

The Dilemma of African Integration: A Critique of Post-Neo Functionalism and Governance Deficits

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Abstract: *The functionalist and neo-functionalist approaches to regional integration may have worked successfully in Europe to bring the European Union to the model which the supranational institution is today in contemporary international relations. But, this paper foregrounds the argument in spite of the great deal of efforts at regional economic integration in Africa for quite some decades now that it doesn't seem feasible for Africa to succeed with regional integration through the route of functionalism and neo-functionalist because of the security problematic in the continent. So, the discourse argues for a post-neo-functionalist approach to integration in Africa. Yet, post-neo-functionalist has the governance and leadership deficits in Africa to contend with. The developmental state in Africa may well come to the rescue to push the African integration process forward.*

Keywords: *Integration, Functionalism, Neo-functionalist, Post-neo-functionalist and Developmental state.*

I. Introduction

Integration theorists, international bureaucrats and even the world citizen-body are not far from the truth when they describe integration of countries. – some geographically contiguous and others quite some thousands of kilometers apart as predominantly mutual, consensual and self-agreed on given issues-fields by nation - states which are parts of any integration process. (Dougherty and Pfatzgraff, 2001:510) describe the integrative process on the world stage today as being born out of consensus or communitarian solidarity based on the development of shared norms, values, interests or goals of nations. This brings to the fore the core concern of nation-states or countries to defend, protect and promote their national interests.

The needs of nations which cannot be met by remaining isolatory have indeed driven nation-states to seek out their neighbours with the object to collaborate, co-operate and bond on generally agreed issues. They could be economic matters, political issues, cultural, military and security concerns. The integration concept and indeed, integrative activities of countries in the modern era have come to narrow down and give deeper meaning to the globalization process, which is literally turning the world into the proverbial global village or yet, globalization necessarily promotes “glocalization” which nation-states, especially composite and purposefully organized nation-states leverage on to achieve the goals of the welfare state for the betterment of their citizens.

Units of the so-called international system are moving towards cooperative arrangements as the basis for regionalism on the global political community. Thus, the World is witnessing economic integration, political integration, social and cultural integration on faster lanes compare to the pre-modern era or the middle ages. The integration paradigm has consequently made states to have interests in cooperative relationships, leading to mutually acceptable solutions to common problems that confront them. Such problems may be in the areas of trade, environment, telecommunications, migration, health, investment, monetary policy, airline, safety, fishing,

sporting activities and several others. Ideas are churned out endlessly on how countries could organize themselves in a collective or regional body or even reach collective agreements on given issues. Economies are coming together with the guidance of international law and norms to reach agreements and consensus. This buzz is not limited to any particular region or continent. It is a global trend. The European Union (EU) which started in 1957 as the European Economic Community (EEC), becoming the European Community (EC) in the 1980s with the economic functions diminished and subsequently became the EU in 1993 and with integration spreading from the original economic objectives to embrace politics, security, diplomacy and foreign relations may have set the standard or model for the integrative process blossom on the world stage.

The EU has modeled integration in such a way that integration spreads from the original economic objectives in 1957 diminished with political objectives and other social and cultural concerns coming to play ascendance role; and also with membership expanding from the original six – Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and Netherland to 27 members today after Britain exited in 2016. The EU had gradually transformed from its economic motivations to become full blast in nearly all human ramification including foreign relations and security concerns, a supranational hegemon, a loose federation of some sort.

While Europe moved from economic integration process and mechanism towards political integration, the African continent is seemingly moving from the search for political integration towards economic integration. Yet, as Africa takes off from the logic and language of politics, the much touted African unity – an idea which is yet to come to full realization due to governance and leadership deficits in the continent, it is intriguing to see how Africa is embracing the logic of integration. Events towards the end of the twentieth century unpacked an Africa that is not only struggling to attain political goal but also working towards economic integration. The trajectory witnessed emerging African elites and rulers working toward political integration and economic integration simultaneously. The irony is that the continent is bedeviled with governance deficits as most of African countries are labouring under very poor and irresponsible governance architecture. It may indeed be very difficult not to run the risk of being branded Afro-pessimist but the facts are self-evident as Nwabueze (2007:129) noted that there is progressive regression of the quality of governance, economy and human life chances that reflect the African condition in contemporary times. As far back as 1999, Adebayo Olukoshi had listed the combination of factors which crippled the African quest to escape from poverty and underdevelopment to include the following;

- i) decline in Africa's share of global economic activities – trade and investment flows:
- ii) a deepening debt crisis (The orchestrated):
- iii) shrinking international competitiveness:
- iv) declining revenue receipts:
- v) growing refugee problem:
- vi) human trafficking:
- vii) interminable systematic violence: and
- viii) increasing number of failed states. (cited in Nwabueze 2007:129). In 2022, the African condition has become more deplorable. Instability, conflict, violence, human trafficking, election rigging, poverty, kidnapping continue to define the African social space. The military, "The men on horseback" are returning to the power space in Africa. Mali, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Chad in West Africa are back in the quagmire of junta rule.

The ruling African elites are pushing on with the integration process – political and economic integration in the twenty-first century. While Africa cannot be denied the integration buzz as it is fashionable to do so, the discourse, mainly a library research, attempts a critique of on-going integration process on the African continent. It reflects on the origin of the African integration process, its long-drawn experience and peculiarity in history. Impediments like neo-colonial ties of the respective African countries, ideological differences of African leaders, primary products export-oriented character of African economies, low productive base of African economies and several others may well make the integration efforts in the continent very challenging but not impossible.

The discourse is organized around seven sections. Section two interrogates the literature on integration and some integration models and theories. In this wise, functionalism, neo-functionalism and post-neo-functionalism are reviewed with the object of understanding how these perspectives have explained and possibly shaped the African experiment at integration of Africa's economies and politics. Section three is a historical overview of integration efforts and various mechanisms adopted in Africa. Are these efforts able to produce the expected ends in the face of weak capacity of the state in Africa and the poor governance culture or legacy in the continent. Section four articulates the dilemma of African integration while section five is concerned with how

post-neo-functionalism and the developmental state in Africa can interface while section six discusses the details of the challenges and prospects of economic integration in Africa. Section seven concludes the study. It weighs the option of the post-neo functionalist approach to African integration but foregrounds the imperative of the continued relevance of the developmental state in Africa which must come along with good governance, responsible and responsive political leadership that can progressively mobilize the African citizenry to embrace the tenets of integration, especially, economic integration.

II. Conceptual Frameworks and Discussion of Related Literature

1.1 Integration

Cooperation among nation-states may well be an old fad or ageless phenomenon. Even in the pre-modern era in mankind evolution and development, humanity has sought cooperation and lean on each other's shoulders. In the post-Westphalian system of states, co-operations between and among nations have been increasingly modernized and intensified. Inter-states co-operations have come to be described as "regionalism", "integration" and even as "loose federation". International cooperation is a set of relationships that are not based on coercion and that are legitimized by the usual consent of members, as in international organizations such as the UN or the EU or in an alliance such as NATO. States may develop cooperative relationships as a result of their membership in international organizations and in what are termed international regimes, defined as agreed rules, regulations, norms, and decision making procedures, within which states seek to resolve issues and around which actor expectation converge. (Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, 2001:505-506). Similarly, (Snidal, 1985:923) puts it succinctly:

In the contemporary world system, more and more objectives of states require group action because of interdependence: monetary policy, trade alliances, or other aspects of security, such as non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. Even the idea of order in the international system may be seen as having collective-good properties. If there is some stability, predictability and regularity in international affairs, adding new actors may not diminish it, and it is difficult (although not impossible) to exclude actors from the benefits of international order and coordination.

The world, thus, has rationally worked towards integration to attain the common good of all humanity especially, the common good of the integrating states in a given region on given issues. Integration theorists, according to Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff (2001) described the integrative process going on in virtually all corners or regions of the world today as primarily consensual, or communitarian based principally on the development of shared norms, values, interests or goals of nations. This necessarily bring to the fore the core concern of states to defend, protect or promote their national interests. The needs and interests of nations which cannot be fulfilled by remaining in isolation or hermitic have indeed driven them to seek out neighbours with the objectives to collaborate, cooperate and bond on generally agreed issues or matters. It could be economic issues, political issues, security issues, cultural issues or for the use of common pool resources. Common-pool resources as Russett and Starr (1996:402) noted, are natural resources that do not fall under a state's sovereignty or jurisdiction. They include the deep seated, the high seas and their fisheries: outer space; the atmosphere including the ozone layer; the carbon dioxide balance; and the electromagnetic frequency spectrum for broadcasting.

Thus, the integration paradigm has come to narrow down, and give deeper meaning to the globalization process which indeed strives to make the world a global village. Hence, the so-called international system is moving towards cooperative arrangements as the basis for regionalism in the global political community. The world is witnessing economic integration, political integration and social and cultural integration. The integration paradigm has consequently made states to have interests in cooperative relationships, leading to mutually acceptable solutions to common problems. Such issues as experience shows include trade, environment, telecommunications, migration, health, investment, monetary policy, airline safety, fishing and sporting and other social and cultural activities. While trying to mitigate conflicts and not ignoring issues of "high politics". namely: politico-military and security concerns, states have tremendously leveraged on issues of "low politics" which include trade, environment, migration and others. "Instead of focusing on the nature of

conflict in an anarchic society”, Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff (2001:511), observed that “emphasis is placed on the circumstances, in which states engage in cooperation in *specific functional* issues in which they have common interests that cannot be addressed by the nation-state acting alone if all are to benefit. In other words the mutual gains from cooperative behaviour are held to outweigh the benefits from acting alone”.

Economic integration is the process by which a group of nation states agree to ignore their national boundaries for at least some economies purposes, creating a larger and more tightly connected system of markets. (Balam and veseth, 2005:243). Regional economic integration is the intersection between neo-mercantilism and neo-functionalism, representing a shift from economic nationalism to economic regionalism or from nation-state to region state (Aniche, Okeke and Ukaegbu, 2009:83). (Nweke, 2000:24-49) contends that the pervasive trend of regional integration has led to the emergence of a multipolar global economy and formation of regional economic bloc. Yet, the debate rages amongst theorists in international relations as to whether a theory of integration of nation-states can solely be based on the quest for a wider market by the integrationist states. There must be some political leveraging and control of such wider markets by realist needs of nation-states for their political survival as they integrate to create a wider market for the integrationists. Thus, some theorists, namely: Thomas Hill Green, Leonard Trelawney, Hobhouse, Emile Durkhem, and John Dewey rejected the concept of the unbridled market and any other forces that prevent individuals from joining together inclusive communities. (See Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff 2001).

From the interface of market forces and the imperatives of communitarian political system on which all people can achieve fulfillment on the basis of equality (Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, 2001:509-510) conceives of integration:

*as a result of political community,
or as a phenomenon that is
communitarian. alternatively,
we may think of integration as
a result of standards or norms
inherent in the cosmos or universe
a theory of integration could contain cosmopolitan
and communitarian elements. its
principles could be based on ideas considered
to be universal such as the inalienable
right to freedom, as expressed in the
American declaration of Independence,
and the communitarian idea that the
representative government, as expressed
in the U.S. constitution, is based on this
consent of the governed.*

Indeed, while most of the discussions on integration focus on economic integration, the point should be made as Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff pointed out that the political arguments for integration remain very potent. Though, the fundamental political problem of integration is the loss of sovereignty that occurs when nations form regional blocs, as (Balam and Veseth, 2005:246-247) argued “global market should become more important, the nation state has been caught in a dilemma”. States necessarily move from economic motives and achievements to attain political integration as the experiment in Europe leading to the EU has revealed. “Regional blocs, such as the European Union (EU) and the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) have the potentials to provide a foundation of governance to match expanding market forces” (Balam and Veseth (2005:247). Yet, the African experiment with integration present a reverse situation. The transition is from the political to the economic.

1.2 Functionalism

In discussing functionalism as a theoretical approach to explaining integration process, the work of David Mitrany readily comes handy as several other scholars worked to build on it over the years. He pointed to the growing number of technical issues that have come to define the twentieth century which could only be resolved by cooperative actions of states across international boundaries. He reasoned that such issues could be addressed by highly trained specialists, rather than by politicians who by their professional backgrounds, generally lacked technical skills. Mitrany emphasized cooperation among states to find solutions according to a specific need or function with the basis to create a web of cooperation leading to the formation and strengthening of international regimes and institutions (Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, 2001:512).

The assumptions of Mitrany include the fact that the more successful cooperation was in one functional setting, the greater would be the incentive for collaboration in other fields. Also, he argued that a cooperative learning process would enable the actors to replace mutual suspicion with growing trust overtime that would extend to other sectors beyond that in which integration was already taking place. The main thrusts of his arguments are that cooperation in a sector of perceived need in the functional task would in itself contribute to a change in attitudes in favour of even greater cooperation over a widening spectrum of issues; also, that such a process would not only broaden and deepen the sectors of cooperation, but diminish prospects for and eventually eliminate war by transforming attitudes and creating norms of peaceful rather than warlike behaviour, and that from functional cooperation would create the essential basis for institutions in the form of international organizations and regimes based on multilateralism that would ultimately diminish the importance and relevance of the nation states (Dourgherty and Pfaltzgraff; 2001;512).

2.3 Neo-functionalism

Neo-functionalism is the theoretical descent of David Mitrany's functionalist theory. Its leading adherents include Ernst Haas, Leon Lindberg, Joseph Nye, Robert Keohane, Phillippe Schmitter and several others whose main concern were the European integration process which birthed the European Union (EU). The neo-functionalists emphasized on the role of political parties and interest groups and the extent to which political elites in the units to be integrated support or oppose integration. Within its EU contexts, this neo-functionalists considered a great deal an integration process that initially include specific tasks but has the potential to expand into other sectors possibly leading to a political union of some kind (Dourgherty and Pfaltzgraff; 2001;512-513). Malcolm Shaw points out that it was in Europe that regionalism became most constructive and political:

The basis of the union (formerly the European Community) lies in furthering economic integration and possibly in the longer term, political union. The EU aims at establishing a single unified market with common external tariffs and the elimination of internal tariffs and quotas and it promotes free movement of capital and labour. There also exists a Common Agricultural policy and a series of association agreements with Third World countries under Yaounde, Arusha and Lome Conventions (Shaw, 2003:1173)

From the works of Ernst Haas and Joseph Nye, neo-functionalism's assumptions on the integration process come out visibly. Haas assumed that integration proceeds as a result of the work of relevant elites in the government and private sectors, who support integration for essentially pragmatic reasons, such as the expectation that the removal of trade barriers will increase markets and profits.

Elites anticipating that they will gain from activity within a supranational organizational framework are likely to seek out similarly minded elites with whom to cooperate across national frontiers. There is gradual politicization of the actors' purposes which were initially considered "technical" or "noncontroversial" as Mitrany had stipulated. As integration process grows and proceeds successfully, the actors become politicized because in response to initial technical purposes, they agree to consider the spectrum of means considered appropriate to attain them. Thus, according to Haas the elites and specialists played an indispensable although not exclusive role in the integration process. Beyond such elites, outside the various governments were the official leaders themselves who in some cases supported and at other times opposed European Integration (Dourgherty and Pfaltzgraff; 2001;513).

Joseph Nye developed a neo-functional theory of integration process that seek to analyze integration in both European and non-western countries and modified the ideas of politicization and spillover of the integration in the works of Ernst Hass and David Mitrany. Nye developed a Neo-functional mechanism and "integrative potential" which can explain the integration process in Western and Non-western countries. He identified seven "process mechanisms" around which he reformulated neo-functionalism. The process mechanisms are: (i) functionalist linkage of tasks or the concept of spillover (ii) rising transactions (iii) deliberate linkages and coalition formation (iv) elite association (v) Regional group formation (vi) ideological

and identitive appeal and (vii) involvement of external actors in the process. Nye also identified the “integrative potential” that are stimulated by the process mechanism to bring integration to fruition. These are (i) symmetry or economic equality of units (ii) elite value complementarity (iii) existence of pluralism and (iv) capacity of member states to adapt and respond (see Dourgherty and Pfaltzgraff; 2001;512-543).

III. A Historical Overview of African Integration or Regional Integration in Africa

Historically, integration in Africa preceded European colonialism and as well predated European integration. Chronologically, integration in Africa has undergone three important phases such as the first phase or phase one (the era of Islamisation or Arab colonialism), the second phase or phase two (the era of Diaspora Pan- Africanism or traditional Pan- Africanism), and the third phase or phase three (the era of modern pan- Africanism) (Okafor and Aniche 2017: 63).

The first phase of integration in Africa started as early as 10th century or even earlier with the gradual but steady Islamisation of the continent under Arab colonialism. From the coasts of the Mediterranean and the Red Sea to the coasts of the Atlantic and India Oceans or from Saharan Africa (covering the whole of North Africa) to Sub-Saharan Africa, the rampaging and marauding Arabs continued the conquest and Islamisation of Africa. Thus, this first phase was more in religious sphere or rather was essentially though not exclusively in religious realm. This was incidentally halt or rather curtailed by European penetration or incursion into Africa between 18th and 19th centuries. In the scramble for Africa, the various European powers defeated Arabs (both Islamised and yet to be Islamised African kingdoms) culminating in Berlin Conference (1884 – 1885), and subsequent European colonialism (Coleman, 1958, 41).

The second Phase of integration in Africa was the era of early or traditional Pan- Africanism during European colonialism in the late 18th and 19th centuries. This was spearheaded or pioneered by Diaspora Africans in the continents of Americas and Europe like Henry Sylvester Williams, Edward Wilmot Blyden, Marcus Garvey, W. E. B. duBois, Malcolm X, among others. The aims were to unite all people of African descent both those in Africa and those in Diaspora in American continents and Europe to tackle racial discrimination and segregation, racism, colonialism, imperialism alien religion and slavery against blacks; and pursue freedom, self-determination, self- government, independence and de-colonialism for Africa (Coleman, 1958:187). This phase two of integration in Africa, also known as black nationalism or Afrocentrism, is more in socio-cultural and political spheres (Okafor Aniche, 2017: 64).

The third phase of African Integration began in the 20th century particularly in the 1960s with the unification of various blocs (namely: Brazzaville, Casablanca, and Monrovia blocs) culminating in the establishment of Organization of African Unity(OAU) in 1963 now African Union (AU) since 2001 and Abuja Treaty of 1991 that gave birth to African Economic Community (AEC). This was led by African leaders such as Haile Selassie, Julius Nyerere, Ahmed Sekou Toure, Kwame Nkrumah, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Muammar Gaddafi, among others. The aims were to achieve the unification of Africa and integration of the fragmented African economies through the fight against neo- colonialism, Apartheid and white minority rule, especially in South Africa, Lesotho, Zimbabwe, etc, movement for Africa renaissance, African revivalism, revival of African culture, philosophy, religion, arts, science, technology, ideology, community heritage, African socialism, African democracy and African welfarism, and the struggle for decolonization and independence of the remaining African territories under colonial rule like Namibia, Angola, Mozambique, etc. It also condemns dependency and stresses the need for collective self- reliance (Sherwood, 2012:111).

Thus, the post- independence integration or post-colonial regionalism in Africa began with the establishment of OAU in May 1963. The other major initiatives include the adoption of the Lagos Plan of Action in 1980 and the Final Act of Lagos, and the signing of the 1991 Abuja Treaty. The Treaty entered into force on May12, 1994. The recognized regional economic communities (AEC) include Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa(COMESA), East African community (EAC), Economic community of Central African States (ECCAS), Community of Sahel- Saharan States (CENSAD), Intergovernmental Authority and Development (IGAD) and Arab Maghreb Union (AMU). Since then, little progress has been recorded in the process of Pan-African integration (Okeke and Aniche, 2012:13).

Even as the AEC Roadmap or Treaty frame-work did not originally provide for a continental free trade area (CFTA) in its targets or goals (ie, free trade area in 2019, custom union in 2019, single or common market in 2023, currency or monetary union in 2028, visa free and borderless Africa, political union in 2028, and defence Pact). However, the AU summit decision to establish the CFTA in November 2010 was to remedy this lacuna or missing link in the Abuja Treaty (Okafor and Aniche, 2017:65).

IV. The dilemma of African Integration

4.1 Regional Integration in Africa as a critique of Neo-functionalism

The phase three of African integration is remarkably different from the two previous phases of integration in the continent. First, it emanated from Africa and represents the first attempt by Africans to integrate its territories. The first phase as noted earlier was imposed from outside Africa (specifically the Arabs) while the second phase was spearheaded by Diaspora Africans. Secondly, as a corollary from the above or as a consequence of it, the third phase is properly referred to as “African Integration” unlike the first and second phases that were appropriately called “Integration in Africa”. Thirdly, and most important, is that phase three of African Integration is more in economic sphere with the target of ultimately embracing other spheres like political, security, social-cultural, etc, whereas the first and second phases were more on religious and socio-cultural cum political spheres respectively. Also, from African historical perspective, the third phase of African integration as currently modeled after European integration, neo- functionalism and civilization is a modern integration or neo-integrationism while the first phase of integration in Africa was based on the classical integration of Arabian Islamic tradition or civilization just as the second phase of integration in Africa represented the neo- classical integrationism revolving around African cultural revival and civilization.

Consequently, African integration is today targeted at regionalism or continentalism through regional integration and democratic reforms; and struggle against military rule and authoritarian regime type or agitations for multiparty democracy modeled after neo-functionalism. However, neo-functionalism and its revised version, neo-neo-functionalism, are essentially theories of European integration (Gehring, 1996:238), (Haas, 1976:173), (Laursen, 2008: 21), (McGowan, 2007: 17), (Niemann and Schmitter, 2009: 45), (Schmitter, 1969: 166) all made this point on the European essence of neo functionalism and its revised version. For Europe, convergent national interest forms the basis for the interstate bargains. In support of this proposition, it is suggested that the EU has developed supranational decision-making process that is the result of agreements or bargains reached at the intergovernmental level. Thus, the focus on integration in its supranational, neo-functional dimension has often contended with an emphasis on an intergovernmental, neorealist perspective (Dougherty and Afaltzgraff, 2001: 545).

Therefore, these theories are not apt to explain the defects, failures and drawbacks of African integration. Most European countries that adopted neo-functional approach to regional integration that resulted to European Union (EU) have transcended problems of national unity, de-industrialization, national security, etc (Aniche, 2015:47). This is why European integration as embedded in neo-functionalism did not prioritized security at onset of European Union. Similarly, the third phase of African integration under AEC set defence and security facts as its last targets when it should actually be the other way round given the huge security challenges confronting the continent as occasioned by internal centrifugal forces of sub- nationalism or disintegrative nationalism.

The explanatory value of neofunctionalism suffered a serious setback as a result of shortcomings or unpredictable trajectory of the upsurge of nationalism in the European Union such that many of its proponents and exponents began to question it. (Hoffman, 1966: 862), (Schmitter, 1970:836) and (Tranhelm- Mikkelsen, 1991:22) have done so in their respective works. The most recent example is the outcome of the June 23 2016 Brexit Referendum (Chadha, 2016:8). Thus, there is the need to deconstruct neo-functionalism in the quest for paradigm shift in African integration. The point is that neo- functionalism has many defects and while assuming that regional integration is a gradual process, its conception of integration as a linear process makes explanation of setbacks or shortcomings impossible (Haas, 1976:173), (Schmitter, 1969:166). Another defect is that neo-functionalism assumes that integration of states is an integration of interdependence, and therefore , not adequate for explaining the incidence of dependence of African economies on Western economies and integration of dependence of the African States to another (Aniche, 2014: 131).

This study contemplates the imperative of evolving a fourth phase of African integration which should be anchored on neo-neo- integrationism or post-neo-functionalism or post-neo-nationalism which emphasizes the initial integration on security matters through post-nationalism given the enormous security challenges confronting Africa with subsequent and gradual phase of integration on economic and political spheres after many years of nation building, national integration, and national development through neo-nationalism or a combination of political and economic nationalism- driven by the people or private sector (rather than the government or the public sector) through humanism. Actually, Post-neo-functionalism is a hybrid of neo-nationalism, post-nationalism and humanism (Aniche, 2015:50).

But, there are fundamental problems of the subsisting political economy in Africa which is rather chaotic than been actually feasible as a public sector or private sector –led economy. Can we in the real sense talk of an

organized productive private sector in Africa today? May be there are isolated cases in South Africa, Egypt or one or two African countries which can boast of a truly productive private sector-led economy that can drive integration process of the African economies without a substantial role of the state? We are not likely to find a good number of viable and productive private sector-led economies in Africa today? Thus, the idea of a post-neo-functionalist approach to African integration may well be something in the distant future if not mere wishful thinking in light of the poor productive base of the African economies and near absence of the much touted private sector in Africa today. Therefore, can Africa redress the avalanche of setbacks without the developmental state in Africa? Can African countries address the huge governance and leadership deficits in the continent to be able to leverage on post-neo-functionalist approach to integration of the continent's economies? We shall return to the arguments for a post-neo-functionalist approach to African integration.

4.2 Trade Constraints in contemporary Africa

Intra-African trade has consistently remained low, approximately averaging 10 percent. Over 80 percent of imports and exports of African states are destined for markets outside the continent. While intra-regional trade in other regions of the world such as EU is over 60 percent, North America is 40 percent – all much higher than Africa. The efforts of regional economic communities (REC) in Africa though substantial and laudable have had limited or marginal impact on intra-African trade. It has been noted that Africa does not trade with itself because of differences in trade regimes, restrictive customs procedures; administrative bureaucratic and technical barriers; limited productive capacity; inadequate trade-related infrastructure, trade finance and trade information; lack of factor market integration and inadequate focus on internal market issues. But it is important to point out that generally, the share of Africa in the global trade in 2010 is very poor, at about 4 percent (Okafor and Aniche, 2017: 66).

Africa is currently facing a number of trade-related challenges such as low share in world exports and low intra-African trade, poor trade infrastructure and supply-side constraints, lack of export diversification, and tariff and non-tariff barriers. The share of Africa's exports in total world exports is only about 4 percent. Essentially, African exports are directed outside the continent. The structure of Africa's exports to the rest of the world reflects market concentration in primary products to just a few partners; the EU and the US, receiving 42.8 percent and 18.1 percent respectively in 2010. For example, oil exporting African countries like Angola, Gabon, Libya, Nigeria, etc are among the least diversified African countries in terms of exports (Aniche, 2014:139).

The average protection rate of Africa is 8.7% For example, Ethiopia imposes an average tariff of 13.3 percent on its imports coming from other African countries and faces an average tariff of 19.5 percent on its exports to the rest of Africa. This means that Ethiopia is on average more protectionist than the rest of Africa adopting an average of 4.6 percent point higher tariff on its imports from the continent (Okafor and Aniche, 2017: 67).

With average protection rate of 9.5 percent faced by African countries on their exports to non-African partners and 12.4 percent on Africa's exports to African countries, African countries face a higher protection rates from another than from non-African countries. At the country level, trade barriers (TBs) imposed are considerably different and extremely complex and heterogeneous. For example, Swaziland faces the highest average tariff when exporting its agricultural products to non-African countries at 96.7 percent; Seychelles imposes the highest average tariff on agricultural products imported from Africa at 53.6 percent. Yet, the higher intra-African trade protection rate partly explains the low levels of intra-regional trade in Africa (Aniche, 2014: 140).

Several reasons account for low intra-African trade. The production and export structures of most African economies are geared towards primary products such as minerals, timber, coffee, cocoa and other raw materials for which demand is externally oriented. Inadequate infrastructure remains one of the chief obstacles to intra-African trade and investment, and private sector development. This limits the range of products African countries can trade among themselves. In other words, intra-African trade is weak partly because fundamental aspects of trade logistics such as infrastructures like transport, energy, information and communication (ICT), etc, are compromised. Trade constraints such as poor infrastructures make trade physically difficult if not impossible no matter the trade regime (Okafor and Anichie, 2012: 67).

Therefore, apart from TBs, many non-trade barriers (NTBs) limit African trade such as lengthy custom procedures, sanitary and phyto-sanitary measures, product standards, anti-dumping measures, countervailing duties and licensing. The point being made is that TBs are not the sole constraints to trade in Africa. NTBs are usually more difficult to quantify. In other words, a major factor accounting for the low level of intra-African trade has been the numerous constraints associated with trade facilitation like complicated customs requirement and procedures, unfavourable domestic trade regulatory environment; poor transport and logistic service provision and infrastructural networks; physical barriers, harassment and corruption along trade and transit

corridors; limited knowledge and understanding of trade facilitation instruments and measures by public sector officials, private sector operators and other trade constituents. Besides contributing to delays and loss of time in conducting business, these constraints impose high transaction costs for African traded goods and services thereby undermining their competitiveness in the International market (Anichie, 2014: 40).

Also, poorly developed financial markets and lack of widely available trade and investment finance for African businesses have been a major hindrance in boosting trade in Africa. The paucity of credit and finance and insurance limits businesses liquidity and undermines their ability to obtain production inputs. In general, it limits the potential for intra-African trade and constrains diversification efforts in Africa. Africa faces serious infrastructural bottle necks, thereby affecting the competitiveness of Africa's exports and contributing to significantly low volumes of intra- African trade. For example, transport cost in Africa are among the highest in the world and poor transport infrastructure is responsible for 40 percent of transport costs in coastal countries and 60 percent in landlocked countries in Africa. More so, many Sub- Saharan African countries continue to experience crisis conditions in national energy supply posing the biggest infrastructural challenge or trade-related constraints in Africa (Okafor and Aniche, 2012:68).

Furthermore, multiple membership has impeded economic integration in two ways. One, directly by generating inconsistencies and incompatibilities and inhibiting coordination and harmonization of activities like customs union, rare trade, single market, monetary union and single common currency. Two, directly, by forcing member countries to dissipate scarce human and financial resources in seeking to survive different regional communities and implementing differing, contradicting and conflicting treaties. In addition, multiple membership have also bedevilled the long running and still incomplete negotiations between several disparate groups of member states and the EU over the establishment of regional Economic Partnership Agreement (EPAs). Overlapping membership to different trade regimes and instruments risk trade deflection, and dealing with them posed legal and administrative challenges to member states. Whilst, one major problem of subgroupings in the African regional economic communities is that it undermines the commitment and allegiance of those African states towards the regional bodies (Aniche, 2014: 141).

4.3 Governance and Leadership Deficits in Africa

Events towards the end of the twentieth century revealed an Africa that is not only struggling to attain political goals but also working towards economic integration. The trajectory witnessed emerging African elites and rulers working to attain political and economic integration simultaneously. The irony is that the continent is bedeviled with governance deficits as most of African countries are suffocating under very poor and irresponsible governance architecture. It may indeed be very difficult not to run the risk of being branded "Afro-pessimist" but facts are self-evident as Nwabueze (2007:129) noted that there is progressive regression of the quality of governance, Economy and human life chances that reflect the African condition in contemporary times.

In 2022, the condition of life in Africa is more deplorable. Instability, conflict, violence, human trafficking, election rigging, poverty, kidnapping, separatists wars, official and unofficial corruption, kleptomania and inter-group/ethnic rivalries define the African socio-political space. The military, the "men on horseback are returning to the power space in Africa. Mali, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Chad in West Africa are back in the quagmire of junta rule. The emerging failure of governance the so-called democratic governance among other numerous factors may have given rise to the resurgence of military rule in Africa in recent times.

Governance in this content is not the neo-liberal, global governance idea piloted by the international financial institutions (IFIs)- International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB) and their co-travellers which packaged the ideology of good governance which insist that Africa and the rest of the Third World countries on the path of reforms and economic recovery must adopt and practice good governance if they are to continue to receive aid, Oversea development assistance (ODA), foreign investments and other forms of external capital flows into their economies (Oriakhi,2019:60). By governance here we refer to the technical and holistic senses of the concept. In the technical sense, governance refers to the efficient management of state institutions. In this wise, issues of public accountability, transparency in government procedures, rule of law, and public sector management are emphasized (Adejumobi, 2004:14). The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) aptly capture the concept of governance:

...The totality of the exercise of authority in the management of a country's affairs comprising of the complex mechanisms, processes and institutions, through which citizens and groups articulate their interest, exercise their legal rights and mediate their

differences. It encompasses the political, economic, legal, judicial, social and administrative authority and therefore includes: government, society (UNDP, 1997 cited in Adejumbi, 2004:15).

Thus, governance is the process of steering state and society towards the realization of collective goals (Adejumbi, 2004). Thus, the major actors or agencies of the governance project are the state, the civil society and the private sector. Governance readily implies good governance but not the IMF and World Bank ideology sense of “good governance”. The good governance in this context, entails the management of political, economic and socio-cultural structures with a view to enhancing the legitimacy of the effectiveness of the public bureaucracies, and the capacity of the economy to produce, and for the benefits of the citizens, who in turn are able to carry out their daily activities without fear of insecurity, and other security threats (Oriakhi, 2018:3). Governance becomes “good” when it operates in accordance with legal and ethical principles as conceived by the society. Good governance symbolizes a situation whereby society seeks to provide a guide and direction to itself through standards and norms embedded in the governance idea. It is the desire, and indeed, the art and science of steering state and society according to defined rules and procedures, and ensuring that governance in all its ramifications serves the interest of the greatest number of people in society through a collective (Mohideen, 1997). It is in this context that the concept of leadership, especially transformational political leadership in Africa is linked with the governance problematic in the continent. Political leadership and governance are in dire stress in contemporary Africa. The failure of African states is the failure of leadership (Nwabueze, 2007:141). While no one factor can exhaustively explain the failure of leadership and the near absence of good governance in Africa, scholars and observers of African politics have repeatedly pointed to the perception of politics as warfare and game of exclusion in different parts of the continent. Elections are rigged by sit-tight leaders, who muzzled the political process in their countries to achieve unconstitutional tenure elongation in office as presidents. Institutions like the judiciary, the legislature and even civil society organs are coerced and forced to do the biddings of dictatorial political leaders who insist they must remain in office. In recent times, the political manipulations of Alhassan Quatara in Ivory Coast, Museveni in Uganda, Paul Biya in Cameroun and several others are self-evident of the political transitions problematic in Africa. Even in Nigeria, where the so-called democratic rule is well over two decades old in the post-military era, the democratization process in the country suffers huge deficits with the dictatorial tendencies of the President Muhammadu Buhari administration. Political opponents and citizens who dared protest against government’s unbearing, harsh policies are mauled down by government forces as witnessed with the nation-wide youth protest in October 2020. The judiciary and parliaments carry on as mere appendages of the executive presidency and the state governors. In short, governance in the country is becoming a nightmare for the citizens. The logical consequence of the dictatorial “democracy” in present day Nigeria is the litany of separatist forces in different parts of the country demanding autonomy from the Federal Republic of Nigeria. There is therefore the problem of democratic consolidation. Going with dictatorial democracy in Nigeria, is the prevalence of official corruption. In short corruption is seemingly the *raison d’etre* of politicians seeking power in the country. Of course, in parts of West Africa: Mali, Chad, Guinea, the military juntas have captured political power. Sanctions from ECOWAS, AU and the UN doesn’t seem to deter soldiers who perceived that politicians are not able to lead their countries out of the woods. The problem of ethnicity and bitter inter- ethnic wars continue all over the continent. The demand for the Azawad state in Mali, Oduduwa and Biafra states in Nigeria, the English speaking part of Cameroon (Southern Cameroon) for autonomy and independence cannot be ignored. Indeed, African countries have continued in what a scholar described as “continuing regression into backwardness and decay in the face of the profundity of unharnessed human and material resources” (Nwabueze, 2007). Nwabueze sums up the African governance problematic at the dawn of the 21st century thus:

-the post- authoritarian civilian regimes that took over the reins of power from the military have through the years, continued to demonstrate a penchant for militarism as viable ethics of governance. rather, arbitrariness, contempt for the rule of law, self-conceit, contempt for public opinion driven by dispositions of infallibility have become convenient and familiar tools of governance (Nwabueze, 2007: 143).

In Nigeria, the respective tiers of governments chose which court rulings or orders to obey. These anti-democratic features and behaviours of power wielders are also very prominent in African states which did not experience military rule, especially in East Africa- Kenya, Zambia, (Zimbabwe), Cameroun, etc- those illiberal and anti-democratic dispositions held sway. None of these states maintained continuity of democratic institutions can be raised as a model for the routinization of democratic government (Nwabueze, 2007: 143-144).

The poor governance scenario in Africa, is caused and sustained by lack of transformational leadership in contemporary times. With the exit of some inspiring first generation leaders like Kwame Nkrumah, Ahmed Sekou Toure, Modibo Keita, Julius Nyerere, Leopold S. Senghor, Obafemi Awolowo, Nnamdi Azikiwe and others. Africa currently parades leaders with very weak foundation, uninspiring, who are also lacking good support base at home, probably as a consequence of their questionable route to power- as many presidential elections in the continent are rigged and compromised. The continent, since the return to the so-called democratization era at the turn of the twenty first century has witnessed a decline in ideologically clear-headed, patriotic and development focused leaders. Rather, ineptitude, corruption, state robbery, rivalry, nepotism, ethnicity, warmongering and other vices now characterized leadership in Africa. Political leadership in Africa instead of transforming the continent economically, politically and even socio- culturally throws the continent into the backwaters of global development indices. Poverty reduction, healthcare delivery, generation of employment for the citizens, good and functional educational system, reduction in cost of governance, elimination of corruption in the public and private spaces have taken the backseat in African governance profile. The political and governance situation in Africa does not give Africans any glimmer of hope. Nigeria the so-called “hope” of Africa and the entire black race has been fighting terrorism since 2009 with no visible signs that she is defeating the Boko Haram and ISWAP terrorists. Also, due to bad governance and corruption on the public space, several parts of the federation have formed separatist groups which are calling for their ethnic nationality autonomy.

The countries of the Sahel region in Sub-Saharan Africa – Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger, even Cameroun in Central Africa are all crisis – ridden. Rebel groups and Islamic terrorists have turned these countries to ungovernable entities. African countries dominate the list of fragile and failed states in the world. (see failed state index, 2022). With fractionalized and factionalized elites all over Africa, struggling to capture political power for self-aggrandizement and ethnic domination and for predatory ends and capital formation objectives, it is not exaggeration to state that there is a great deal of absence of legitimate political leadership in most of a Africa today. Yet, Eddy Maloka, the chief executive officer of the African peer review mechanism (APRM), an organization under the auspices of the African Union (AU) contends that good governance is key to African development. According to him;

It is clear that good governance is the solution to the problem that we have on our continent. Peace and security challenges are largely the manifestation governance challenges such as how we manage our elections. Even issues relating to terrorism, management of diversity, development and others are all about governance. Good governance is key! Governance is the route for Africa to claim the century (Maloka, 2018).

While Moloka is hopeful that Africa will get the governance problem right in due course as the peer review mechanism with about 40 member countries on board envisages, there are yet fears that the APRM is just another African leaders poster claim and hypocrisy as their attitudes and conducts in their respective countries does not show much commitment to rule of law, constitutionalism, orderliness, democratic ethics of free and fair election, transparency and accountability to the citizenry.

V. Post-neo-functionalism and the Developmental State in Africa: Contradictions and Possibilities

Neo-integrationism or post neo-functionalism or post-neo- nationalism is concerned with the initial integration on security matters through post-nationalism given the enormous security challenges confronting Africa with the subsequent and gradual phase of integration on economic and political spheres after many years of nation-building, national integration and national development through neo-nationalism or a combination of political and economic nationalism – driven by the people or private sector (rather than the government or public sector) through humanism. Actually, Post-neo-functionalism is a hybrid of neo-nationalism post nationalism and humanism (Aniche, 2015:50). Post neo-nationalism strengthens the idea of a fourth phase of African integration which emphasizes integration on security matters on the continental stage. The idea is that with africa’s gradual phase of integration in the political and economic spheres, there is the imperative for Africa to build on its records on political and economic integration to leverage the security nexus with the private sector and the mass of the African peoples driving the process rather than the government, the public sector, through humanism. Post-neo-functionalism framework frowns at the existing Euro-centric strategies or theories of integration process and foregrounds the point that they are not suitable for the African situation and therefore not capable of solving Africa’s integration problematique.

The theoretical assumption is that people-centric or human-centric or bottom-up integration approach fits the African quest for integration rather than the top-down approach to integration or state-centric or inter-governmental integration approach of functionalism and neo-functionalism. The core of the argument is that

integration should be people-driven or private sector-led rather than being state-driven or public-sector led. The state should only play regulatory or facilitative roles. The thinking is that given the enormous security challenges in Africa, post-neo-functionalist approach to African integration should begin with regional security integration, that is, creating regional security organizations in Africa. In as much as post-neo-functionalism emphasizes the security problem in Africa and pontificate on the imperatives for the private sector and the people to drive African integration process with the state in Africa playing minimal role in the entire gamut of African integration, there are concerns about first, the deplorable state of the private sector in African economies. As stated earlier, the private sector in Africa is largely undeveloped, as industrialization and material production, even private sector-led agricultural production are at very low ebb. What is more, the state in Africa in spite of its weakness and underdevelopment by foreign interests and African politicians and other compradorial elements in African political economy still remains the centre of gravity in Africa's entire system. The private sector can hardly function without the state as the state controls and ditches out material benefits in Africa. This is puzzling for the post-neo-functionalist theory in the African integration process. The state in Africa, despite its "bastardization" by local political forces and foreign capital interests can hardly be reduced to mere regulator or facilitator in the integration process in any major continental affairs. Here lies the contradictions. Indeed, while it is a truism as we have established earlier on that the African local ruling classes, with few exceptions, have not set into motion the process of re-building the anticipated democratic and developmental state in Africa: in fact, the first generation of African leaders merely inherited the colonial policies and infrastructures for exploitation, which partly explained why they were not really interested in deconstructing, rethinking and designing people-centred, pro-development and pro-democracy state (Agbese and Kieh, 2014:5), the point should be made that in the absence of genuine production activities (in Nigeria and in Africa) and the overwhelming power of patronage of those who control levers of political power, become heavily accentuated by gatekeepers or "godfathers" who having made their wealth through unproductive processes are desirous of ensuring unhindered access to state patronage to maintain their social debauchery (Odion-Akhaine, Chizea and Oriakhi, 2007:7). The backwardness of the African state has not diminished the increasing need for a developmental state in Africa given the ravenous economic blueprint of neoliberalism and its agencies of International Monetary Fund (IMF), The World Bank (WB), The World Trade Organization (WTO) and other imperialist economic and financial institutions that impose neoliberal economic policies on Africa. The state in Africa (Nay South Africa) as Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma argued "must have capacity and capability to lead and mobilize all sectors of society behind a common agenda. Her arguments were buttressed by Xortile Ngatha who argued emphatically that a developmental state is an imperative in contemporary South Africa. In his words:

*a developmental state that
asserts national interests,
that intervenes in the
interest of the majority is
a pre-condition to overcome
this current crisis...develop-
mental states were usually associated
with high economic growth such
as Japan, South Korea,
China and Brazil (Maqhina, 2022)*

The current crisis referred to here is the crisis of development in South Africa. That crisis is worsened by the economic hardship caused by COVID-19 and the market policies of neoliberalism. The free market neoliberal model of development is the dominant model of development imposed on Africa in the 1980s in the wake of the imposition of the Structural Adjustment programme (SAP) on several African countries in the 1980s by the global north-led financial institutions, -The IMF and World Bank. The developmental state-led development model adopted by virtually all of African states on attaining independence between the 1950s and 1980s was gradually abandoned for the so-called free market, neo-liberal-led development model based on the policy prescriptions of the IMF and World Bank. Africa is worse for it. The developmental state is characterized by having a strong state intervention as well as extensive regulation and planning. Africa has been on this path to development since the 1950s. The adoption of the free market model of economic development shoved aside the developmental state in most of Africa since the 1980s. However, to push African integration further, the state in Africa must play great role to mobilize the citizenry towards economic production, promote intra-African trade, work very hard to achieve political stability, de-escalate or completely eradicate conflicts in different parts of the continent. Yet, the state in Africa is weak, corrupt, prebendal and lacks autonomy in concrete terms. The state in Africa is remote-controlled by external powers and imperial interests.

VI. Prospects and Challenges of Regional Integration in Africa

Before drawing the curtains on this study, it is important to isolate some prospects and challenges of regional integration in Africa. First, the prospects. A regional economic integration that embraces all 54 AU member states endowed with human resources of a growing and youthful population of about 1.3 billion people, if it succeeds in dismantling all trade barriers and non-trade barriers to intra-African trade will unlock the continent's immense development potentials, boost its trade performance and integration into the global trading system, and reduce the continent's current heavy dependence on aid for development. Thus, it has been noted that achievement of a successful regional integration will require the removal of tariffs, the establishment of common rules of origin, the harmonization and simplification of customs regulations and procedures, and the elimination of non-tariff barriers to intra-African trade. This will lead to a significant growth and sustainable development just as the creation of the COMESA trade between 2000 and 2010 (Okafor and Aniche, (2017, 67-68).

Among other expected specific benefits that will accrue to African states from the attainment of CFTA in a regional integration include increased food security through reduction of the protection rate on trade in agricultural commodities among the African states; increased competitiveness of Africa's industrial products through harnessing the economics of scale of a large continental market of over one billion people increased rate of diversification and transformation of Africa's economy and the continent's ability to supply its import needs from its own resources: growth of intra-industry trade and the development of geographically based specialization in Africa: reduced vulnerability of Africa to external trade shocks: enhanced participation of Africa in global trade and reduced dependence of the continent on aid and external borrowing (Okafor and Aniche, 2017:70).

There is optimism that achievement of CFTA in regional integration will enable Africa tackle most of the trade constraints or obstacles to intra-African trade. For example, African leaders and other stakeholders are optimistic that increased trade through initiatives like the Grand TFTA and other potential inter-RECs FTAs will quickly transform into a CFTA with enormous benefits. It will enlarge markets for goods and services; eliminate duplicative, multiple and overlapping membership; enhance customs cooperation and broaden trade facilitation, promote harmonization and coordination of trade instruments: and broader relaxation of restrictions on movement of goods and services, persons. The collaboration and cooperation of RECs through the CFTA will further improve regional infrastructure and consolidate regional markets through improved interconnectivity in all forms of transport and communication as well as promote energy pooling to enhance Africa's competitiveness (Okafor and Aniche, 2017:72). This will help to fast-track the realization of the vision of 1991 Abuja Treaty of an African common market, and ultimately, the AEC. It had also been noted that trade flows would be significantly enhanced with the establishment of vast free trade areas in Africa or liberalization of intra- African trade. The creation of a CFTA in regional integration would stimulate African exports by 4 percent or \$25.3 billion. Specifically, it is in agriculture that African exports will rise the most with the adoption of CFTA reforms with 9.4 percent or \$5 billion ton baseline scenario in 2022. Africa's exports would increase in agricultural sectors and exports of wheats, cereals, sugar, meat, raw milk, dairy products and other food commodities would be the most stimulated. Africa exports of industrial products would also increase with 4.7percent or \$21.1 billion (Okafor and Aniche, 2017,71).

FTA reforms would be net trade creative for Africa as trade diversion effects will be largely compensated by the creation of new trade flows. The increase in Africa exports within the continent would strongly offset reductions of African exports to non-African countries. The net trade creation effect for Africa would be recorded in Agriculture and in industrial sector. But the reduction in African exports of services directed outside the continent would be larger than the increase of exports in services within the African countries (Okafor and Aniche, 2017,7172). Establishment of FTAs among African economies could lead to substantial increase in trade flows within the continent, considering the high trade protection levels. But this will require adjustment costs such as tariff revenues losses. The benefits of CFTA in regional integration could be considerably enhanced and offset related adjustment costs if accompanied by other policies such as the reduction of NTBs. Agricultural commodities could reap important gains from such trade policies. The trade creating effect could lead to higher demand for imports from African states, and thus, to higher production (Alcala and Ciccone, 2004:632). With opening up of African economies, competition will increase on the continental level following the creation of CFTA. Trade flows will be reoriented just as African imports from African partners from within and outside the continent will be replaced by imports from African partners benefitting from better market access. With tariff cuts, this will lead to terms of trade reductions. African imports from non-African developing countries would decrease by \$3.2 billion or 1.6 percent with the realization of CFTA. While African imports from developed countries will decrease by \$ 6.2 billion or 1.7 percent. In other words, the share of intra-African trade would be enhanced by 2.5 percent over a 12 year period

rising from 10.3 percent in 2010 to 15.5 percent in 2022. For agricultural goods, the share of intra-African trade would grow from 20 percent to 28.3 percent from 2010 to 2022. With subsequent full removal of TBs, the initially large shares of African industrial and services exports to the rest of the world would be reduced, falling from 89 percent in 2010 to 83 percent in 2022. With subsequent full removal of TBs, the initially large shares of African industrial and services exports to the rest of the world would be reduced, falling from 89 percent in 2010 to 96.6 percent in 2022 in services. The dominant trade-creating effects of the FTA reforms would increase intra-African trade by about half over a 12 year period from 10.2 percent in 2010 to 15.5 percent in 2022. While the eventual realization of CFTA would increase the share of intra-African trade though not as expected or desired (Okafor and Aniche, 2017:7071).

The creation of CFTA would amplify the gains from the establishment of RECs FTAs such as marginal increase in continental exports, real income, and real wages for all categories of workers. Agricultural exports would be significantly stimulated following the removal of relatively high initial TBs, and unskilled workers employed in non-agricultural sectors would obtain the highest real wages for all categories of African workers would also be positively affected by the formation of large free trade areas. For instance, with the implementation of a CFTA unskilled workers employed in non-agricultural sectors would obtain the highest real wages increase of 0.8 percent, while their unskilled counterparts engaged in the agricultural sector would see their income raised by 0.74 percent for the year 2022. But to a lesser extent, a skilled worker in the sector would also get positive real wage variations (Okafor and Aniche, 2017:71).

With the effective implementation of a CFTA and reduction of NTBs, the share of intra-African trade will more than double rising from 10.2 percent in 2010 to 21.9 percent in 2022. Also, the introduction of trade facilitation measures would expand the exchanges of industrial goods thereby increasing sophistication of intra-African trade. The increase of Africa's industrial exports would surpass that of agricultural exports in relative terms leading to higher wage increase for skilled and unskilled workers employed in non-agricultural activities than for their counterparts in agricultural (Okafor and Aniche, 2017:72).

There are several challenges confronting African regional integration which the authorities will have to deal with for the integration process in the continent to succeed. Some of the challenges include: widespread poverty, marginalization in global trade and limited capacity of its trade to serve as a key engine of sustainable socio-economic development. For example, it has been noted that Africa accounts for 4 percent of the global trade and its participation as exporter in manufactures and services is even much lower. At around 10 percent, the level of Africa's intra-regional trade is the lowest among the major region of the world rendering its economies highly vulnerable to trade shocks emanating from outside the continent; when 40 percent of North American trade is with North American countries, 63 percent of trade by countries in western Europe is with other western European countries (Okafor and Aniche, 2017: 68).

Therefore, regional economic integration in Africa is confronted with significant challenges that most African countries must take on in the process of opening up their national markets to the whole continent such as problems arising from liberalization reforms. For example, as world prices of food products slightly increase, net-importing African countries like Angola, Congo Democratic Republic, Mozambique, Botswana, North African countries, Nigeria and Central African countries are hurt as their real income reduce. It is still difficult to see how all economies of Africa will be transformed to a level of shared equal benefits in long term (Okafor and Aniche, 2017: 67 – 68).

Given that most of African leaders, if not all, are renowned for their passivity, slowness and tendency to depend on foreign aid, it is left to be seen how they will transform their political decisions into actions and effectively implement the initiative beyond rhetoric. There has also been rhetoric on continental unity and regional integration which is not matched by practical action. There are reasons to suspect that grand political pronouncements and agreements at the continental level may not be backed up by implementation and support at the national level. (Aniche, 2014: 139 – 140). Generally, there is slow progress towards regional economic integration due to inadequacy of institutional frameworks for realization of important objectives: obstacles to factor mobility like labour, capital and enterprise; inadequate finance and credit guarantee; and lack of trade formation system (Nkuepo, 2013: 2).

While at the regional level, the main challenge is ensuring the effective implementation of NTBs, there is a gap in terms of a continental trade exchanges for inter-regional trade exchanges. For example, trade between countries that do not belong to the same regional economic community is either on the basis of a bilateral trade agreement or a most favoured nation (MFN) basis constituting to some extent a negative effect on the bilateral trade flows between countries across regions in Africa. Thus, given the imbalances in the levels of development

in Africa. it will be a negligence to task creating a CFTA without ensuring equitable outcomes for member states through compensation mechanisms to address adjustment cost to greater trade opening or liberalization and help smaller or weaker countries build their production capacities (Okafor and Aniche, 2017 :67). There are several other constraints to regional integration in Africa. There is overlapping or multiple membership to RECS which continues to pose a big challenge towards negotiating and accomplishing CFTA. For example, more than half of the African states totaling thirty-one have dual membership of the eight RECs, while seven have multiple membership out of which six belong to three of the eight RECs and one belong to four: only 15 or at most 16 African states maintain single membership and none belong to all the eight RECs. In addition, and SADC contain within them sub-groupings. For instance, CEMAC is a sub-bloc of ECCAS; West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) and West African Monetary Zone (WANZ) are Sub-groups of ECOWAS; and South African Customs Union (SACU) is a sub-group of SADC. Consequently, some countries belong to customs union yet continue to negotiate towards establishing other customs union (Aniche and Ukaegbu 2016: 109).

Also, commitment to integration varies across countries of Africa even as some countries have not undertaken any liberalization within their respective RECs FTA. It will be difficult for them to commit to a CFTA when they cannot commit themselves to a smaller FTA. Some African countries still remain skeptical of regional integration, fearing domination by richer or more powerful states or ceding power or sovereignty to a supranational body. There is as well the challenge arising from trade negotiations, especially with some countries that are not in any form of FTA at the moment. Limited human resources, financial constraints and lack of others enabling capacity undermine the viability and sustaining of institutional arrangements at national, regional, and continental levels. It is in doubt that Africa possesses the commensurate manpower and institutional capacity to handle the enormous challenges of implementing a CFTA when they cannot manage their affairs at the national level (Okafor and Aniche, 2017 :71).

And then, there is the problem of huge deficit of socio-economic infrastructures across Africa. It is uncertain how Africa can manage the huge financial outlay to provide the facilitating and complimentary infrastructures because African countries are in general financially weak with little or no capacity to undertake such levels of investment. Therefore, Africa will be confronted with the challenges of mobilizing the direct financial requirements to provide required trade – related infrastructures such as transport facilities like roads, airways, waterways, etc.

Another significant challenge to economic integration in Africa is the fact that many of the African countries have similar economic structures and thus produce, import and export similar products. Therefore, the scope of complementarities rather than competition on their trade relations is often very limited. This partially explain why they currently trade so little (usually less than 10%)with each other. Therefore, the current stage of regional integration in Africa has not been able to transform the vertical linkage and external dependence of economies of its member states. For example, Mozambique's and Botswana's exports are more oriented towards the EU in which mineral and metal products constitutes 54% of Mozambique's exports, while 71% of Botswana's exports are primary products. (Aniche, 20114 :133). Ditto, worth the intra-regional dependencies in which some of the economies of the prospective members will be dependent on South Africa, Egypt, Nigeria, etc. Two major implications flow from this. One, member states will be trading more with industrialised countries of the west than with one another. And two, the trade relations between many of the member states and the aforementioned regional economic hegemony will be skewed in favour of the latter. As a result, member states would be unwittingly aiding developed countries in undermining African free trade area. The point being made is that the present phase of regional economic integration in Africa has not been able to boost intra-regional trade as such, except in case of trade between other member states and economic regional hegemony, because most of them are export- oriented primary producers whose primary products are in very little demand within the continent, and to remedy this will be very difficult (Nnoli, 1985: 127-128, Ake, 1981: 169 -170 and Aniche and Ukaegbu, 2016:114).

As a corollary to the above, the weak economic structure of most member states and the attendant economic crisis, stagnation and instability of the member states pose a great challenge to regional integration in Africa, and will continue to be a drawback to its prospects. It has even been stated that the proposed roadmap for regional integration may be unrealistically ambitious given the diversity of economies involved and the long term requirement (Okafor and Aniche, 2017: 66).

The point is that challenges that have been met by the RECs individually may be magnified in the larger FTA if not dealt with effectively. Some of these challenges include economic polarization, fiscal challenges, negotiation with external parties, institutional weaknesses and political stability. For example,

asymmetric product complementarities in the regions means that more developed economies of Egypt, Nigeria, South Africa, etc are in much better position to market their exports raising a concern over possible economic polarization and disparity as investment may be attracted towards these economies that can undermine the proposed integration effort. The less prepared countries are at a risk of being swallowed economically by more powerful countries, as their local industries would suffer from the stiff trade competition from more rival firms in an open market. This competition may subsequently allow the major organized and developed economies to push weaker local firms out of business (Aniche, 2014:141).

Furthermore, regional integration in Africa has been confronted with the sub-national centrifugal tendencies like conflicts, crises, violence, ethnic, nationalism, religion, intolerance, terrorism and ultimately civil wars. Political instability in some key member states like Somalia, Sudan, The DRC, etc, renders the continent risky for investments and counters the benefits of regional integration. It suffices to say that the current phase of regional integration is situated in a crisis region where internal centrifugal forces of sub-nationalism and other forms of conflicts like xenophobia are ravaging the continent (Aniche, 2015:48; Aniche and Ukaegbu 2016:108).

Finally, regional economic integration in Africa is hampered by several political differences which include the differences in the development ideologies of member states and their fear of compromising their sovereignty or control over their territories (Ake,1981:168). The importance of this is that regional integration in Africa is encumbered by conflicts or disputes between members like wars, armed conflicts, xenophobia, etc. Wars will in turn lead to the upsurge of refugees in the zone and worsen the economic crises in these countries (Aniche, 2015:51). This is exactly what Nduba Echezona refers to when he averred that the intractable civil strife with the member states of ECOWAS and OAU (now AU) and the refugee crisis which they cause are the constant reminders that African states are too fragile to engage in the pursuit of regional integration or as he puts it. “of system wide community formation” (Echezona, 1998:48)

VII. Summary and Conclusion

Regional integration in contemporary international relations may have come to stay as countries continue to move closer to each other for the purpose of attaining their shared goals. Africa has not been left out in this on-going phenomenon which is seemingly a subset of the globalization mission. In spite of decades of contemporary phase of integration in Africa, African states still trade more with others outside the continent than with themselves. This discourse has identified the reasons for this sad reality in Africa. Yet, more worrisome for the discourse is the fact the Euro-centric neo-functionalist approaches are seemingly not good enough to explain the defects, failures and drawbacks of African integration. Most of this European countries that adopted neo-functionalist approach to regional integration that resulted to European Union (EU) have transcended problems of national security. European integration as embedded in neo-functionalism did not prioritize security at the onset of European integration process. Similarly, the third phase of African integration under AEC set defence and security pact as its last targets when it should actually be the other way round given the huge security challenges confronting the continent as occasioned by internal centrifugal forces of sub-nationalism disintegrative nationalism. The thinking here is that there is need to evolve the fourth phase of African integration anchored on neo-neo-integrationism or post-neo-functionalism or post-neo-nationalism that emphasizes the initial integration on security matters through post-nationalism given the enormous security challenges confronting the continent with the subsequent and gradual phase of integration on economic and political spheres after many years of nation building, national integration, and national development through neo-nationalism or a combination of political and economic nationalism driven by the people or private sector rather than the government or the public sector through humanism. There is, however, a dilemma. Post-neo-functionalism in Africa where the private sector is weak and largely dependent on the state and government for patronage can hardly drive the process of integration. African integration is further frustrated with the deficit of good governance and transformational leadership in the continent. Yet, the study identifies the strengths and weaknesses of integration while foregrounding the fact that the African continent still need the developmental state to facilitate or push forward the African integration process.

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