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Research article

REGIME CHANGE: A BANE OF ECONOMIC INTEGRATION IN WEST AFRICA

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Abstract

This study is an attempt to explain the impacts of regime change and political instability on prospects of integration in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). These impacts are considered at the levels of negotiation and operation in the community. While the positive results of regime change and political instability are fully recognized, the study argues that the negative aspects have largely impeded the advancement of the ECOWAS. The military coup d'etat in Nigeria in 1966 and the subsequent civil war, in part accounted for the delay in the formation of the Community. Similarly, the slow process in the consolidation of the ECOWAS, in part, arises from the frequent changes in governments in the sub-region, occasioned by violent military coups d'etat such as those in Ghana, Nigeria and Liberia. Regime change often results in new ideological and developmental orientations. Also, it brings about new directions in external relations. Generally, these taken together have usually engendered negative responses from other ECOWAS members.

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Introduction

Although the fact that political instability tends to influence economic integration is usually acknowledged, it is hardly given any systematic treatment in the context of concrete integration schemes in the Third World. The tendency to treat it as given has invariably led to the neglect of its effects on integration systems in those regions of the Third World where political succession is hardly the subject of open, orderly and constitutional processes.

In stable constitutional systems where changes in government follow well established procedures, the position of major political groups on fundamental social issues on which a government may be called upon to act are usually well defined, so that possible policy direction on assumption of power by such groups can be anticipated. However, this is not the case in areas where regime changes occur through sudden, violent and unconstitutional means.

This article attempts to analyse the impact of political instability (narrowly defined here as sudden, unconstitutional and often, violent changes in government) in member states on economic integration in West Africa. Specifically, the analysis focuses on the experience of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

Political Instability in West Africa

Like many parts of the Third World, West African states have been highly prone to political instability. Since 1963 when the removal of Hubert Maga's government in Dahomey (now Benin) and the assassination of President Sylvanus Olympio of Togo signaled the dawn of the era of unconstitutional regime changes in West Africa, not less than 25 violent, successful *coups d'etat* have been carried out in the sub-region. Nigeria, Benin and Ghana have topped the list with five successful attempts each, while only Cote d'Ivoire, The Gambia and Senegal (out of the sixteen countries that make up the sub-region) have, up till 1988, escaped this phenomenon. However, like virtually all the other countries in the sub-region the latter countries have also had their own brushes with failed coups, or those nipped in the bud in the planning stages.

In most cases, these sudden regime changes have hardly involved fundamental philosophical shifts in governmental outlook. But within the dominant domestic groups, such changes do reflect factional struggles, and the ascendance of some factions over others. This could, of course, means some shift in emphasis in state policies, reflecting the material interests of the ascendant faction.

There have also been a few cases where new regimes have justified their actions by proclaiming a profound wish to effect a decisive redirection in the ideological basis of society. This, therefore, implies a redefinition of the goals and strategies of development. The nature of the revolutionary rhetorics with which such new regimes attempt to justify themselves to their domestic constituents, as well as the degree of violence accompanying the take-over

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process could sometimes determine the readiness of neighbouring states to engage in normal inter-state relations with such governments.

Finally, a new government's rendition of the national interest and the tactics adopted in its pursuit must also be seen in the context of the need to consolidate internally and differentiate itself from its predecessor, which more often than not, has to be discredited, the latter being part of the process of internal and external consolidation.

On the basis of the foregoing, the analysis of the impact of political instability on the West African integration process is based on three major standpoints.

First, policies adopted by a new regime may have crucial implications for the integration process. Such policies may introduce unsavoury elements into, or break an existing deadlock in, the process. But an important factor is that the new policy element is rather sudden and unanticipated.

Secondly, a high degree of violence associated with regime change may pose problems of legitimacy for the new government. The diplomatic sanctions against the new government which this may involve may be reinforced by certain member states with economic sanctions.

Finally, a new regime that finds itself the object of diplomatic or economic sanctions by fellow members of an integration scheme may decide to reciprocate the hostile action by initiating moves designed to reduce its commitment to other member states and the collectivity.

The particular form which issues have assumed in ECOWAS is brought out through an analysis of the impact of selected instances of abnormal regime changes in some ECOWAS member states. The period covered by the analysis is divided into two – the formative period (1972 – 1976); and the operational period, 1977 – 1985. This is to further streamline the nature and implications of their instances for the particular stage of the integration process.

The Formative Periods

The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) sponsored a series of conferences during the sixties for the formation of an all-embracing economic grouping in West Africa. The Monrovia Summit of 1968 would have crowned these efforts with the formal signing of the treaty of a West African Economic Community, (WAEC). However, of the fourteen expected delegations, only nine attended. Although this treaty-signing summit was rescheduled for a later date at Ougadougou, this did not materialize. The main reason for the poor attendance and the subsequent suspension of the treaty-signing summit was the absence of the member states of the *Entente* Council – Ivory Coast, Togo, Benin and Niger. But also crucial was the element of political instability which, in the form of a *coup d'etat* in Sierra Leone and a civil war in Nigeria, kept these countries away. This further reduced the ranks of those who would normally have been counted upon to support integration.

However, the analysis of the impact of a sudden regime change on the formation of ECOWAS must start with the advent of the Mattieu Kerekou regime in Dahomey (later Benin Republic) in 1972 (West Africa, 1972:150).

By 1970, Nigeria had initiated her own moves to create a West African Economic Community (WAEC). One major obstacle encountered at this stage was lack of interest and, in fact, active opposition by the Francophone countries in the sub-region to an all-embracing grouping that would pitch them together with 'giant' Nigeria. In spite of the vigorous efforts made by Nigeria to persuade her Francophone neighbor to the West, Benin, to render support for this project, the triumvirate that governed this country up to 1972 was decidedly of the old French school, and firmly supported the general Francophone stand, despite the high degree of complementary economic interests which she shared with Nigeria.

Major Kerekou's overthrow of the triumvirate in 1972 changed this stance. The members of the military regime did not see themselves as part of the fraternal political class that grouped together the old hands of the colonial French West African federation. There was, therefore, hardly any lingering feelings for the resuscitation of common institutions of the old days. Besides, this regime claimed to be founded on the revolutionary ideology of Marxism-Leninism and Pan-Africanism. Consequently, Francophone fratemity, including certain patterns of relations with France, where denounced as neocolonialism. (West Africa, 1972:850).

Most importantly, Kerekou's government took the pragmatic decision that it would not be blinded by sentimental ties to the Francophone bloc to the fact that Nigeria is more important to her than any of the countries in Francophone West Africa. The latter group at this point in time was floating an exclusive economic grouping to act as an alternative to the all-embracing proposition which Nigeria had initiated with Togo as co-sponsor. The pragmatic stance saw the defecting francophone Benin adopting the Togolese view that no economic grouping in West Africa can claim to be 'West African' without Nigeria's participation. Thus, as Major Alladaye, the Beninois Foreign Minister, declared with reference to his country's approach to West African integration:

> We shall not be bound by sentimental ties, left-overs from colonial days… I may speak French and the Nigerian may speak English, this is merely a technical problem. What matters is that I feel that Cotonou is nearer to Lagos than to Dakar. (West Africa; 1973:629).

Of course, the Nigerian – Togo grouping which marked the embryo community would have decidedly placed Benin, sand-witched by the two countries and involved in intense rivalry with her Francophone neighbor to the West, in a precarious economic position without her membership of whatever community Nigeria belonged. The placement of the economics of political geography over colonial affinities was thus a decision which the military elements that assumed power in Benin in 1972 did not hesitate to make in the light of circumstances, although their civilian predecessors clearly put priority on Francophone exclusiveness. In this case, the advantage of

Kerekou's coup resided in the removal of an obstacle to the process of West African integration (West Africa, 1973:630).

At two critical stages in the formative period, coups in Niger and Nigeria did not only impose major delays in the proceedings but also created obstacles which threatened the emergence of the organization. The inaugural Ministerial meeting for the proposed all-embracing WAEC was held in Lome in December 1973. This was to be followed by another Ministerial meeting which was scheduled for March/April 1974, in Niamcy, Niger.

This meeting was critical in the sense that it was to consider a draft treaty which a committee of experts which met earlier in Accra, Ghana had drawn up. But this second Ministerial meeting could not hold as scheduled due to a *coup d'etat* in the proposed host country. This was a major setback along the road to ECOWAS. Niger, under President Hamani Diori, was a mainstream Francophone country where the old guard still reigned. For her to agree to host the propose conference was a major victory for the sponsors. However, the overthrow of President Diori in a bloody coup before the conference could hold, presented a number of problems (Gowon, 1984).

First was the fact that the conference could not take place as planned, a situation that dimmed the air of urgency that had begun to manifest around the concept of an all-embracing WAEC after years of irresolution and uncertainty. Secondly, the news of the coup was not well received by other Francophone old guards, such as President Felix Houphouet-Boigny and Leopold Sedar Senghor, the two main antagonists to an all-embracing WAEC, and whose support was crucial in persuading Niger to host the summit. In the light of the changed circumstances, it would have been quite difficult to convince other Francophone states, especially Senegal and Ivory Coast, to send representatives to Niger, even if the other West African states had accepted the offer of the new rulers of Niger to go ahead with hosting the conference. The major issue, therefore, was to decie on another suitable venue. Although many countries offered to play host, the symbolism of Niger under President Diori was largely absent. Liberia eventually hosted the conference but not until January 1975. A delay of proceedings had to be sustained for nearly a year. That Monrovia could not exactly replicate the bridge-building role mapped out for Niamcy would seem to have been confirmed in the implacable hostility to ECOWAS which Senegal openly displayed through her stalling tactics at the treaty signing summit in Lagos, in May 1975 (Gowon, 1984:75).

The overthrow of General Yakubu Gowon in July 1975 cast another shadow on the fledgling community. The treaty of ECOWAS had been signed in Lagos two months earlier, but the important enabling protocols were yet to be prepared and endorsed. In addition, the institutions of the new organization were yet to be created and distributed among member states. In the resolution of these issues, the coup that removed Gowon from power occurred at an inauspicious moment.

Nigeria, along with Togo, was the prime mover in the formation of ECOWAS. The unexpected removal from office of the key individuals (such as Gowon and Adebayo Adedeji) who had more or less shouldered the ardous task involved in the creation of the new organization immediately raised the question of commitment on the part of their successors. Although the new government in Nigeria dispatched an emissary to some West Africa capitals to reassure them of continuing commitment to the organization, an important element was missing. At the treaty-signing summit in May 1975, Nigeria and Togo had been assigned the task of preparing the protocols which were very crucial to the take-off of the community. The need for the new regime to settle down and get itself acquainted with the issues surrounding the new organization led to inevitable delays in the preparation and consideration of the protocols, and therefore the effective take-off of the community. Contributing to the delay was the abrupt elimination f the personal element which had been responsible for much of the smooth working relationship between Nigeria and Togo. In addition, those member states whose membership of the organization appeared to have been compelled by the fear of isolation saw the events in Nigeria as some sort of vindication of their anti-ECOWAS stance (African Research Bulletin, 1976:3830).

When the summit for the consideration of the annexed protocols eventually took off in Accra in November 1976, the impact of the change on the Nigerian government was palpable in the proceedings.

First, with pronounced nationalist fervor, the Nigerian leader, General Olusegun Obasanjo, raised objections to the system of assessment which saw Nigeria burdened with nearly 35% of the organisation's annual budget. General Obasanjo's position was a clear signal for a more equitable distribution of burden, as opposed to the former Nigerian leader, General Gowon, who was very much ready to make Nigeria play the role of underwriter. Moreover, Nigeria's new leaders emphasized the need for benefits to be made commensurate with the burden borne. Again, this was somewhat counter to General Gowon's position which conceived benefits for the country on a long-term basis. Having had to travel the full-length of the difficult route to West African integration, General Gowon had become suitably impressed by the importance of distributive policies for the success of the organization. He was also attuned to the fact of Nigeria's unique position to anchor such policies.

However, as a starting point in the pursuit of 'commensurate benefits for burden borne', General Obasanjo demanded and got for Nigeria the headquarters of ECOWAS, originally meant for Togo, in what was understood as a 'gentleman's agreement' between General Gowon and President Gnassingbe Eyadema of Togo on the subject of distributing the institutions of the community. Nigeria further emphasized the issue of benefits in trying to get the summit to accept a weighted system of voting. Thus, General Obasanjo argued that voting power in the statutory bodies of the organization should be distributed according to contribution to the community budget, a position that was close to conferring veto power status on Nigeria in ECOWAS decision-making. However, with the other member states holding firmly to the counter position that voting was, and must be a function of sovereign equality and not that of the power of the purse, Nigeria had to drop this specific demand. The nationalist fervor of the new regime in Nigeria was somewhat appeased when the summit decided to modify the assessment formula to accommodate the country's objections, if only on a marginal note (Gowon, 1982:1367).

Of the five abnormal regime changes that had some noticeable effects on ECOWAS during the operational phase, there (two in Ghana and one in Liberia) precipitated crises for the integration process as a result of some member state's reluctance to fraternize with the new governments. The remaining two, both in Nigeria, produced mixed effects – intensification of national isolationism, reformation of integration polices and breaking of a deadlock in the process. We now turn to an examination of the effect of these changes on the integration initiative.

Ghana and Liberia: The Problem of Regime Legitimacy

The first and second coming of Ft. Lt. Jerry Rawlings successfully terminated Ghana's third military government and third experiment in democratic rule, respectively. Rawlings first coup in June 1979 ended General Frederick Akuffo's military regime at a time when the latter was engaged in an elaborate transition programme for the restoration of civil rule in Ghana. But what really invited the odium of the international community on the new regime was its summary trial and execution of eminent Ghanaian political figures including three former military Heads of State. Many West African government expressed outrage at this. Cote d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso imposed blockades on Ghana. In fact, Burkina Faso, the major source of meat to Ghana, cut off supply. Benin Republic also suspended her supply of oil and corn to the country. In all cases, Ghana's attempts to send delegations to explain itself were rebuffed (New Nig. 1974:24).

However, it was Nigeria's oil embargo that had the most telling effect on the Ghanian economy. Nigeria and Ghana are the largest and most naturally endowed of the former British colonies in West Africa. The pattern and pace of their colonial exploitation as well as political evolution are remarkably similar. In the post-colonial period, observers tended to see some continuation of this similarity in the political and economic fortunes of the two countries. Ghana and Nigeria had embarked on their (third and second respectively) democratic experiments in 1979. The terminal military regimes of Frederick Akuffo in Ghana and Olusegun Obasanjo in Nigeria drew mutual inspiration from each other in their disengagement plans. At the same time the presidential systems adopted by both countries were quite similar.

This similarity of circumstances naturally made General Akuffo and Obasanjo, and later Presidents Hilla Limann and Shehu Shagari, to draw support from one another. Thus, Nigeria reacted strongly when these arrangements were terminated or disrupted by Jerry Rawlings first coup in June 1979 and second in December 1981. The concessionary advantage in oil sales to Ghana was withdrawn. Thus, the 90-day credit facility was slashed to 30-days. Ghana was also told to pay up her accumulated arrears within a month or face total oil embargo. These actions, whose impact the Ghanaian government freely admitted, were repeated by Nigeria when Rawlings staged his second coup in 1981 (Daily Star, 1976:6).

As in 1979, Rawlings' second coming on 31 December, 1981 was a rude shock to the Nigerian governing class and it did not hesitate to communicate its hostility to the new regime. Nigeria's suspension of oil sales to Ghana lasted for two months. She equally demanded the immediate payment of arrears of about $150 million (West Africa, 1976:149).

While the various sanctions imposed on Ghana on the advent of Rawlings' two regimes had major adverse effects o the economy of that country, the most import adverse effect from the point of view of West African integration was that Ghana was forced to turn to alternative sources of supply outside ECOWAS. This was at a time when ECOWAS was in the process of establishing a free trade area in readiness for the more comprehensive integration stage of customs union. Although such arrangements do not usually cover crude oil supply, yet an issue was immediately raised, namely that the political and ideological complexion of a member-state government can easily elicit a hostile action from another member state that may compel the member with the 'unacceptable complexion' to find trading partners outside the integrated community, this is in spite of the abundance of cheap sources of supply within the community. Such a stance was clearly at variance with the concept of economic integration. The action represented a grave loss to supplier, customer, as well as the entire community. To the supplier, the deliberate constriction of its own market represents a net income loss and, therefore, a reduction in its general welfare. At the same time, if alternative sources of supply are readily available to the customer, diversion to sources outside the community may be attractive irrespective of the additional costs, if only to afford a protective shield against politically-motivated economic sanctions. This, to the supplier, could mean a market partially lost or, at least, endangered in the short to medium terms (West Africa, 1982:691).

For the customer, it represents a reduction in welfare for as long as costs may be increased due to loss or reduction in concessionary terms of sales and increase in freight rate due in the event that the new sources were located much further from her territory. Where the imported item is strategic or an important raw material, its embargo by an exporter could lead to a standstill in the economy of the importer or result in the incapacitation of a major industry. For example, in 1979, Jerry Rawlings described Nigeria's oil embargo as an attempt to sabotage his revolution (West Africa, 1982:693).

For the community in general, the net effect is likely to be a reduction in the total volume of trade, the net reduction being a gain that in principle accrues to non-community members. This reduction in the overall volume of trade may be greater if the item withheld by an exporting country is crucial to an importer's industry whose consequent impairment may be translated into supply shortages for the community. The embargoed country can always decide to reciprocate the hostile action of its fellow community members who, in all probability, may have already embargoed all trade transactions with the country of the unacceptable regime. Since an integration scheme hinges essentially on commercial integration, such a posture could certainly be a bad precedent.

The issue of legitimacy and its attendant consequences was equally well dramatized following the coup led by Master Sergeant Samuel Doe in Liberia in March 1980. This coup put an end to the oldest republican constitutional government in Africa. William Tolbert, the Head of State and then the Chairman of the OAU, was killed by the coup makers. The new regime of Sergeant Doe then proceeded to execute 13 leading politicians of the Tolbert government. These brutal killings had the immediate effect of turning Samuel Doe and his government into an outcast among African states. The OAU's refusal to admit Doe or his representatives to its Economic summit in

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Lagos in March 1980 was followed by his exclusion from the ECOWAS Lome summit meeting of May 1980. Although Samuel Doe had flown into Lome for this conference, he was refused entry into the venue of the meeting by his peers who had met behind closed doors prior to the official opening of the summit and decided that Liberia would not be represented. This action was spearheaded by Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone. Although President Sekou Toure of Guinea had pleaded the case for Doe's admittance with his colleagues (Doe had flown into Lome in company of Sekou Toure) the best the Authorityof ECOWAS was prepared todo was to set up a commission made up of the Heads of State of Sierra Leone, Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire and Togo to decide whether Liberia should be allowed to participate in the working sessions (Daily Sketch, 1980:1).

This action created the impression that Liberia had been suspended from the membership of ECOWAS. While the Executive Secretary denied this, he stressed the fact that some members of the organization were not ready to tolerate the presence of Doe in their midst. In turn, Doe's government reacted unfavourably. Liberia, which was one of the few member states noted for prompt remittance of budgetary contributions to ECOWAS, started to delay payment. Another target of Doe was the free Movement policy of the organization which had come into effect a year earlier. Many ECOWAS' citizens who had attempted to take advantage of the protocol to enter Liberia during this period were denied entry (The Punch, 1980:1-3).

The imbroglio was finally resolved by Doe's acceptance of the conditions worked out by the ECOWAS' Committee of Heads of State set up during the Lome summit to handle the issue. These conditions were:

(i) The release of Mr. A. B. Tolbert, son of late President Tolbert,

(ii) Release of all political detainees, and

(iii) The reinstatement of the French Ambassador earlier expelled by the new Liberian government for sheltering Mr. A. B. Tolbert in the French Embassy in Monrovia. Doe's government was only too glad to comply, and resume its commitments to ECOWAS.

As in the case of Ghana, the Liberian case indicates that the hostility of member states towards a new undemocratic government in a fellow member state may detract from the integration process through reduced commitments or mutual embargoes. However form the point of view of social integration some positive results can also result from the action of the Authority of ECOWAS. The obvious willingness of the Authority to show its distaste for the brutalities of Sergeant Doe's government by attempting to isolate that regime was a pioneer move by the Community in the area of human rights. Though the united stance of the Community did not only help to secure the release of many political prisoners, it may probably have prevented further executions as well. The position of the authority represented a foray of the highest body of ECOWAS into what could be seen as an internal problem of Liberia. Thus, in withholding recognition from the government headed by Samuel Doe, ECOWAS indicated the need for restraints in the pattern of military coups in West Africa and in the subsequent treatment of political opponents. While this could not be taken as a well articulated policy on human rights I West Africa, it did represent a precedent upon which a more comprehensive community Declaration on Citizens rights could be erected.

Economic Crisis, Coups and Economic Integration:

The Nigerian Case

By 1983, Nigeria was enmeshed in a fundamental structural crisis. The civilian administration of President Shehu Shagari had embarked on a mass expulsion of aliens, mostly West African as an important policy response to this crisis. The peripheral capitalist state over which Shehu Shagari presided had resorted to this measure in an effort to conserve foreign exchange, stem rapid unemployment and consequently impose some control on a balance of payments deficit (seen by the authorities as worsened by the mass presence of aliens in the country) that was fast getting out of hand.

When Major-General Muhammadu Buhari seized power in December 1983, this brand of anti-regionalism was pursued with military vigour. In April 1984, Nigeria closed all her land borders. The immediate cause of this was the change in the national currency which the military government had initiated. These borders remained closed until February 1986 – more than 20 months after the currency exercise – when that particular excuse could no longer be invoked. The action was now justified as an anti-smuggling policy as well as a necessary response to other criminal practices that were sabotaging the Nigerian economy and perpetrating a depreciative effect on the Naira.

Nigeria’s neighbours and fellow ECOWAS member states protested these measures vigorously. For example, Niger decried Nigeria’s ban on food exports. Nigeria made it clear that the economic crisis of the country necessitated the export ban on food items even to ECOWAS member states. The impact of Nigeria’s action was more dramatically felt among her neighbours to the West – Benin, Togo and Ghana. Trade with Nigiera, so vital to the economies of these countries, was virtually brought to a halt. This was further aggravated when the Buhari administration embarked on a mass expulsion of illegal aliens in May 1985. These aliens numbering about one million and mostly of West African (Ghanian) origin were expelled just about twomonths to the crucial ECOWAS summit at which arrangements for the second stage (Residence stage) of the ECOWAS Free Movement policy were to be finalized (NTA, 1984).

This isolationist posture, assumed by a country generally regarded as the core state in ECOWAS, created apprehension about the prospects of West African integration. Thus, when the Buhari administration was overthrown, its replacement by a military regime that was more mindful of regional sentiments was greeted with relief among West African countries.

The Babangida administration which came to power in August 1985 addressed itself to some of those anti-regionalist programmes which the preceding military regime had embarked upon or fortified in its 18 months in office. The new regime also re-opened the borders, but this was not until February 1986, some months after coming into office. What had amounted to an outright Nigerian opposition to the take-off of the second phase of the Free Movement policy of ECOWAS was also modified by the Babangida administration. But just as the borders were re-opened reluctantly by the new administration after a long delay, Nigeria's attempt to break the deadlock on the Free Movement policy took the form of presenting counter-proposals to those originally presented by the Executive Secretariat of ECOWAS. While the draft proposals of the Secretariat had sought a blanket right of residence for all categories of ECOWAS citizens, the Nigerian draft had conferred this right on only six categories of professionals. In addition, the Secretariat, (with the support of most member states and in order to prevent the kind of mass expulsions which Nigeria had twice embarked upon between 1983 and 1985) attempted to transfer final powers to determine community citizens' right to stay and work in the host state from the country of residence to the community and the home state of the alien. In contrast, Nigeria had this right restored and firmly situated in the host state.

In spite of opposition from some countries such as Ghana, the Nigerian draft was adopted. This was not necessarily for its inherent merits (although many member states were uneasy about the Secretariat's attempt to alienate their sovereign powers) but by the need to avoid frustrating the resurgence of regionalist sentiments (typified by Babangida's regime) in Nigeria.

The adopted draft actually made no significant difference to the *status quo.* The fate of the community citizen remained as precarious as ever. The right of residence and employment was also not applicable to the most mobile kind of labour in West Africa – unskilled and semi-skilled labour. Rather, it was restricted to a small category of professionals, who were not only vastly inadequate for the needs of their home countries but whose migratory instincts tended to be firmly set on greener pastures for beyond the West African sub-region (The Punch, 1986:15).

Thus, the real difference between Babangida and Buhari to West African integration was not so much in the substance as in the approach. While Buhari was blunt and uncompromising in his pursuit of what he perceived as the national interest, and thereby succeeded in virtually isolating the country from the rest of the sub-region, Babangida easily gained wide acceptance by adopting a conciliatory approach which conceded little but retrieved the country from isolation.

The similarity in the substance of the choices made by the two regimes can be linked to the conditioning impact of the structural economic crisis under which they both operated. But while, in the first case, the approach of nationalistic insularity was rather short-sighted in limiting itself to the economic crisis in Nigeria, the latter adopted an approach that sought a balance between the short-term demands of tackling Nigeria's economic crisis with the long-term needs of an extended zone of accumulation in West Africa for Nigerian capital.

Conclusion

Abnormal changes in regimes sometimes cause friction in international organizations. While a regime with doubtful legitimacy credentials may attract sanctions from states and international organizations, such sanctions would be more harmful in their overall effect if applied within an international organization primarily devoted to economic integration.

In West Africa where *coups d'etat* and their attendant legitimacy problems were not uncommon, sanctions may be seen as a peculiar hazard of the integration process, a hazard which will hardly be encountered in integration systems among developed countries.

Some of the cases analysed in this article indicate that some new governments installed through unconstitutional means may, in contrast to their predecessors, actually introduce new policies or adopt attitudes that may facilitate the integration process. However, this positive element which a change in regime may induce is a chance element, and the result may also have a negative bearing on the integration process. To be successful, integration cannot be left to such unpredictable elements.

The conclusion is, therefore, that abnormal regime changes, especially violent ones, are detrimental to the integration process. Sanctions which may be imposed on a regime, and the possibility of reciprocal action by a target country, may have adverse consequences for the community's industrial production, trade liberalization and factor movement in general. The objective of a customs union would be seriously undermined if lingering political ill-will and mutual suspicions lead to the erection of protective shields in the form of cultivating alternative sources of supply and outlets outside the community area.

Besides, politically-motivated sanctions may be necessary if only to show disapproval of those regimes whose seizure of power promote consequences starkly contradictory to fundamental human rights and decent standards of human conduct. Indeed, if such sanctions actually discourage the perpetration of *coups d'etat* that tend to precipitate legitimacy crisis in their wake, they should be regarded as beneficial for the integration process, and the country concerned.

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[10] West Africa, 7 July, 1972, p. 850. The Reason for their Absence was that the Project was Dominated by the Commonwealth Countries and would lead to the Permanent Subordination of the francophone Countries.