to a large extent when the casualty rates and the time the crisis lasted is compared. Aworawo (2016) while evaluating Nigeria's role in the Ivorian crises, noted that apart from Nigeria's non-military involvement, the country did not play its usual leadership role even in diplomatic aspects as well. That the difficulties encountered' by Nigeria in Liberia and Sierra Leone and the fact that the Nigerian public did not support the interventions, made Nigeria 'peace-keeping-wearied'. He however, stated that Nigeria has not been incapacitated, her unwillingness and unenthusiastic stance in the use of force and huge financial involvement reflected high ideals by working within ECOWAS, AU and UN frameworks through-out the Ivorian crises and provided opportunity for other regional leaders like Gnassingbe Eyadema of Togo in 2001 and Blaise Compaore of Burkina Faso in 2007 to organize negotiations that eventually led to the Ouagadougou Peace Agreement (Aworawo, 2016).

Public opinion, domestic pressures and public policy in Nigeria at the time was largely against military deployment. An interesting contribution from ECOWAS Deputy Director Political Affairs interviewed in November 2022:
in the sub-region, Nigeria is like 'America', and Cote d'Ivoire 'Russia', Gbagbo's government ab initio was undemocratic, because of the circumstances that brought him to power and the insurgents cannot be supported, so on which side did you expect Nigeria to fight? ECOMICI 1 was like a lame duck and it would have been disastrous given our military resources that were in Liberia and sierra Leone at the time. Commenting further on funding ECOWAS, Nigerians view the leaders funding of ECOWAS as not based on any economic advantages but because of African solidarity:
we are large in funding and support but weak in influence in the sub-region. Look at all the directorates in ECOWAS, Nigeria has never occupied the presidency of the ECOWAS Commission and Chairs only the Directorate of Political Affairs, how do you exert influence on ECOWAS activities and engagements with such disposition?

To lead effectively Nigeria's representation in standing committees and implementation measures should be guaranteed. The implications of merging diplomatic and political approaches with military interventions, demands that Nigeria must be effectively represented in ECOWAS committees, delegations and military deployments, if the supranational authority of organization is to be respected and accepted.

Table 3. Responses to interview on ECOWAS further measures on voter education and citizenship advocacy to improve the conduct of elections in Cote d'Ivoire after 2010.

S/N	RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
1	Voter Education	3	20%
2	Citizenship Advocacy	4	26.7%
3	Election Monitoring/ Observation	7	46.7%
4	Amendment of laws	1	6.6%
	TOTAL	15	100%

 Compiled by the author during field work in December, 2023.

From the interviews, 46.7% agreed that the visibility and success of ECOWAS was highest during election issues. 20% said voter education was most impressive but one respondent said the change of the laws was most important. 26.7% argued that ECOWAS advocacy and electoral assistance measures followed ECOWAS procedures religiously in managing the Ivorian crisis particularly the peace agreements beginning with the Accra meetings, facilitating the French Linas-Marcousis agreement and other subsequent agreements. The mediation agreements were not only initiated by ECOWAS leadership, member countries like Togo, Benin, and Burkina Faso initiated peace meetings and it is the 2007 Blaise Compaore, Ouagadougou Peace Accord in our case study, that turned out to be the beginning of the solution to the crisis. It is not just the regional leader initiating leadership projects, ECOWAS mandates follower members to take the initiative when necessary to foster the goals of the community.

Under election monitoring and ECOWAS Assistance, the protocols empower the Executive secretary of ECOWAS to appoint a fact-finding Mission, followed by an exploratory Mission and an Observer/Supervisory Mission to member countries conducting elections. Beginning with evaluating the conditions on ground to guarantee free, fair and credible elections, areas of assistance required, training and institutional capacity of election agencies, even voter education and election logistics. ECOWAS pre-election fact finding mission engaged all contestants from parties and independent candidates both in the main election of 2010 and the rerun as well as the election day observer incident reports and post-election evaluation. ECOWAS summit in Abuja Nigeria on 7/12/2010, certified the presidential run-off election results as validated by the UN representative. ECOWAS at its Abuja Summit on 7 December 2010, the extraordinary Session of the Authority of Head of States and Government on Cote d'Ivoire, was adamant on the credibility of the IEC results and insisted that Quattara won and should be sworn in as the president. Former Nigerian President, Olusegun Obasanjo was appointed as envoy to convey ECOWAS position to Laurent Gbagbo to avoid further crisis, with a provision to ensure the incoming government recognized him as a former president and to enjoy the guarantees even if he wants to go on exile but Gbagbo refused and ECOWAS had to threaten that force will be utilized to remove him from power.

Those interviewed gave credit to ECOWAS on their engagement of the Ivorian electoral commission, the constitutional council and political parties before the 2010 elections. The acceptance by all presidential candidates that the UN Representative endorse the results of the election before announcement was also a credibility booster of the 2010 election results. Like the ECOWAS representative in Cote d'Ivoire in 2010 observed

> Gbagbo like every other presidential aspirant signed the document
> authorizing the UN Special Representative to endorse the results of
> Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), when they were announced
> he chose to reject them and utilized the Constitutional Council to discredit
> it but when ECOWAS presented its documentary evidence and reports to the
> AU investigation panel, even the AU had no choice but to accept
> ECOWAS position that Quattara be sworn in.

In fact, ECOWAS resident representative in Cote d'Ivoire maintained that despite the turn- out of events after the 2010 elections, the credibility of ECOWAS was tested and proven and its processes certified as worthy wherever the reports were tendered even in the UN.
Those interviewed were of one voice that the advocacy of ECOWAS for electoral reforms in Cote d'Ivoire ensured the highest voter turnout in 2010.

While those interviewed commend the electoral education and awareness initiatives, they argue the period is brief and the sensitization not pervasive enough to cover the entire country. The president of the Ivorian Civil Society Coalition responded critically that:

the awareness is not enough, our problem is managing diversity and ensuring good governance, rushing two months into elections to advice people to be peaceful would not work. People must learn to tolerate each other and not be quick to kill because of elections and corrupt politicians.

ECOWAS early warning reports have been useful in the 2015 and 2020 elections particularly the intervention when Quattara's party in 2019 nominated him for a third term, because of the death of the presidential candidate of the ruling party. The dialogue that ensued to avoid the personal issues that have always escalated political divisions were properly managed, particularly with the involvement of civil society coalitions.

Table 4. Responses to interview on Challenges of practical implementation of mediation, diplomacy and electoral assistance measures in crisis situations.

S/N	RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
1	Lack of Funding	3	20%
2	Lack of political will/manipulation of democratic institutions by national leaders	5	33.3%
3	Non domestication of ECOWAS mechanism to create national partnerships.	4	26.7%
4	Bad governance and resort to ethnic and religious divisions in politics	3	20%
	TOTAL	15	100%

Compiled by the author during field work in December, 2023.

The sub-region is still plagued with internal security challenges, terrorism, smuggling, illicit cross border trading and political instability occasioned by: bad governance, electoral violence, lack of free and fair elections, inability of incumbents to accept electoral defeat by opposition, attempts at tenure elongation through constitutional amendments, unconstitutional changes of government and French influence in Francophone states.

The manipulation of democratic institutions by national political leaders from the interview responses of 33.3% is considered the greatest challenge to the implementation of the mechanism and specifically the protocol on democracy and good governance. This agrees with the assertion by Omotola (2011):

That the inherent limitations in addressing the root causes of conflicts in the sub-region of West Africa is the pervasion of democratic institutions by national political actors that rig the state against the people and creating a seeming sense of 'powerlessness on the part of international community to meaningfully intervene to prevent such pervasion', especially when the core interests of such intervening agencies are not at stake (Omotola, 2011 p. 7).

ECOWAS has to a large extent mitigated crisis between states in the sub-region, but has not facilitated good relations within national boundaries. The absence of political will to act against national sovereignty limitations, to deal with insecurity caused by internal country agendas. Issues like the challenge of ethnic and religious divisions or the inability to act against insecurity instigated by national security actors in member states. For example, the action of the Constitutional Council that overturned the result of Ivorian Election Council in 2010, was perceived by those interviewed as a ploy by Gbagbo to use the power of incumbency to thwart the will of Ivorians, as some succinctly put it:

The ability of incumbent presidents to manipulate national institutions to perpetuate their illegitimate hold on power was demonstrated by the attempt to utilize the Ivorian Constitutional Council to invalidate the electoral commission's result by cancelling over 600,000 votes in areas where Quattara won even when there were no reports of irregularities in those areas during the run-off.

Another major implementation challenge represented by 26.7% of respondents, is the extent to which the sub-regional frameworks assume the force of national laws, by ratification in member states; and level of institutionalization and degree of respect for and adherence to the protocols in practice (Omotola, 2011). The non-institutionalization of ECOWAS mechanism and protocols in member states like the non-operationalization of the ECPF on its own is a huge limitation. Translating concepts to practice in view of the funding and enormity of institutional capacity required is a daunting task anywhere in the world. The text of the guiding principles enumerated in the 2001 supplemental protocol to guide the resolution of conflicts arising from political crisis and strengthening democracy provides:

Having observed that to become really effective, the protocol of 10 December 1999 needs to be complemented through the incorporation of provisions concerning issues such as prevention of internal crises, democracy and good governance, the rule of law, and human rights; having decided to enhance the ECOWAS mechanism for conflict prevention, management, resolution, peacekeeping and security; have agreed as follows: constitutional convergence principles: article 1 the following shall be declared as constitutional principles shared by all member states: a) separation of powers- the executive, legislative and Judiciary; Empowerment and strengthening of

parliaments and guarantee of parliamentary immunity. Independence of judiciary: Freedom of members of the Bar b) every accession to power must be made through free fair and transparent elections. c) Zero tolerance for power obtained or maintained by unconstitutional means. d) Popular participation in decision-making, strict adherence to democratic principles and decentralization of power at all levels of governance (Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, Article1).

Such ambitious provisions that ultimately involve the transfer of national policy competences and power potentials to ECOWAS department/committees with structures that are limited in timing, functions, scope and roles defined by ECOWAS rules cannot be undertaken through dictatorial means.

Table 5. Responses to interview on evaluation of the resolution of the crisis given that there is still no transition of power after 14 years.

S/N	RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
1	Not Resolved	3	20%
2	Resolved	4	26.7%
3	Possibility of re-occurrence of crisis there is no reconciliation	5	33.3%
4	Appreciate ECOWAS	3	20%
	TOTAL	15	100%

Compiled by the author during field work in December, 2023.

From the interviews conducted 33.3% agree that though peace has returned to Cote d'Ivoire, the possibility of re-occurrence of the crisis is there because there has not been genuine reconciliation. The 26.7% who believe the issues are resolved point to the fact that no one had imagined how the ethnic groups in Cote d'Ivoire will come together under a northerner in their country. This also is the reason why 20% appreciated what ECOWAS and the intervening countries have done. However, the 20% who argue that the crisis is not resolved, see the present reconciliation as a manipulation by global powers working behind Nigeria to impose their will on their country. All the experts on ECOWAS are of this view that over dependence on Nigeria to shoulder its military, economic and political activities as well as Nigeria's own dependence on UN, UK and France for military support, affects Nigeria's leadership and legitimacy of missions in the sub-region. Leading some respondents to question whether Nigeria is a puppet of imperialism in West Africa like Cote d'Ivoire among francophone West Africa States.

That it appears this is the balance Nigeria did not want to distort. Experts on international affairs and ECOWAS are agreed that:
it is possible that 'politics and strategic games' necessitated Alasane Quattara's overwhelming recognition, from the issue of the role of neighbouring states with stakes in the political outcomes in the crisis and complicity of 'external hegemonic interests' and ex-colonial masters seeking to maintain established interests, undermining intervention mechanisms.

Other concerns arising from the results of election monitoring and observation in 2015 and 2020 in the same administration of Quattara were that in 2015 Alassane Quattara the incumbent was the sole candidate, Gbagbo was on trial, his supporters boycotted the elections and even national reconciliation efforts. ECOWAS 2014 early warning report on Cote d'Ivoire elections only

envisaged challenges for the proposed parliamentary elections while the President of the Ivorian civil society groups maintained there was no opposition in the 2015 elections. There have been two elections in 2015 and 2020 under Quattara's regime. With Gbagbo on exile, the 2015 elections were marred with complaints of partisan appointment of members of the electoral commission and the constitutional Council to favour Quattara. There was no opposition and Quattara secured 83% of the votes cast to secure a five-year second term in office. In 2016 there was a constitutional amendment limiting presidential tenure to two terms of five years each. Also, Civil Society Organizations were recognized and assigned responsibilities to mobilize and educate the public on their electoral duties and monitor the credibility of elections, and hold government accountable. The Ivorian Civil Society Convention brought together over 200 NGOs in the country under a president and formidable pressure group.

The 2020 elections were more ridiculous as Quattara ran for a third term on the pretext that the death of the presidential candidate of the ruling party months into the election did not give the party room to appoint a suitable successor and had to present himself for another term. His supporters on the other hand claimed the 2011 to 2015 term did not count since the decision on two terms was taken in 2016. Youssouf Bakayoko president of the Independent Electoral Commission accepted that the elections were free and fair despite the boycott but what is clear is that Quattara may have succeeded in achieving his ambition but Ivorians are still divided and there is no genuine reconciliation.

Youssouf Bakayoko president of the Independent Electoral Commission accepted that the elections were free and fair despite the boycott but what is clear is that Quattara may have succeeded in achieving his ambition but Ivorians are still divided and there is no genuine reconciliation.

Discussion of Findings
Evaluating the effectiveness of mediation, diplomacy and electoral assistance measures as part of intervention instruments showed that they were actually the appropriate means. With France already implicated in the crisis in Cote d'Ivoire, ECOWAS was handicapped from the beginning. ECOWAS inability to deal with the inherent pervasion of democratic institutions by national political actors that rig the state against the people, creating a seeming sense of 'powerlessness on the part of international community to meaningfully intervene to prevent such pervasion', especially when the core interests of such intervening agencies are not at stake is the root cause of ECOWAS ineffectiveness.

The second objective of discussing the challenges that mitigate against the implementation of mediation, diplomacy and electoral issues border on the sensitivity of national sovereignty issues, and the fact that the crisis evolved alongside the development of the ECOWAS Peace and Security mechanism and the protocols relating thereto which needed to be ratified before engagement. Nevertheless, ECOWAS protocols and mechanisms are largely yet to be domesticated in member states although they have all ratified the treaties. Such ambitious provisions that ultimately involve the transfer of national policy competences and power potentials to ECOWAS department/committees with structures that are limited in timing, functions, scope and roles defined by ECOWAS rules cannot be undertaken through dictatorial means.

Conclusion

To address the root causes of crisis, there must be a common definition of good governance among ECOWAS member states. The plethora of destabilizing factors that can lead to unconstitutional changes of government in the sub-region even in Nigeria itself, make the need for a sub-region led by consensus, sacrosanct. The institutionalization of norms for cooperative hegemony in ECOWAS still requires a Nigeria, that is willing and able to lead the sub-regional pact in partnership with Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana and Senegal, if its goals are to be achieved.

Recommendations

i. To facilitate good governance and promote democracy, ECOWAS should develop measures to create mass enlightenment in member states on the provisions of its protocols on democracy and good governance for mass participation by people in the sub-region if national reconciliation, tolerance and common citizenship is to be achieved and not just government to government bureaucratic relations;

ii. To guarantee national partnerships to implement ECPF, institutions in member states, that have cognate functions with ECOWAS normative frameworks to promote institutionalization of ECOWAS protocols and mechanisms in member states;

References

Aworawo, F. (2016). Nigeria and ECOWAS Since 1999: Continuity and Change in Multilateralism and Conflict Resolution. Ihafa: *A Journal of African Studies 8*: 2 Dec. 1-16.

Bakare, O. D. (2019). An Assessment of the Role of Nigeria in ECOWAS Security Architecture, and Democratization Efforts in West Africa: From Unilateralism to Multilateralism. IJSSHE 3 (2), 2019, ISSN 2521-0041.

Burges, S.W. (2008), Consensual Hegemony: Theorizing Brazilian Foreign Policy after the Cold War: *International Relations*, 22 (2008), 65-84.

Buzan, B., & Weaver, O. (2003). *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, New York.

Destradi, Sandra (2010), Regional powers and their strategies: empire, hegemony, and leadership. *Review of International Studies, 36*(4), 903-930. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210510001361

ECOWAS Reports: (2002), (2005), (2008), (20015), (2017).

ECOWAS Crime Prevention Framework, 2008.

Ebegbulem, J.C. (2019). Nigeria's Leadership Role and Conflict Resolution in West Africa. IJORIHS. *International Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Studies* 6, Issue 10, 22-33 ISSN 2394-6296.

Harnisch, Sebastian (2015), International Leadership as a role theoretical concept. *Institute of International Relations*, Prague (Role Theory Workshop, 1-33 2012).

Ikenberry, J.G., & Kupchan, Charles A., (1990), The Legitimation of Hegemonic Power, in David P. Rapkin (eds), World Leadership and Hegemony (Boulder, London: Lynne Rienner, 1990).

Ismail, O. (2011). ECOWAS and Human Security: in Jaiye, T., Garuba, D., & Amadi, Stella (2011) ECOWAS and the Dynamics of Conflict and Peacebuilding. CODESRIA, CDD.

Kaplan, R. (1994). *The Coming Anarchy, The Atlantic Monthly*, 273 (2), 44-76.

Keohane, R. (1984). After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Kode, David (2016), The Complexities of Democracy-Building in Conflict-Affected States: The Role of ECOWAS and African Union in Cote D'Ivoire. International IDEA, Stockholm, 2016, pp. 1-27.

Kwaja, Chris (2017), The Role of ECOWAS in Post-Conflict Rehabilitation: Lessons from Liberia. *NUST Journal of International Peace & Stability.* 2017, Vol 1 (1), Pp53-71. njips.nust.edu.pk

McGovern, Mike (2008), International Interventions in Cote d' Ivoire, Accord Issue 19, February 2008. pp. 62-65. (2011), Making War in Cote d'Ivoire, Hurst: 2011.

Moga, T. L. (2009), The Contribution of the neo-functionalist and inter-governmentalism: theories to the evolution of the European integration process. Journal of Alternative Perspectives in the Social sciences, 1 (3), 796-807.

Moravcsik, A. (1993). *The Choice For Europe*. Routledge: London, 1998.

Musah, Abdelfatau (2011), ECOWAS and Regional Responses to Conflicts: in in Jaiye, T., Garuba, D., & Amadi, Stella (2011), ECOWAS and the Dynamics of Conflict and Peacebuilding. CODESRIA.

Neumann, I. B. (1992), Regional Great Powers in International Politics, Palgrave: Macmillan, 1992.

Nolte, Detlef (2010), How to Compare Regional Powers: Analytical Concepts and Research Topics, Review of International Studies, 36(4) (2009), 881-901.

Nye, Joseph (2004), Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics, Public Affairs: eds. (2005).

Obi, Cyril (2009), Economic Community of West African States on the Ground: Comparing Peacekeeping In Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau, and Cote D'Ivoire., African Security, 2: 2-3, 119-135, https://doi.org/10.1080/19362200903361945.

Okeke, V. O., Sunday, O., & Okechukwu, Richard (2014), United Nations-ECOWAS Intervention in Mali-Guinea Bissau: Geo-Economic and Strategic Analysis, Global Journal of Human Social Sciences (E) Vol. 14 (3), 1 (2014), pp. 1- 12.

Omotola, S. (2011). Unconstitutional changes of government in Africa. What implication for Demo-cratic Consolidation? NORDISKA, Nordic Africa Institute, UPPSALA, 2011.

Pedersen, T. (2002), Cooperative hegemony: power, ideas and institutions in regional integration, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Prabhakar, R. (2010), Hegemonic Stability Theory and the 20th Century International Economy, *E International Relations,* ISSN 2053-8626, https://www.e-ir.info/2010/01/08/hegemonic-stability

Prys, M.(2009), Regional hegemon or Regional Bystander: South Africa's Zimbabwe Policy 2000-2005, Politikon-South African Journal for Political Studies, volume 36, No. 2 (August 2009), 193-218. Hegemony, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1990).

Rattan, J. (2019), Changing Dimensions of Intervention Under International Law: A Critical Analysis, SAGE Open, April-June 2019, 1-12. Doi: 10.1177/21582440119840911.

Rodriguez, Roberto (2018), Peace Operations in West Africa: ECOWAS Successes and Failures in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, and Guinea Bissau, World Mediation Organization Conflict Insight, ISSN: 2628-6998, https://worldmediation.org/conflict-insight

Salimov, S. (2018). The Concept of Leadership in international relations, *International Journal Of Social Sciences and Humanities Invention*: August 2018, DOI:10.18535/ijsshi/v5i8.08

Schirm, S. (2010), Leaders in Need of Followers: Emerging Powers in Global Governance, *European Journal of International Relations,* 16, 197-221.

Snidal, D.(1985). The Limits of Hegemonic Stability Theory, International Organization, 39, No. 4 (Autumn, 1985), pp. 579-614.

Tijjani, C.B., & Ozden, K. (2021), Cost-Benefit Analysis of Nigeria's Continued Role in ECOWAS, Nile University Abuja, http://doi.org/10.31039/jomeino.2021.5.2.2

Troung-Minh, V. (2017). International Leadership as a Process: The case of China in Southeast Asia, Rev. Bras. Polit. Int. 60(1): e001, 2017.   Doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/0034-7329201 600109.