The Politics of a Viable Alternative to Underdevelopment in Africa: The Case of Economic Integration in West Africa, 1960-1975

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Abstract

The paper examines the political obstacles facing economic co-operation in West Africa between 1960 and 1975. By comparing the economic and political factors that formed the pillars of sub-regional cooperation, the study submits that efforts to integrate the region before 1975 were marred by suspicion among members states and the meddlesomeness of foreign Powers such as France in the region. Drawing from its findings, the paper concludes that lack of commitment from member states delayed the integration of the region till 1975.

Keywords: economic, development, integration, politics, West Africa

1. Introduction

This paper examines the political obstacles facing economic co-operation in West Africa between 1960 and 1975. It also attempt to compare both economic and political factors as important pillars of any meaningful co-operation in the sub-region.

A close look at West African sub-region shows that most of the economies of West African States have been predominantly agricultural and industries, where they exist, have been mostly embryonic. Many of the countries are small both in physical dimensions and in population; and have low per capita incomes and severely limited natural resources. They are therefore, highly dependent on foreign trade, very little of which takes place within the sub-region (Ajayi, 1984: 135-136). In their attempts to control this situation, West African leaders made efforts through regional co-operation to foster closer ties among themselves. However, these efforts have always been faced with some seemingly insurmountable problems.

2. The First Phase: 1960-1975

The first obstacle to co-operation among the newly independent states, particularly between 1957 and 1963, came from political boundaries. Most of the international boundaries of the new states were not perfect. Each boundary was and has continued to be a source of friction and discontent among frontier peoples (Ofoegbu, 1972; 58). It should be noted that the boundaries were not deliberately arranged to provoke tension and hostility. It was a mistaken belief by the colonial decision-makers that normal relations between France and Britain would guarantee peace and co-operation in West Africa. But this was not the case, and in fact, balkanisation of Africa led to restrictive measures along the frontiers which worsened inter-state relations among West African States. Therefore, international boundaries were made economic barriers which directly or otherwise diverted the complex flow of production and distribution out of the channels they would have followed (Ofoegbu, 1972; 58). Political differences over frontier locations and ownership of some frontier territories also developed from the problem of imperfect political boundaries. The Cameroun Republic was dissatisfied with the attribution of the Northern Camerouns to Nigeria; and Ghana demanded the re-unification of the Agnie-Nzima people of Ivory Coast with their counterparts in Ghana. The Ewe in Togo also wanted their counterparts in Ghana (Ofoegbu, 1972; 61). This obviously slowed down social and economic interactions among the people, who for many centuries before the colonial intrusion, had lived together in peace and harmony.

The emergence of rival coalitions between 1960 and 1962 also slowed down the movement towards economic co-operation. During this period, three different groups; the Casablanca, Monrovia and Brazzaville (French Aligned) groups, had been formed. These groups favoured African Unity but differed on the principles of achieving it. The Casablanca group (Ghana, Guinea, Mali and their North African allies) favoured radical and

immediate African political and systematic approach. Each group saw one another as reactionary element. In fact, Casablanca's principle of African political union and the creation of an Africa High Command aroused the opposition of most of the other African States, both French and English speaking. Therefore, these groups' failure to strike a balance very early in the 1960s really affected subsequent attempts to forge meaningful co-operation among West African States.

The Casablanca group continued to isolate itself from the other groups in Africa as its members refused to attend some conferences designed to discuss how a continental union could be formed in Africa. The Lagos Conference of January 1962, is a good example of this claim. This was a conference where a whole new complex of machinery for inter-African co-operation was inaugurated. The Casablanca group refused to attend, claiming that the Algerian Provisional Government, which they regarded as a full member of the group, was not invited to Lagos (*West Africa*, 1962; 113). But what the group failed to realize is that the Algerian Provisional Government was a government in exile and could not have been invited to represent Algeria which has a United Nations recognised government in place. In fact, the reason given by the group is suspicious as a careful observation would reveal that their refusal to attend the Lagos conference was connected to the humiliation suffered by Morocco, the leader of the group, over the recognition of Mauritania as a sovereign state, and the non recognition of Algerian Provisional Government by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

Furthermore, subsequent conferences of 1962, to discuss the merging of air lines and permanent organisations did not achieve much success because the political situations still remained fluid as the continent was still divided into blocs. Thus while it is clear that the Lagos Conference failed to achieve its desired goal, one can say that considering the lofty idea of the general programme of co-operation mapped out by the conference, the African leaders, it is expected should have buried their differences and made it a reality.

Moreover, with the formation of the organisation of African Unity (OAU) in 1963, one would have expected the three groups to quickly dissolve, as their interests could now be accommodated within the framework of the new body. And even when the Casablanca and the Monrovia groups were dissolved, the Brazzaville group refused to wind-up, strategically to continue to 'protect' the interest of the francophone West Africa States and that of France. This further slowed down efforts at closer union and the development has been manifesting itself more in French diplomacy in African politics.

Another important factor is Nkrumah's action of disengaging Ghana from such West African Institutions as West African Currency Board, West African Produce Marketing Board and West African Airways; and the systematic dismantling of other notable West African Institutions like the West African Frontier Force, West African Institute for Social and Economic Research, West African Cocoa Research Institute etc (Onwuka, 1982; 7). This action dealt a serious blow to the idea of co-operation in West Africa particularly between 1960 and 1965. What is puzzling is Ghana's withdrawal despite her principle of universality. Could Nkrumah's action be based on the Gowon's argument, that the union of individual states is the eventual union of the whole West African sub-region (Gowon, 1984)? Or can one easily support Azikwe's position that Nkrumah subverted the process of a larger unity in the period, by breaking the links with his Anglophone counterparts? Whatever pontifications are, granted similar circumstances in which Ghana operated, particularly in the light of the upsurge of nationalist feeling prevailing in the 1950s, Nigeria, Sierra-Leone or Gambia may not have acted differently. In fact, being newly independent, most states held a strong determination to demonstrate and maintain their national sovereignty and integrity. Therefore, demonstration of sovereignty led naturally to adopting national currencies, national central banks, national airways, national research institutes and the like. In so far as these were thought to be the outward manifestations of nationhood and sovereignty, they became symbols of attachment eliciting loyalties that could not transcend the national borders.

Moreover, by 1960, not all West African States had become independent. In this regard, the struggle for independence did not allow for much time to come together. The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) established in 1958, that could have acted to bring the states together economically, was also at the initial stage of its formation, affected by the politics of suspicion among West African leaders. Politically, the French West African States believed that there should be a French speaking African Deputy Executive Secretary for the ECA. The result was that the commission spent a good deal of time to reform itself rather than set at once on the task before it. This is why some argued that the ECA in its early years achieved little success when compared to the achievement of Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA), under Raul Prebisch, its Executive Secretary between 1950 and 1963.

One other problem that slowed down the creation of an economic community in West Africa is that many governments since independence were and still are not disposed to what they regarded as interference in their

internal affairs. They would prefer to seek expert advise from outside the region, rather than discuss their policies with neighbouring countries, how much less harmonise their development polices (Okwuosa, 1976; 87). In this connection, it becomes necessary, therefore, that for an economic grouping to be successful, it must be so conceived that its provisions should not interfere much with either the political or economic nationalism of targeted member states. However, one may ask: how much of interference should be allowed? This is a difficult question to answer with the upsurge of nationalism at that time.

Another obstacle is the fear of small countries. These poor countries always have the fear that in any serious economic co-operation, they would be swallowed by the richer countries which means the loss of their sovereign powers. This, in fact, had been evident since 1957 when West African States started to secure independence. These nation states jealously guard their sovereign status. Political nationalism coupled with the differences in their political systems would make the transfer of power of decisions to a supra-national authority a difficult task (Okwuosa, 1976; 87). That is, an integration problem would arise where the expected co-operation is not forthcoming from member states because of their unwillingness to surrender part of their sovereignty for an economic union which they believed is not certain. In fact, the failure of the Mali Federation and the Ghana-Guinea-Mali Union formed between 1958 and 1962, demonstrated that even contiguous territories found it difficult to sacrifice the charms of national sovereignty in favour of collective decision-making. Perhaps this is why in 1962, Colin Legum claimed that:

> Pan Africanism is finished, that it has fulfilled what was a limited political
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> role during the period of colonial oppression; and that it has nothing
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> constructive to offer to an independent Africa (Legum, 1962; 131).

3. The Second Phase: 1960-1975

Arising from the on-going analysis, is the fact that West African leaders were just being unduly selfish and narrow minded. None of them wanted to settle down for a second place. However, it is feasible to proffer that, if all the leaders had been sincere in their attempts to forge a larger union, West African States through collective efforts would have developed a strong and virile economy, based perhaps on the principle of comparative advantage.

Furthermore, from about 1966-1970, the West African sub-region was politically unstable, thereby creating considerable uncertainty. During this period, military coups detat became a common feature of the political scene. It was increasingly clear that the military were getting tired of staying in their barracks watching the undue hostilities among West African leaders. Thus when the military boys swung into action, about a half out of the sovereign states of West Africa experienced change of government. In some other countries, the military had once attempted or threatened to intervene. Sierra Leone, for example, had a prolonged constitutional crisis, resulting in two military coups in 1967 and 1968 respectively (*African Research Bulleting,* 1967 & 1968). The military took over power in Togo in 1963, Nigeria in 1966, Ghana in 1966 and Dahomey (Benin) had about six coups detat during this period (Nwabuzor, 1982; 87). This unsettled atmosphere in West Africa inhibited a concrete and conscious attempts to move closer to regional co-operation, since most of the leaders, particularly those in uniform, were busy establishing themselves domestically. Therefore, they had little time left for international relations (Nwabuzor, 1982; 90).

This situation was not peculiar to all West African leaders because some of them were sincerely interested in forging multilateral co-operation. The argument is that, at least, the situation described above explains also the lack of sustained adherence by some West African States to decision concerning the formation of sub-regional machinery for co-operation. As noted earlier, some states in the sub-region had genuine desires to see multilateral co-operation established but the unsettled situations in neighbouring states might have forced them to adopt a very cautions approach towards the whole scheme. At this time also African Nationalists in Guinea-Bissau were still fighting for independence and so could not have got enough time for other issues except to ensure independence. These Nationalists were supported by both Senegal and Guinea. The result of this assistance was an abortive invasion of Guinea by the Portuguese troops in 1970 (*African Research Bulleting*, 1971).

Another important obstacle is the hostile relationship among West African leaders between 1966 and 1970. The general hostile relationships between Nigeria and Ghana, Senegal and the Gambia, Guinea and Ghana; Guinea and almost all her francophone neighbours are examples.

The removal of Kwame, Nkrumah, the president of Ghana in 1966, through a military coup detat, almost resulted in a state of war between Ghana and Guinea. Ghana severed diplomatic relations with Guinea because Sekou

Toure accepted Nkrumah as a joint leader of Guinea. This perhaps could have been one of the reasons why Guinea refused to attend the Accra meeting of West African Regional Group in April, 1967. Guinea also went further to allow Nkrumah the use of Radio Guinea to address the people of Ghana as a leader on the eve of Ghana's ninth Independence Anniversary. In this circumstance, Guinea repudiated the debt of 12 million cedi owed to Ghana because according to Sekou Toure, there was no legally constituted government in Ghana to which he could pay the money (*African Research Bulleting*, 1971).

However, Guinea made attempt to overthrow the military regime in Ghana. This development further strained her relationship with Ivory Coast which had refused Guinea's passage through her territory to attack Ghana. The result was that both countries sent troops to their common borders in readiness for any eventualities (*African Research Bulleting*, 1967).

Furthermore, war nearly broke out between Guinea and Ivory Coast when in the middle of 1967, Guinean Foreign Affairs Minister, Mr. Looius Lansana Beavogui and others were seized in Abidjan. This was a retaliatory action as the Ivorian authorities claimed, following the arrest and detention of several Ivory Coast nationals in Guinea. However, in as much as one would agree that such tensed political and diplomatic situations were, indeed not conducive to any multilateral economic cooperation, the question that readily comes to mind is whether Guinea was not making a diplomatic mistake in her action. A close analysis shows that Guinea could not afford to attack Ghana and at the same time defend her territory from the Portuguese and the Ivorians. Also since her intervention in Ghana's internal affairs had no much chance of success, international law demands that such intervention should not be conceived at all. In fact, it was even very clear that Guinea's man-power could not have sustained such ambitious adventure.

The relationship between Guinea and Senegal was not also at its best. This resulted in Guinea suspending her membership of the Senegal River Basin organisation on the ground that Guinea could not co-operate with President Senghor until such a time as his position would reflect the defence of Africa and Senegalese interests rather than that of French policy towards the African countries (Gowon, 1984; 154). Also Senegal's relationship with The Gambia was hostile in the late sixties after the former's abortive attempt to annex the latter. Thus Senegal realising her diplomatic failure, turned round to accuse the Gambians of being the cause of her economic woes, mainly through smuggling (*West Africa*, 1969; 435).

Ghana's relations with Nigeria was also deteriorating particularly after the removal of Nkrumah. Nigerians living in Ghana were arrested and detained on the allegation that they were terrorists, who had infiltrated Ghana to undertake sabotage operations, on behalf of Nkrumah (*African Research Bulleting,* 1967; 720). By 1969, Ghana had expelled about 2 million aliens, most of whom came from Nigeria, Mali, Niger and Upper Volta (Burkina Faso). This strained diplomatic relations between Nigeria and Ghana to the extent that tougher measures against Ghana were called for by the Nigerian public. But to a careful observer, the reason for the arrest and deportation of foreigners in Ghana, was not only political, it was also economic. The authorities in Ghana realized that the economy was declining and so felt that the strains and stresses on the economy by the foreigners were responsible. The point that should be made here is that diplomatic considerations should have guided Ghanaian authorities, especially when it is considered that the situation in Nigeria at the time was not settled, due to the civil war; and that the problems that would be posed by the rehabilitation of the deportees would be enormous.

Political rivalry at home did not also allow enough time for West African leaders to come together. They engaged in power struggles and suppression of opposition. The political rivalries were more pronounced between 1960 and 1966 in almost all West African States. In Ghana, the Preventive Detention Act of 1958 had to be used by the ruling Convention People's Party, in an attempt to bring sanity into the State. Under the Act, anyone suspected for subverting the state was to be kept in detention for five years without formal trial. In Upper Volta (Burkina Faso), Niger, Cameroun, Togo, Dahomey (Benin) and Mauritania, rival political parties were officially banned. Sierra Leone was not an exception as the Sierra Leone People's Party was faced with opposition from rival political parties (Afigbo, 1971; 192). In Nigeria, unhealthy political rivalries led directly to the 1964 general Elections crisis and the 1965 Western Regional Election crisis. These events along with other economic discontent resulted in the military taking over the mantle of leadership in most West African states. In fact, the crises in Nigeria, laid a strong foundation for the 1967-70 Civil War which shook the country to its very foundation.

Meanwhile, the Civil War occupied Nigeria's attention that as a leading state in the sub-region, it had little time to mediate in the series of conflicts in other parts of West Africa. The Civil War introduced new strains into West African relationship. The countries that were apprehensive of Nigeria's growing economic and political strength in West Africa and indeed in Africa as a whole, gave support to the "Biafran State", in order to see

Nigeria dismembered. Among others, Sierra-Leone gave landing rights to the air-crafts of the secessionist government, while Dahomey (Benin) had been pressurised by France into allowing their country to be used as a base for transporting supplies to the secessionist forces. Ivory Coast, Gabon, Zambia and Tanzania, by 1968 had all given diplomatic recognition to the "Biafran State". This made Nigeria to severe diplomatic relations with Ivory Coast (Ogunsanwo, 1978; 4 and Akpan, 1986) and resumed hostile relations with the other countries that recognized the secessionists.

However, the recognition of "Biafran State" by Ivory Coast and Gabon should not have surprised any careful observer of African politics. Most Francophone African States had and still have strong ties with France. Therefore, the apron strings knotting them to "Daddy" France have been too tough for them to offer any positive leverage to co-operation in West Africa in general. Thus no serious African expects much from them, particularly in the area of the African economic revolution. In this connection, Ivory Coast and Gabon were only carrying out orders from Paris. Zambia's recognition of the secessionist government is still a little puzzling, especially when one bears in mind the militant and antagonistic posture of Lusaka against Ian Smith's Unilateral Declaration of Independence in Southern Rhodesia and any attempt to subvert movement towards African Unity (Ojigbo, 1969; 278).

The most profound puzzle perhaps, presents itself when we consider Tanzania's action. Here is a state which had in 1964, invited Nigeria to quell an army mutiny that almost removed President Julius Nyerere from power. Nigeria promptly dispatched a contingent of its Army under Lt. Col. (late) Yakubu Pam and the mutiny was suppressed (Ojigbo, 1969; 278). Three years after, Nyerere was credited with a statement that further confirmed his belief in African Unity. That is, in 1967 speaking to West Africa, a London based weekly magazine, he stated that:

> We deeply regret the break-up of the Nigerian Federation, we are firm
> believers in unity and believe that a fragmented Africa cannot do as much
> for her people as a United Africa. Let us by all means encourage the people
> of Nigeria to maintain their unity (*West Africa*, 1967; 772).

Besides the statement quoted above, Tanzania and Algeria are probably those totally committed to the African revolution that is hoped will gain for Africa its rightful position. President Nyerere is one of the foremost leaders of Africa whom the younger African generation looks up to as one of the African political giants and who can lead the continent to salvation. But he betrayed the trust and pressed the wrong button by recognising "Biafran State".

However, apart from the comments we have made on the recognition of "Biafra", there is also a similar reason for the actions of such states that recognised "Biafra". Generally, the states were aware that the economy of Nigeria was based mainly on her oil and partly on her large area of land, population and other potentials. Also they believed that the strength of Nigeria remains in her indivisibility. Therefore, if she is divided, she would cease being a leading and influential state in Africa.

In this circumstance, her major export, oil, would be controlled by the secessionist government and this meant their getting oil at preferential rates to reciprocate their good will.

Moreover, even after these states had failed in their attempt to have Nigeria divided, Nigerian Government played the role of a good brother by extending her hand of reconciliation to her neighbours by selling oil to most of them at reduced prices and gave them massive aids individually in times of crisis. It can be seen from the above that the political crisis in West Africa from 1966 to 1970 was not conducive to cooperation.

The West African States' relationship with the extra-regional powers which led to the extension of power politics ranging among West African States is another political obstacle, dated back to the colonial days. This in fact, represents an obstacle to the maximalist type of regional economic cooperation. The African countries looked up to these powers for aid and often the aid is tied to conditions that left both their economic and political policies dependent on the wishes of the western powers (Okwuosa, 1976; 86).

All African States are guilty of having close ties with the extra-regional powers but the Francophone African States are more guilty. The French administered all their territories in West Africa as one entity. They enjoyed treatment over third countries with their exports entering France duty free. Any inequalities in Customs revenue between various states were compensated by the Federal Budget arrangements. In return, French exports to the colonies enjoyed preference over similar products from third countries. Also the four British Commonwealth countries in the sub-region had most of their raw materials entering the United Kingdom market duty-free with or without reciprocal arrangements. On their part the territories provided markets for British products.

Furthermore, the policy of Assimilation adopted by France in governing her territories had conditioned the Francophone West African States to regard themselves as French citizens that by independence, the countries were encouraged by France to keep their Anglophone counterparts at arm's length, while keeping the economic and political associations they inherited from her. Such organisations include OCAM, UDEAO etc. Most of these organisations were and still are funded largely by France and French transnational corporations have established in all sectors of the economics of such states. Houphouet Boigny, Ivorian leader illustrates this attachment to France when he says that "not only does French aid enabled us to develop, but thanks to it, we have a new sense of our own strength" (Gowon, 1984; 76). In fact, at the creation of the *Communaute Economique de l'Oest* (CEAO) between 1972 and 1973, President Georges Pompidou of France openly declared that the Francophone West African States should coordinate their efforts in order to counter-balance the heavy weight of Nigeria (Bach, 1983; 605-623).

It is reasonable to think that the Francophone West African States should have the membership of these organisations to their Anglophone counter-parts, so as to form a larger organisation. But this was never done, perhaps due to strict instructions from France. They saw the Anglophone West African States as enemies. It can be argued further that the Anglophone States would not have declined the offer if invited. Therefore, the absence of any initiative to this effect, delayed indeed, the movement towards a viable common economic organisation in West Africa.

Moreover, the period between 1970 and 1975, though a period of renewed activities and energy at forging cooperation, witnessed political problems which also affected movement towards a wider economic union. As indicated earlier, following an abortive attempt to disintegrate Nigeria, France thought that the best and perhaps the only way to curtail Nigeria's growing power and influence within the sub-region was to help rejuvenate the ineffective UDEAO, whose size, population and wealth would be equal that of Nigeria. Thus the formation of the CEAO from the ruins of the UDEAO almost put a check on the idea of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) because the CEAO states made all efforts to see that the idea never matured.

The CEAO became an organisation to guard against any further enchroachment by Nigeria and Gowon's attempt at promoting his idea of a regional integration across former colonial frontiers. The CEAO was also to ensure that any future West African Community would need the prior approval of the Francophone States (Gowon, 1984; 2860). This was manifested between May 23 and 28, 1975 when the ECOWAS Treaty was signed. At the Minsterial meeting which was to draft an agenda for the Heads of State meeting, the CEAO States presented a joint report that in principle, the aims of the two organisations were similar, they insisted that:

> this semblance does not extend to the means of implementing them, that is, the draft treaty was silent on the regulations and procedures by which the community hoped to realize its objectives, giving the impression that the document rather resembled a series of declarations of intent; that the provisions made by the ECOWAS draft treaty, for the poorer states of the region, was grossly inadequate; that more powers should be given to the new supra-national institutions, so that they can provide directives and impart some kind of impulsion to the grouping; and that the draft treaty was silent on specific community structures charged with promoting the exploitation of natural resources (Gowon, 1984; 336-346)

Some aspects of the draft treaty had to be amended on the basis of the CEAO joint report. The point being made here is that the cautious steps taken by these ministers save the day, otherwise, the CEAO States might not have signed the treaty.

Furthermore, during the period, precisely in April, 1974, one of the committed advocates of economic cooperation in West Africa, President Hamani Diori of Niger, was removed from office by Lt. Col. Seyin Kountche. With this event, it became impossible for the new regime in Niger to host the Second Ministerial meeting of February 1974. The Niamey (Niger) Conference was to have been the last before the Lagos Summit which ratified and signed the ECOWAS Treaty in May 28, 1975. Thus the cancellation of he Niamey meeting interrupted the programme for a wider economic grouping. In the final analysis, one should praise the subtle diplomacy of General Gowon and the good will of President Tolbert of Liberia for making frantic efforts to see the conference through in Monrovia the capital of Liberia (Gowon, 1984; 292). This directly led to the formation of ECOWAS by the Treaty of Lagos in 1975.

3. Conclusion

Inspite of the political obstacles which we have discussed, a West African Common Market was later formed. However, one should not be under the impression that politics of suspicion among West African leaders have been the only bane of forging wider economic union, there are also economic problems closely tied to the political obstacles. In fact, every aspect of economic integration involves both political and economic decisions. For instance, the removal of trade barriers within the community is bound to affect producers in varying degrees. The more efficient producers will prosper while the less efficient one which are unable to introduce improvements in order to cope with foreign competition will be injured. Granted that most of the member countries may embrace industrialization and establish industries which are at different levels of development. But given that different cost structures can be obtained in the various industries, there are several questions to be asked. How will less efficient industries respond to foreign competition from other member states which are more efficient? What will be the place of the infant industry argument in these cases? What will also happen to the workers in non-competitive industries that will be displaced?

Moreover, bearing the above situation in mind, it is natural for member Governments, especially the relatively poor ones, to resent any foreign competition which proves injurious to their carefully nurtured infant industries following the reduction or complete removal of tariffs and quotas on products of intra-community origin. This argument can be strengthened further considering the fact that there is no provision in the ECOWAS treaty for a temporary re-imposition of protective barriers if the going should prove difficult. It stands to reason, therefore, that if a firm is unable to cope with foreign competition it may have to fold up, but this would not be in the best interest of the affected country and so the situation where this may likely occur will be resented.

In this situation, it requires a lot of political and economic tolerance; and cooperation to see an inefficient firm eliminated by foreign competition. However, we should note that there is a limit to this type of tolerance because for political and economic reasons, every country would like to have a strong economy based on the principle of self reliance. These interwoven political and economic problems have combined to limit ECOWAS achievements, even though some have expressed the opinion that the question of achievement should not arise since the organisation is still very young. They even compared it to the European Economic Community which had been existing for almost thirty-five years without achieving political federation, though they agree that a good deal of trade is taking place among its members.

They argued further that if it is difficult for the EEC which has only nine members to reach political federation, it may be more difficult for the ECOWAS with about sixteen members to reach same. Therefore, they believe ECOWAS should be given a chance to work out its plans.

Finally, one can conclude that the amount of progress which can be made in integrating the sub-region, will depend critically on the political and economic will to integrate. This in fact, may be difficult to obtain. However, if the member states are really committed to integrating their economies, the prospects are that the objective of integrating countries will be attained. The obstacles may as usual only make the realisation of the objective longer than scheduled.

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