States' Attitude to International Boundaries and Africa's Challenging Integration: CUES from Pre-1945 Europe

Ariyo Sunday Aboyade

Department of Political Science and International Studies
College of Social and Management Sciences
Afe Babalola University, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria
ariyoa@abuad.edu.ng

Abstract

Since the 1960s, African states have sought ways to overcome the challenges of economic and political integration through the establishment and promotion of regional and sub-regional organizations across the continent. The different efforts have yielded very modest success altogether. However, it appears that Africans are the architect of the continent's low level of integration. Africa's nationalist approach to international boundaries coupled with the inclination and disposition towards economic nationalism with regards to neighbouring states has been identified as the major impediments to the process of integration in the continent. By adopting content analysis approach, this paper explores the nexus between the state's attitude to international boundaries and regional integration. This paper analyses how European's attitude to international boundaries and the resulting trans-boundary cooperation between and among the different groups of European states before 1945 was instrumental to the historic success of integration in post-1945 Europe. It further looks into the pre-1945 European experience with trans-boundary cooperation as a template for assessing trans-boundary cooperation among African states during the colonial and post-colonial periods. This paper concludes that modest achievements so far recorded in the process of regional integration in Africa is a function of the nationalistic attitude of states to international boundary. Subsequently, the study recommends that to achieve real integration in the continent, Africans and their leaders must change their attitude towards inherited colonial boundaries from their prevailing official postures as lines of divides to a more liberal disposition as corridors of cooperation.

Keywords: International boundaries, Trans-boundary cooperation, Regional integration, Africa, African borders, African Union Border Programme, Europe borders.

Introduction

One of the remarkable developments of the twentieth century was the conscious and deliberate efforts by political leaders to promote and intensify regional cooperation through the interdependence of states within regions on specific issues. Modeled along functionalist and neo-functionalist perspectives, it was largely aimed at achieving greater integration of regions for social and economic development in the long-run. Europe with its history of notable success in trans-boundary cooperation led the way in the process of regional integration by adopting various approaches, one of which was the promotion of efficient cross-border relations among states as a measure of reducing and eventually eliminating the scourge of negative nationalism, international conflicts and extremely destructive territorial wars that characterised the continent in the period before 1945 (Asiwaju, 2007, p. 97).

In socio-economic terms, trans-boundary cooperation in Europe before 1945 enabled the pooling of resources of some contiguous states for solving their common problems, promote regional development, encouraged efficient division of labour and allocation of resources through specialisation and economies of scale that gradually increased the interdependence between the states. Moreover, this promoted free movement of the people, goods, services, capitals and ideas in the region. The pre-1945 intra-regional cooperation laid the foundation for the process of integration that happened much later in the post-World War II period that eventually characterised the continent. During this period, some European states opted to cooperate in a number of areas beyond the allocation and regulation of sovereign rights in pursuit of greater development and economic prosperity. This innovative process was the precursor for the unprecedented revolution that established regional integration efforts in Europe in the post-1945 era.

Like Europe, post-independence African political leaders observed that regional integration would be a veritable mechanism through which the continent could collectively promote and achieve her anticipated economic prosperity along with social and political developments through cooperation and interdependence of states within their regions. Additionally, the mechanism would be a stepping stone in fostering unity among its peoples. However, African leaders have not taken cross-border or trans-boundary cooperation seriously as their European counterpart in the drive towards regional integration, therefore being accountable for the modest success so far recorded in the integration of regions in the continent in more than half a century of independence.

A statist approach to international boundaries by African states and the growth of nationalism among her people towards national boundaries with neighbouring states have gradually increased the distance between the adjoining states and thus promoting individualism rather than intra-regional cooperation built on collective efforts. Borderlines, consequently become lines of exclusion rather than corridors of contact, interaction and cooperation, as each state pursues the preservation of its sovereignty, territorial integrity and national interests with little consideration for regional/continental unity. This negative attitude to

international boundaries is anti-regionalism and promotes mutual suspicion, economic nationalism, xenophobia, etc. that has perilously discouraged and, in some cases, frustrated trans-boundary cooperation in the continent. The statist approach to international boundaries in post-colonial Africa is driven largely by the doctrine that the state is a sovereign entity inside its own borders and, as such, has total control over its territory and may employ that control at its borders on its behest. By implication, it thus means that sovereignty remains a major applicable doctrine when considering interstate relations in post-colonial Africa (Feinstein & Dajani-Daoudi, 2000, p. 5).

Trans-boundary cooperation refers to collaborative relations across frontiers or mutual exchanges across national boundaries. According to S. M. Solana, national boundaries serve a dual importance with opposing functions; while they are defensive in nature, by defining the contours of states' boundaries and safeguarding national sovereignty, they are also a point of contact and exchange between two or more countries and, as such, an area of international cooperation (cited in Scott, 1993 p. 39). Hence, some have come to regard trans-boundary cooperation as a form of international collaboration forced on adjacent sovereign states. Such cooperation and interactions are compelled to reasons not only on common interests in human and natural resources due to the shared international boundary but also because of common concerns about cross-border environmental/socioeconomic consequences including the act of God (Asiwaju, 1999, p. 1). In a broader sense, trans-boundary cooperation is an integration process that signifies a de-emphasis on the barrier effect of international boundaries. This implies that borderlines should be perceived as corridors of contact, interaction and cooperation among conterminous states rather than being seen as buffer zones between sovereign states and as lines of exclusion (Akinyele, 2005, p. 2; Feinstein & Dajani-Daoudi, 2000, pp. 4-5). Consequently, the interaction generated by trans-boundary interests in human and natural resources could result in conflict and war unless policies are put in place by geographically contiguous states to promote cooperation and peace (Asiwaju, 1999, p. 2).

Therefore, this study attempts to undertake a dispassionate examination of how trans-boundary cooperation in Europe before 1945 provided a vista on the proportionate relationship between international boundary and regional integration. Using trans-boundary cooperation in Europe before 1945 as a template for analysis, the paper examines Africans' attitude towards international boundaries and the impact it had on the level of success recorded in regional integration of the continent to date. The study defines and describes the concept of integration and regional cooperation to stimulate our understanding of the discourse. It also explores the nature and patterns of trans-boundary cooperation in Africa during colonial and post-colonial periods including the attitude of African states to international boundaries in the post-independence era to understand the level of success through integration efforts in Africa and the factors that militate against it. The study eventually concludes that the level of success of regional integration in Africa would be proportionately dependent on the attitude of African states to international boundaries.

Regional Integration: A Conceptual Review

The term "regional integration" does not have a universally accepted definition, as many scholars have defined the concept in many ways, according to individual intellectual predilections or school of thought. While some have advanced definitions that presented the concept as a process, others have described it as an organisation whereby it gives the impression that a study of regional integration is synonymous with a study of international organisation (Aworawo, 2012, p. 169). Nonetheless, the fundamental point across all definitions is that regional integration is both a process and an entity. This accounts for the reason the term has been used interchangeably by scholars in ways that reflect this duality. At any rate, integration has been defined as "the cooperation among political entities leading to the formation of a new centre and the creation of a sense of identity and integrated community" (Deutsch, 1989, p. 270). This process involves turning previously separated units into components of a coherent system. In a similar vein, some scholars have defined regional integration simply as the process by which states within a particular region increases their level of interaction on economic, security, political, social and cultural issues. Hence, regional integration is the joining of individual states within a region into a larger whole. The degree of integration, however, depends upon the willingness and commitment of independent sovereign states to share their sovereignty. De Lombaerde and Van Langenhove (2007) describe this 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" (pp. 378-9).

Regional integration initiatives, according to De Lombaerde and Van Langenhove (2007), should fulfill at least eight important functions, namely the strengthening of trade integration in the region; the creation of an appropriate enabling environment for private sector development; the development of infrastructure programmes in support of economic growth and regional integration; the development of strong public sector institutions and good governance; the reduction of social exclusion and the development of an inclusive civil society; contribution to peace and security in the region; the building of environmental programmes at the regional level; and the strengthening of the region's interaction with other regions of the world.

According to Karl Deutsch (1989), regional integration is "the attainment within a territory of a sense of community and of institutions and practices strong enough and widespread enough to ensure, for a long time, dependable expectations of peaceful change among its population" (pp. 280-3). In hindsight, integration does not necessarily include a new state-like entity. However, if the aim is to construct a supranational unit, the strategy must consist of four elements, namely maintaining peace; attaining greater multipurpose capabilities; accomplishing some specific tasks; and gaining a new self-image and role identity" (Deutsch, 1989).

Ernst Haas' view on regional integration is different. He did not subscribe to the view that integration does not manifest in a state-like system as stated by Deutsch. Accordingly, he argues that regional integration is a process whereby political actors in several distinct national settings are persuaded to shift their loyalties, expectations and political activities to a new centre, whereby the institution possesses or demands jurisdiction over pre-existing national states. The result, is a new political community, superimposed over the pre-existing ones (Hass, 1958, p. 11; Dosenrode, 2011). Based on Hass' definition, regional integration is the devolution of power or sovereignty to a new body, by countries who have decided to create a supranational body to manage and coordinate the objectives of the newly established organisation. Thus, Hass (1964) asserts that the process of regional integration implies "the tendency towards the voluntary creation of larger political units, each of which self-consciously eschews the use of force in the relation between the participating units and groups" (p. 3).

While Karl Deutsch considers integration as a condition in which hitherto separate units attain a relationship of mutual interdependence and jointly produce system properties, which they would separately lack, Ernst Haas (1971) regards regional integration as a process in which the actors voluntarily give up certain sovereign powers and evolve new techniques for tackling common problems and resolving mutual conflicts. Notwithstanding the difference in views, what is clear and incontrovertible is that the integration consists of a merger of separate contiguous institution and communities, usually within a specific geographical region, into a larger unit. It is within this context that regional integration is defined as the feeling of attachment to a region and the desire to promote its interests and development (Wallace, 1990, p. 24). It is against this background that some scholars view integration through the lenses of nationalism.

Literature Review: State Boundaries and Regional Integration in Africa

According to Diener & Hagen (2012), humans "are 'geographic beings' for whom the creation of places, and by consequence the process of bordering, seems natural. But borders are not 'natural' phenomenon; they exist in the world only to the extent that humans regard them as meaningful (p. 1). As a political phenomenon, borders emerge as a means of defining and separating a territory from others while determining the jurisdiction of the authority of the state and affirming state's sovereignty and the identity of its inhabitants. This was the strong feature of the territorial state that was created in 1648 and was eventually exported to the rest of the world (Diener & Hagen, 2012, p. 3).

The scramble for Africa and its eventual partition into the spheres of influence of imperial European power launched the continent into the European system of territorial-based state, characterised by "a fixed position in space (territoriality); supreme rule within a bordered realm (sovereignty); and allegiance or loyalty from the permanent inhabitants of the territory that superseded other loyalties." (Lee, 2011, pp. 59-60; Diener & Hagen, 2010,

pp. 1-14). Upon independence, African states held on to the conception of border as a hard line of demarcation which must be defended and secured. Consequently, borders of post-independence African states became 'hardened' or 'territorialized' due to rising nationalism and concern for national security and protection of territorial integrity including cultural and national identity (Ackleson, 2011, p. 245; Andreas & Biersteker, 2003). By territorializing African borders, the behaviour of most African states tend to gravitate towards defining and defending their territory even when they submitted themselves to membership of regional organisations. The statist, nationalist and security approach to territorial boundaries of African states created the environment for mutual distrust and suspicion – a major challenge towards integration efforts in the continent.

Issues of sovereignty, territoriality, and security with regards to border continued to challenge the process of regional integration in Africa. While others around the world have found ways to limit or check the effects of these phenomena on intraregional relations, they have remained active in African transnational relations. Consequently, regional integration in Africa has remained, at best, modest (Aworawo, 2016). According to John McComick (1999), regional integration, as a process, occurs when two or more states agree to cooperate and work closely together to achieve issues of common interest. As a process built on trans-boundary cooperation, regional integration is expected to blur the lines of territorial demarcation among contiguous states and facilitate close cooperation through collective cross-border efforts. However, the perception and conception of border by African states make it challenging for optimal attainment of the projected advantages of regional integration (Asiwaju, 2012).

In Africa, it is somewhat feared by both the state and people, that the regional integration process will not only blur the lines on the boundaries of their respective borders that separates them but also the identity of the state and its people. Furthermore, the nationalistic opposition against integration manifested clearly in the covert and overt national efforts in making sure that the lines of demarcation that separates them from others despite their accession to cooperative arrangements of regional organisations built on collective efforts, move towards achieving common goals. Tatiana Zhurzhenko's reflection on the tale of two cities - Lviv and Triest - in Europe is reflective of the fate of how nationalistic perception of borders in interstate relations have affected the processes of regional integration in Africa. The states are not willing to forego the borders or erase the demarcation. Hence, the process of integration has remained challenging and slow in the continent.

Trans-boundary Cooperation in Europe before 1945

It may seem imperceptible to look for lessons of regional integration and successful trans-boundary cooperation in the European experience during the periods before 1945, an era characterised notably by negative nationalism, destructive wars and frequent territorial adjustments occasioned by warfare and diplomacy of the great powers and their pursuit of

selfish strategic national interests. Anthony Asiwaju (2007) reinforced this view when he cautioned that "The lessons in European experience are not to be sought in Europe's pre-1945 history, characterised by negative nationalism, international conflicts and extremely destructive territorial wars… What must be of great attraction for Africa is that Europe is the region of the most evolved history of political boundaries, and the alternative provided for practical and fruitful experience of the post-1945 era" (p. 97). In other words, Europe, during the period before 1945 was that of nationalism, whereby the basic concern of states were for the sovereignty and boundary maintenance rather than regionalism and the simplification of the border effect. According to Asiwaju (2012),

The history of modern Europe, as homeland of the nation-state and its border problematic, confronts Africa with only one of two choices: the path of war and human tragedy, which constituted the emphasis in the era from the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 to the end of the Second World War… the option of peaceful cooperation characterized by commitment to regional integration and trans-border cooperation of the period since 1945 (p. 72)While this portrayal of Europe before 1945 as a continent notable for its extreme political fragmentation and a history characterised by conflict is incontrovertibly correct. There are also abound of records of trans-boundary cooperation among states in the Rhine area, the Nordic region and other parts of Europe during this period that served as a mechanism for practical solutions to solving mutual problems among the participating states (Asiwaju, 1999, p. 2). Indeed, these initial efforts at eliminating the border as a barrier and its promotion as a bridge between contiguous states were the first demonstration of the sincerity of purpose by European states to engage in a regional cooperative venture. Thus, the commitments to open border, free movement of people, goods, services, capital and ideas including the removal of restrictive border control to socio-economic engagements laid the foundation for the historic success that subsequently characterised the post-World War II European regional cooperation and integration effort.

Notably, one of the earliest forms of trans-boundary cooperation in Europe during the nineteenth century was the "Concert of Europe" established in 1815 by the Vienna Congress that reorganised Europe in the post-Napoleonic era (Craig, 1960, pp. 1-5). This was essentially an arrangement put in place by the great powers namely Britain, France, Russia, Austria and Prussia as a system to enable the great powers to cooperate on important issues of mutual concerns and for the purpose of consulting on their common interests particularly on the prosperity between nations and the maintenance of peace in Europe. The Concert System operated through *ad hoc* meetings of member states that cooperated on matters of security, politics and economy. This cooperative arrangement helped maintain peace and stability of Europe for about forty years until the Crimean War ended the cooperation and ceased conduct of relations in the continent (Ikenberry, 2001).

The prototypic Zollverein of 1834 is another important example of trans-boundary cooperation in Europe that promoted socio-economic and political interest between Prussia and the German states in the nineteenth century. The Zollverein was a German customs

union established in 1834 under Prussian leadership. It created a free-trade area throughout much of Germany. In 1818, Prussia began mooting the idea to create a customs union that would include other German states. Unfortunately, central and southern German states feared Prussian domination and this in turn formed rival unions. These unions however, did not succeed in attracting members. In 1834, Prussia formally established the Zollverein, and within seven years, it included most of the German states. The Zollverein levied tariffs on goods coming into the member states and distributed the income from the tariffs among the states according to their populations. The economic cooperation that the Zollverein created among the German states paved the way for their eventual political unification in 1871 (Microsoft Encarta, 2008; Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2014). This trans-boundary arrangement was the foremost conscious expansive trans-boundary economic cooperation by European states along regional integration line at the time. The operation and outcome of the cooperative arrangement obviously influenced subsequent functionalist and neo-functionalist perspectives on integration and, particularly, the principle of automaticity.

Another notable integrative venture in pre-1945 Europe that prompted a bilateral economic and monetary union formed by Belgium and Luxembourg in 1921 was the The Belgium-Luxembourg Economic Union, abbreviated to BLEU or UEBL. The BLEU was created by a treaty signed in 1921 but came into effect upon ratification by the Luxembourg Chamber of Deputies in 1922. The customs union had the objective of bringing about total economic integration by ensuring free circulation of persons, goods, capital and services through a coordinated policy in the economic, financial and social fields and subsequently, pursuing a common policy with regard to international trade (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2014). On the basis of the trans-boundary cooperation, citizens of both countries, were allowed to build or erect houses across their borders without due acknowledgement of the lines that separated them. In 1944, the bilateral economic and monetary union was later expanded to include Netherlands, changing the abbreviation from 'BLEU' to 'Benelux'. The plans for an integrative customs union between the three countries were agreed upon at the London Customs Convention of 1944 and became operative in 1948 (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2014).

The Oslo Agreements or Convention of Economic Rapprochement of 1930, are good examples of pre-1945 trans-boundary cooperation that promoted integrative tendencies in northern Europe. The agreements promoted trans-boundary cooperation between the Benelux countries in the coastal region of northwestern Europe and the Scandinavian states of Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland. Together, the states formed an impressive economic bloc in Europe that controlled about 8.64 per cent of world trade in 1931 (Olsson, 2010, pp. 17-19). The cooperation commenced initially as a trans-border economic agreement between the governments of the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and the countries of the BLEU, however it was later expanded to include Finland in 1933. Based on the desire to liberalise trade in Europe, the countries agreed to devalue their boundary and cooperate for the economic development of their region. Hence, the agreements were

designed to primarily coordinate tariff policies and promote trade among participating countries (Olsson, 2010, p. 19).

In 1926, a bilateral treaty of commerce was signed between Yugoslavia and Hungary. The terms of the treaty were essentially on trans-boundary economic cooperation between and among the peoples of both countries. The provisions of the bilateral treaty also permitted free movements of people and the right of residence to the citizen of either country with less emphasis placed on the lines of demarcation separating both states. The German-Polish Trans-boundary Treaty of 1931 allowed fifteen yards of trans-boundary crossing between the citizens of both countries, essentially making it possible for the inhabitants who settled in the border communities to engage freely in cross-border activities without much restriction (Strassoldo, 1989, p. 393). In other words, citizens of the border communities assumed a new status as belonging to "one country," following the removal of the barrier effects of the borderlines. Indeed, this demonstrated that borderlines are supposed to be corridors of interaction between adjoining countries, rather than lines of exclusion as prevalent in some regions of the world (Akinyele, 2005, p. 2).

The Anglo-French Union of 1940, which created the concept of United States of Europe, operated as a Council of Europe between 1942 and 1943, which was perhaps the most important effort towards regional integration in Europe in the period before 1945. The trans-boundary cooperation advanced greatly, devaluing the barrier effects of international boundaries and promoting regional integration. The Council emphasised and pursued the reduction of trade barriers among member states to promote free movements of people and established a common military and a high court to adjudicate disputes between the states (Urwin, 1991, p. 4).

Although sparse in degree and spread, the trans-boundary cooperation that was initiated in Europe before 1945 created the framework upon which the post-1945 fruitful integration effort was founded. Since the end of the Second World War, policy emphasis, diplomacy and international relations in Europe have shifted significantly from a disposition of war to an ever-increasing commitment to the exploration and systematic utilisation of peace, and economic opportunities engendered by trans-boundary cooperation and regional integration. Some of the trans-boundary cooperation in Europe before 1945 originated as informal initiatives, however, as of today, they have all developed within the framework of European integration processes. The concept of regional integration of Europe was indeed influenced by the experiences of local level trans-boundary cooperation.

Today, observers have regarded the European Union and the tremendous success it represents as a model for regional integration. Nevertheless, many are unaware that the monumental success in regional integration effort has had its roots and learning processes within the trans-boundary cooperation initiatives between the European states in the period before 1945, an era marred by conflicts and rivalries between the great powers. From the lowering of the barrier effects on border, to the outright removal of restrictive controls in some of the

cooperative relations, and the gains this process engendered among participating countries in some regions of the continent subsequently encouraged European statesmen to pursue regional integration along social, economic and political lines with vigour and commitment from 1945 onwards as a panacea for conflict prevention and as the facilitator of peace and sustained development. Remarkably, the post-1945 trans-boundary cooperation effort has resulted in monumental success, that it is often actively canvassed and replicated outside Europe, notably in North and Latin America, Asia and Africa as the ideal model of regional integration (Adeleke, 2006, p. 70). The desire for continental stability, prosperity and sustainable development has necessitated the consideration of the factors that underpin this success.

Trans-boundary Cooperation and Regional Integration in Africa before 1960

The elimination of the border as a barrier and its promotion as a bridge between states has long been recognised as the panacea for Africa's development. Unfortunately, the insincerity of purpose and half-hearted commitment to regional integration effort in the continent have been the limiting factor and the reason Africa is lagging in development. Before the 1960s, attempts at fostering regional integration through trans-boundary cooperation among states within particular regions had become noticeable. However, this approach was the initiative of the colonial European powers who partitioned Africa into spheres of influence that was replicated within the colonies. Undeniably, the same process was just beginning to unfold in Europe. Indeed, it was an opportunity to have inaugurated such an idea on the continent. The success of the pioneers' efforts was encouraging and should have served as a template for Africa's integration at independence.

Earlier attempts at regional integration through trans-boundary cooperation were noticeable in Africa during the colonial era across Africa. One of the earliest trans-boundary cooperation efforts in Africa was the establishment of the Southern Africa Customs Union in 1910 by Imperial Britain to promote economic cooperation in the region. The strategic interests of the British was to achieve regional economic linkages for greater exploitation of resources in the region. Nonetheless, the process had an integrative propensity to engender regional integration of Southern Africa through trade and free movement of people between the states of Lesotho, Swaziland, South Africa, Namibia and Botswana (Ojo, 1982, p. 77). Furthermore, the development encouraged economic cooperation among the states involved since the territories were contiguous. The success of the customs union between South Africa and the countries involved today attest to the earlier recognition for the need of trans-boundary cooperation by the colonial authority who founded the Union in 1910.

In 1905, the British adopted a similar strategy in East Africa. In the bid to harmonise and promote common law within the East African region, the British founded the Court of Appeal for all the principalities within the region. This ensured that no restriction was placed on the free movement of people inhabiting the region and permitted their engagement in

cross-border socio-economic activities. The British further established the East African Community in 1919 and the East Africa Currency Board in 1920 to promote its trans-boundary cooperation agenda for the economic exploitation of the region. As in the Southern African region, the intended economic linkage agenda of the British created a condition that fostered the process of integration aimed at binding the cooperating principalities into a whole. However, it was originally tailored to safeguard British economic interests in the region. The Currency Board was created largely to regulate trade among the principalities (Ojo, 1982, p. 78).

In North Africa, the case was similar to another British venture that resulted in the formation of the Union of Nile States in 1940 between Egypt and Sudan for the purpose of promoting joint benefits of the strategic and economic importance of the Nile River for both countries (Svendsen, 1968, pp. 54-6). The bilateral cooperative arrangement fostered peaceful relations and socio-economic cooperation between both countries.

In West Africa, the French also adopted trans-boundary cooperation as a strategy to accomplish its colonial interests in the region. For instance, in 1957, as part of its gradual integration of the French colonies within the region, the French created the Union Douanier de l'Afrique to regulate budgetary policies of all Francophone countries in West Africa (Ogunremi & Faluyi, 1996, p. 34). This development increased trans-boundary cooperation among the French colonies. This in turn led to the formation of a West African Customs Union in 1959 by the French, to liberalise trade within the francophone sphere and among the francophone colonies which engendered trans-boundary cooperation among them (Ogunremi & Faluyi, 1996). The entente created was aimed at a complete customs union and communication services between Ivory Coast, Niger, Benin, Togo and Guinea, which subsequently devalued the barrier effects of border among the countries to facilitate trade cooperation and free movement of people, goods, services and capital with less restrictions (Claire, 2005, p. 10).

The West African Currency Board established by the British in 1912 was another functional economic arrangement established during the colonial period to foster economic cooperation and regional integration. The Board was responsible for issuing the West African Pound to Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone and Gambia (Adejugbe, 1996, p. 227). These countries also jointly operated the West African Airways, and together owned and maintained research institutions, such as the West African Cocoa Research Institute, the West African Palm Oil Research and the West African Institute of Social and Economic Research (Adejugbe, 1996). The association between the countries enhanced integration within the sub-region, lowering the barrier effects of boundaries to promote cooperation among the colonies.

However, the integration of the West African sub-region was patterned to the interests of colonial powers, France and Britain, who operated the region as spheres of influence. Essentially, economic cooperation arrangements within the region were built around countries belonging to the same colonial power – Anglophone colonies were oriented

towards Britain and her interests, while Francophone colonies were integrated to serve the interests of the French. Hence, trans-border cooperation in West Africa during the colonial period followed an isolative pattern, a phenomenon that still affects unity in the sub-region in contemporary times.

A critical assessment of the trans-boundary cooperation in Africa during the colonial period clearly shows that the colonial powers were repeating processes that had been carried out in Europe before 1945. Although most African scholars have argued that trans-border cooperation during the colonial era was engendered to serve the socio-economic and political interests of the colonial masters, notwithstanding, there is little doubt that they equally provided the ideas and some direction for regional integration of Africa at independence.

Africa's Post-1960 Regional Integration Efforts and the Border Challenge

Established in 1963 and signed by the 32 heads of states from the then independent African states after the Addis Ababa Charter, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) was an important milestone in the history of pan-African thought and movement (Falola, T. et. al., 2003, p. 216). The founding fathers of the OAU were convinced that the problems regarding Africa's development could only be solved when the continent was politically liberated and the states therein politically united (Agubuzu, 2004; Aworawo, 2016). However, persisting and worsening poverty in the continent even though the OAU had accomplished its task of decolonisation suggested that a new platform was needed to address Africa's post-colonial integration and underdevelopment. It was against this background that the OAU was replaced by the African Union (AU) in 2002, following extensive discussion from the heads of state of Senegal, Nigeria, South Africa, Gambia and Libya (Ogwu, 2006, pp. 2-3). The transformation of OAU to AU signifies the aspiration of forming an African economic union that would work cohesively along the lines of regional integration, as in other parts of the world, such as the European Union (EU), North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) (Osuntokun, 2006, p. 108). At inception, it was clear that if the emergent AU is to succeed, the organisation must learn from the mistakes of the OAU.

The incessant violent conflict and deteriorating poverty in the continent after the OAU had accomplished its task of decolonisation, necessitated the transformation of the organisation to the African Union in 2002 for the purpose of realising socio-economic, security, political and development goals. Failure in its attempts to reach its goals have subsequently led experts to speculate that the root cause of disunity and conflict in Africa was a result to the ways and mannerism in which African boundaries were drawn by the colonial masters. Anthony Asiwaju (1999) captured the views of those that shared this sentiment by stating:

> It is generally lamented, for example, that Africa was badly partitioned; that
> African boundary were arbitrarily drawn with little or no regard for pre-

existing socio-economic patterns and network and are, therefore, artificial; that the boundary have led to the erratic separation of unified cultured areas and a fragmentation of coherent natural planning regions and ecosystem; that a great deal of Africa's current economic problems have stemmed from the division of territories into a large number of competitive, rather than complementary, national economies; and finally, that much of the continents current political problems have originated from the arbitrary nature of the colonial boundaries (p. 11).

However, none of the claims seem uncommon to Africa (Anene, 1970, p. 4). In fact, in Africa, as in Europe, studies have shown that there are parallel experiences of neighbouring border regions that have been partitioned along different official languages, natural cultures and histories, differing economic systems, incompatible legal regimes and similar administrative traditions.

Asiwaju (1999), corroborated the aforementioned and asserted that:

> This explains the close similarities that have been observed between Africa and Europe. For example, the Catalans, an ethnic group-neither French nor Spanish in the Cerdenya Valley of the Eastern Pyrenees, which is split into two by the Franco-Spanish border; the Yoruba ethnic group, which are neither French nor British, but which was eventually officially separated into present-day Nigeria and Benin. The Catalans in Europe and the Yoruba in Africa are but a few of the numerous vivisected ethnic groups or 'trans-boundary' people found across virtually all state frontiers in the two continents. Partitioned Europe and Africa are, by virtually the same processes, continents consisting of a multiplicity of state territories and state frontiers, Europe even more obvious than Africa. (p. 12).

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of the people towards national borders, which they have considered as corridors from one country to another rather than buffer zones.

It is clear that Africa's international boundaries are arbitrary and artificial, emanating from the partition of the continent into spheres of influence by the European imperial powers that included Britain, France, Germany, Portugal, Belgium, Spain and Italy in the 1880s. Nevertheless, it was after Africa's independence during the 1960's, that the African leaders at the OAU Summit of 1964 in Cairo, Egypt collectively agreed to respect their inherited borders in the interest of peace, stability and security of the continent (Touval, 1968, p. 101). The continental position on colonial boundaries, however, spurred irredentist and boundary disputes among neighbour states and affected interstate relations and cooperation. Four states had established irredentist policies shortly after independence in an attempt to review the inherited colonial boundaries which are; Somalia, Morocco, Ghana and Togo. Their irredentism ideology challenged the legitimacy of existing boundaries and the corresponding territorial apportionment that led to five major conflicts between; Somalia and Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya, Morocco and Algeria, Morocco and Mauritania, and Ghana and Togo (Akinyele, 2005, pp. 6-7). According to Akinyele (2005), Somalia, Togo, and Ghana argued that their boundaries cut across ethnic groups, which had the right to be united and governed under a singular state. On the other hand, Morocco wanted to enlarge its territory based on its historic right that includes all the territories which were once ruled by the Sherifian dynasty.

A number of disputes had broken out among states in Africa over disagreements on sharing trans-boundary resources. Water, oil, mineral ores and other natural resources have caused border disputes in Africa that has frustrated trans-boundary cooperation (Akinyele, 2005). Particularly, the confrontation between Mali and Burkina Faso over the Agacher strip in 1985, a region suspected to be rich in mineral resources. The prolonged Bakassi crises between Nigeria and Cameroon were essentially over oil, while Libya attempted to annex the Aouzou strip of Chad in 1973 for its rich uranium deposits. Senegal and Mauritania fought frequently over access to River Senegal.

The partition of Africa into several competing currency zones adversely affected the unity and economic development of the continent in the post-colonial era. As a result, the African states are still tied to their former colonial masters, especially in matters relating to trade. Even though there are different sub-regional cooperation initiatives in Africa, such as the ECOWAS, ECCAS, EAC, SADC, UMA and etc, trade between and among member states is less than 15 percent of total trade all over the sub-region in the continent compared to over 75 percent of trade between countries of Africa and their former colonial rulers (Omowah, 2009, pp. 15-17; Aworawo, 2016, pp. 24-28). This resulted from the lack of trans-boundary cooperation in terms of trade within the continent that to a large extent, affected negatively on the integration processes. Thus, the success of the integration movement across Africa would require tremendous and concrete efforts in promoting intra-continental trade (Ndubisi, 2009). Simply put, African states must look inward for its imports and exports.

One of the major attitudes shown by the Africans regarding territorial borders shortly after their independence, was that the policies of the sovereign states viewed borderlines as lines of exclusion rather than a corridor of contact (Asiwaju, 2007). This implies that borderlines were rigidly enforced after independence during the 1960s, contrary to the trans-boundary initiatives that were promoted during the colonial era. Consequently, this has resulted in the decline of trans-border cooperation in terms of socio-economic and political activities. The nationalist disposition of states toward international boundaries have given rise to the practice of economic nationalism that promotes the national interests of states over regional interests. Economic nationalism is a variant of nationalism that strongly contends with regionalism and globalisation. It has emerged as a powerful and attractive policy to press for national interests, achieve economic aims and preserve the autonomy of individual states in an increasingly interdependent world (Hobsbawm, 1992; Gellner, 1983). Economic nationalism has become a major hindrance to regional integration and the attainment of continental unity in post-independent Africa.

Throughout the colonial era, the restriction of movement was not rigidly enforced by colonial authorities. In fact, some measure of liberality characterised their management of boundaries. The overall presumption of the colonial powers was that borderlines should not hinder cooperation among adjoining colonies and engendered the free movement of goods, services and people within and among the colonies in the region. This accounted for the successes of trans-boundary cooperation in Africa during the colonial era, a practice similar to what was experienced in Europe before 1945. Conversely, since independence, the Africans adopted a viewpoint that essentially made borderlines a problem to their socio-economic development. In fact, in Africa, international boundaries are held and treated more as points of discontinuity and as barriers rather than bridges between adjoining states or cornerstones for a wider regional integration. The manifestations of "closed borders," including the unrelenting exercise of restrictive control suggests a lack of commitment and seriousness of intent on the part of the African states to transition towards trans-border cooperation (Asiwaju, 2007, p. 89). Although, the European community emphasis decentralisation of territorial administration and decision-making process, Africa seems to be on a trend towards an ever-increasing centralisation of border control in post-independence Africa. Due to unnecessary trans-boundary restrictions to free movement of goods and services, smuggling and other clandestine enterprises have been lucratively on the rise along the African borders.

With regards to the illicit activities conducted near borders, suggestions have been made on border markets, among the 130 identified from Senegal to Chad in West Africa, such as Idiroko in Ogun State, southwest Nigeria, Malanville in the Alibori Department, northeast of Benin Republic, Gaya in the Dosso Region southwest of Niger Republic, and a few along the Nigeria-Benin Republic border area, the Senegambia region, those between Southern Togo and Benin Republic, and between Côte d'Ivoire and her neighbours to the north (Mali and Burkina Faso), the Congolese city of Goma and Gisenyi in Rwanda in East Africa, the city of Chipata in Zambia near the border with Malawi and the border town of Mchinji,

central Malawi, about 12 kilometres from Zambia in Southern Africa. These border markets should be upgraded into international markets that provides the opportunity for registered and unregistered traders alike to freely exchange goods, services and technologies across the border to curb the rate of smuggling and other illegal cross-border activities that can essentially speed up the development of border regions and empower margin communities (Walther, 2014; UNCTAD, 2018). In an attempt to control smuggling and other cross-border related crimes, the operation eventually led to the closure of the border between Nigeria and the Republic of Benin in August 2005 (Akinyele, 2005, p. 7). Furthermore, the young men living in the frontier villages are found to be conducting illicit trade practices and smuggling, that subsequently created a class of wealthy men and women, whose position could no longer be ignored in the affairs of their localities. These are clear examples of the consequences of rigid restrictions that have served as obstacles to trans-boundary cooperation in Africa. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) conducted a study on informal cross-border trade as a factor for economic development and regional integration in Eastern and Southern Africa. The study reiterates the nationalistic nature of African borders that continues to act as a formidable barrier to cross-border economic cooperation and regional integration (United Nations, 2019).

The African Union (AU) is divided into sub-regional organisations like Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Southern African Development Community (SADC), East African Common Market, (EACM), Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) and Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), among others. Most of these sub-regional organisations pay lip service to the objective of regional integration, as most of the borders within the various region are still largely viewed from the nation-state perspective that stresses on the barrier effects of the borders. Africa is still in its infancy in its quest for regional integration, but it does require time and effort from all the states to attain the level of trans-boundary cooperation and regional integration achieved in Europe, like the formation of the European Coal and Steel Community in 1951. Fortunately, there are substantial evidence that suggest that efficient trans-boundary integration can be found in Africa today.

The Southern African Customs Union (SACU) portrays a semblance of efficient regional integration in Africa. This is a cooperation between South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and Namibia on the management of common tariffs, revenue distribution and joint monetary policies. Integration observed within SACU is the result of the continuity in the arrangement that dates back to the colonial period. SACU uses a common external tariff (CET) to redistribute customs, excise revenue and establish free movement of goods and services among member states without strict emphasis on borderlines.

The implementation of SACU's redistribution formula is tied to the use of the South African Rand as the common currency. The agreement between member states could be traced back to 1910. This is strikingly different from other sub-regional organisations, such as ECOWAS, SADC and EACM, whose policies on the protocol of free movement of people, factors of production and removal of trade restrictions across international boundaries

are still not implemented or practiced (Akinyeye, 2010, p. 149). There are no evidence that the adoption of the OAU Abuja Plan of Action in 1991 would create initiatives that can be implemented towards the establishment of a continental common market by 2025. Unfortunately, in Africa, too much emphasis on the borderlines clearly had a disastrous impact on the free movement of people, and the economic and social development of states. Moreover, this will continue to hinder regional integration in the continent until positive attitudes are directed towards the borderlines.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The need for regional integration in Africa cannot be emphasised. The numerous programmes and institutions established across the continent have achieved very little since independence. Essentially, borderlines are seen as lines of exclusion rather than a corridor of contact from one country to another by Africans and their leaders. This implies that the attitudes of Africans to the borders have invariably hindered the success of African regional integration efforts. For integration to take place in the continent, the African Union must ensure the conversion of the attitudes of states towards inherited colonial borders from their prevailing official postures as barriers to a more liberal disposition, and bridge the gap between member states and corridors of cooperation. In doing so, the AU stands to profit from the experiences of Europe, whose border problems pre-1945 was eerily similar to those in post-colonial Africa that were eventually tackled with notable success.

African states should ensure that international markets be established in border regions and upgrade existing regional border markets to facilitate economic development with adequate attention given to the free movement of people, goods, services, capitals, ideas and technologies to promote a more efficient trans-boundary cooperation and to reduce incidences of smuggling and other illicit activities across the borders. The study conducted by The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in 2019 on informal cross-border trade (ICBT) in Eastern and Southern Africa affirmed the need for establishing such markets by relaxing barriers on borders and promoting deliberate cross-border cooperation to effectively manage African nationalistic. Borders that are supported by the states would encourage informal cross-border trade alongside formal cross-border transactions that would generate significant non-farm income and become the catalyst for value chain creation and support in border regions and beyond. Subsequently, this would result in lower unemployment, slow rural-urban migration, and reducing or possibly eliminating illegal cross-border activities while empowering the population living in the margin areas. If border constraints are effectively tackled politically, cross-border cooperation would foster economic development in adjoining border regions with significant potential to help alleviate poverty, contribute to food security, empower the people whilst building peace and foster productive cross-border relations (United Nations, 2019).

Various regional organisations established within the continent must embrace a gradualist approach in line with the functionalist and the neo-functionalist perspectives whereby

emphasis is tailored towards cooperation on socio-economic issues before a political union is achieved. This would promote intra-Africa trade and reduce its dependence on Western countries, especially on former colonial powers. In other words, the solution to Africa's integration problems lies within the continent, particularly the willingness of the African states to cooperate with one another.

As Curzon has indicated with respect to the European integration experience, "the choice is between boundaries as factors of war and death and boundaries as factors of peace and life" (Asiwaju, 2007, p. 97). According to Anthony Asiwaju; "the choice for Africa cannot be the war and death end of the border equation". For Africa, the lessons in Europe's pre-1945 experience are not to be sought after as it characterised by negative nationalism, international conflicts and extremely destructive territorial wars. The tragic events that led to the disintegration of Yugoslavia should not be regarded as the likely outcome for Africa's multi-ethnic states. The important point that Africa can learn and eventually practise from the European experience is the history of political boundaries and the alternative provided for practical and fruitful experience in the post-1945 era (Asiwaju, 2007). This is paramount for achieving proper integration in Africa.

Indeed, the success of regional integration within Europe derived from an ever-increasing reduction of border barriers among states is commendable, although plagued with history of recurrent and most devastating territorial and border conflicts. The inauguration of the European Union based on the theory and practice of the 'concept of Europe without Frontiers' should shed light on the possibility of a concept of Africa without frontier. Africa's experience during the colonial era and the post-independence integration efforts have shown the failures that state leaders are required to learn from that are required to establish a more practical system that would devalue or eliminate completely the barrier effects of African boundaries to facilitate an efficient integration process.

In addition, regional organisations in Africa must seek to promote market integration through trade liberalisation programmes and devise strategies associated with the management of frontier disparities. It is crucial for Africans to address and adjust their attitudes toward borderline and continue to affect Africa's regional integration efforts positively. Thus, adopting the European's attitude towards borderline and trans-boundary cooperation will accelerate regional integration efforts that would drive success and prosperity in Africa.

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