

# REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN AFRICA: EAC AND ECOWAS\*

*Afrika'da Bölgesel Entegrasyon: EAC ve ECOWAS*

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## **Abstract**

*This study, which focuses on the comparison of the East African Community (EAC) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), seeks answer to the question of what are the critical points in the historical processes of these two organizations. While the EAC and ECOWAS, which have had problems in creating sustainable financial resources and taking rapid action throughout the historical period; -although the desired goals cannot be fully achieved-, have been effective in promoting economic growth, facilitating trade, improving living standards, enhancing infrastructure, and most importantly, strengthening regional cooperation, they have not found sufficient recognition in academic studies.*

**Keywords:** *Integration, EAC, Africa, ECOWAS, Region.*

## **Öz**

*Doğu Afrika Topluluğu (EAC) ile Batı Afrika Devletleri Ekonomik Topluluğu (ECOWAS)'ın karşılaştırılmasına odaklanan bu çalışma; bu iki organizasyonun tarihsel süreçlerinde kritik noktalar nelerdir sorusuna cevap aramaktadır. EAC ile ECOWAS; -arzu edilen hedeflere tam olarak ulaşılmasa da-, ekonomik büyümeyi teşvik etme, ticareti kolaylaştırma, yaşam standartlarını yükseltme, altyapıyı geliştirme ve en önemlisi bölgesel iş birliğini güçlendirme konularında etkiliyken; akademik çalışmalarda yeterince kendine yer bulamamıştır.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** *Entegrasyon, EAC, Afrika, ECOWAS, Bölge.*

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### INTRODUCTION

Integration, which is considered to have many benefits in a world with a healthy order and balance, unquestionably plays a critical role in crisis situations. These organizations, established to achieve common goals and promote cooperation among countries, emerge on both international and regional levels. As international organizations take the lead in specific areas and global-scale issues, regional organizations (RO) serve a range of important objectives such as facilitating economic integration, supporting political stability, targeting social development, and promoting cooperation among countries within a region. While the contributions of organizations formed by developed countries cannot be denied, regional organizations established in the African continent, where developing and/or underdeveloped countries face challenges such as migration crisis, food scarcity, poverty, and conflicts, become even more significant. This study examines the East African Community (EAC) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). These two integrations are effective in facilitating trade, improving living standards, supporting sustainable development, developing infrastructure, and most importantly, strengthening regional cooperation.

International entities, in addition to nation-states, can be part of global organizations. These organizations play a crucial role in carrying out tasks that serve the global public interest, tasks that no single state can accomplish alone. For an entity to be considered an international organization, it must possess a physical presence, functional infrastructure, and financial resources. The structure of international organizations may vary, but they typically consist of a permanent secretariat, a plenary body where all members convene, a smaller executive body, and sometimes an additional assembly. The conceptualization of international organizations has traditionally been intertwined with broader frameworks, combining legal theories and political science assumptions (Golia Jr and Peters, 2022: 28-30).

Even in the midst of chaos and unpredictability, the field of international relations operates under a set of regulations. These regulations determine the eligibility of full membership and govern the

communication, trade, business, and even conflicts among various actors. Each set of regulations is referred to as an international institution. These institutions are broadly defined as foundational and enduring practices that have evolved rather than being deliberately designed. They shape the behavior and legitimate activities of actors in relation to one another. Institutions encompass both established practices and agreements, serving as the framework for international relations. They can take formal or informal forms, be documented or unwritten, and exist within organizations or independently. Furthermore, institutions have the potential to significantly influence the interests of key actors, but this influence can vary in strength (Stiles, 2023: 1).

Three characteristics in how legitimacy is sought to be established by international organizations (IOs) through their functioning are recognized: i] Facilitating Mutual Assistance and Cooperation ii] Upholding Rules and Traditions iii] Promoting Norms and Principles. If examples of international organizations are to be given; the United Nations (UN), World Health Organization (WHO), other economic institutions, and World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) can be mentioned. (Corbett et al, 2021: 9-18).

The advocated regionalism focuses primarily on the economic dimension of integration. Moreover, the integration process is believed to follow a distinct trajectory, where capital, labor, goods, and services flow more freely across member states' borders. This process can take different forms, starting with a free trade area (FTA), advancing to a customs union (CU), then transitioning into a common market, economic union, and ultimately achieving full integration. As an organization that strictly operates between governments, regional integration primarily focuses on preserving state sovereignty.

Consequently, the involvement of non-state actors is limited and subject to specific mechanisms. Similar to other centralized and regulated processes, regional integration has often marginalized its citizens in shaping and implementing policies and regional development projects. Moreover, there is a growing sense of distrust and skepticism towards civil society among member states of integration, leading to the emergence of independent avenues for participation by civil society

organizations as an alternative means of including non-state actors (Tshimpaka et al, 2021: 3-4).

The UN relies on the assistance of regional organizations to distribute the workload in addressing conflicts. The Secretary-General emphasized that collaborating more closely with regional organizations could alleviate the burden on the Security Council, which currently faces numerous conflicts. This collaboration would also enhance and democratize the UN's conflict resolution efforts. Regional organizations are seen as advantageous in managing conflicts within their respective regions. Their familiarity with the region equips them with deep knowledge and established personal and professional connections, facilitating easier access and the ability to apply pressure that the UN may not possess.

Consequently, their involvement may be viewed as less intrusive and more positively received compared to UN interventions. Moreover, since regional organizations are directly affected by the conflicts, they are more inclined to generate the necessary political will to take immediate action in addressing them (Boulden, 2013: 1-2).

The perception of regionalism has significantly worsened in the past decade. In the late 1980s to the mid-2000s, there was great optimism among academics and the general public regarding the growth of regional organizations and integration. The concept of the New Regionalism captured this optimism and presented a compelling narrative. It argued that there was a continuous movement towards regional governance, which was seen as a positive response to major global challenges like peacekeeping, economic development, and addressing transboundary policy issues. However, this optimism has gradually transformed into more mixed assessments and outright frustration.

After the Cold War, regional organizations expanded both in terms of their membership and their institutional structures. Each organization developed its own set of rules and procedures, often resistant to expert recommendations aimed at enhancing their effectiveness. For states that view regional organizations as pragmatic tools for addressing transboundary issues, these developments can be frustrating. The

complexities of history inevitably result in regional organizations acquiring some degree of independence from their creators and evolving in their own unique ways. The existing literature on regionalism fails to acknowledge the significance of these historical trajectories. It primarily focuses on whether regional organizations are successful in providing governance for present challenges, without considering the importance of contextual factors. While critical assessments of the effectiveness of regional organizations are necessary, they should be grounded in a realistic understanding of the conditions required for institutional adaptation. Conventional approaches mainly emphasize "supply factors" such as regional leadership or strong institutional frameworks, overlooking the fact that regional organizations are shaped over time through the agency of political actors who draw upon and negotiate various normative ideas about how regional politics should be organized (Spandler, 2019: 1-3).

In the context of regional integration in Africa, two institutions stand out: EAC and ECOWAS. EAC stands as the sole RO that experienced dissolution followed by subsequent revival. The initial EAC disintegrated in 1977 due to diplomatic and ideological conflicts among Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. It was effectively rejuvenated in 1999. The EAC and ECOWAS have heightened their efforts to combat breaches of core principles within their member nations. Across the entire spectrum of democratic principles, human rights, and the rule of law, both the quantity and breadth of standards had expanded significantly by the year 2020. Within these realms, ECOWAS ranks among the organizations with the highest values, particularly in all three dimensions of democracy, as well as in the aspects related to state organization and the primacy of the rule of law (Stapel, 2022: 95, 122-123).

The ultimate goal of the EAC is to create a full-fledged political federation. It underscores the active involvement of both the private sector and civil society. Achieving these goals necessitates a comprehensive and purpose-driven institutional structure. The EAC aspires to achieve a level of integration that surpasses the vision of its forerunner, all while preventing the errors that led to the breakdown of past East African integration attempts. Key precautions involve a step-by-

step approach to integration and mechanisms to ensure a fair distribution of the benefits of integration (Ugirashebuja et al, 2017).

It has been demonstrated that ECOWAS is a sub-regional organization that has clearly emulated the integration approach of the EU to achieve comparable outcomes. Particularly after the treaty revision in 1993, ECOWAS has made an endeavor towards what can be described as the social and cooperative aspect of West African integration. In particular, this contribution has considered an instance of cooperation between member states of ECOWAS (MSs) and non-citizens (social security) and an instance of cooperation among ECOWAS MSs (the response to the Ebola epidemic) (Rugani, 2023: 299).

In this study, EAC and ECOWAS have been examined in terms of their similarities and differences. While EAC emphasizes regional unity, ECOWAS has focused on regional economic goals. The processes they have gone through from their establishment to the present have been examined in a historical context. Furthermore, critical junctures they encountered during their historical processes have been evaluated. The contributions of these two organizations to their regions and member countries have been analyzed in social, economic, and political contexts. Although EAC and ECOWAS share similar prominent issues at the regional level, there are differences in their priorities and approaches in social development, security, political stability, and the economy.

### REGIONAL UNION: EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY

The East African Community (EAC) is a regional organization consisting of 7 partner states: Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Uganda, and Tanzania. Its headquarters are located in Arusha, Tanzania. The EAC has an estimated population of 283.7 million people, with more than 30% residing in urban areas. Covering a land area of 4.8 million square kilometers and utilizing English, Kiswahili, and French as official languages, the EAC has a combined Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of US\$ 305.3 billion. The realization of the EAC holds significant strategic and geopolitical importance, offering promising

prospects for its renewed and revitalized state. The community's operations are governed by the treaty that established it (EAC official website, 2023).

Regional integration is a key development strategy for African nations that aim to achieve continent-wide economic, social, and cultural integration by 2028. Trade liberalization is a crucial component of this strategy, intended to be realized through regional free trade areas, leading to a customs union, a common market, and ultimately a monetary union. The primary objective of the EAC is to enhance and strengthen cooperation among its partner states.

The EAC is among the eight regional economic communities recognized by the African Union (AU) and the only one with a vision for creating a political federation within its framework. Africa is known for its abundant resources but lacks proper infrastructure. In the energy sector, the EAC is working on ensuring that all Partner States have access to energy and power, but there is also a need for regional integration and harmonization of policies and laws. This harmonization is essential to treat all partner states equally, regardless of their legal standing, and to eliminate any deterrents within the EAC (Tharani, 2017: 486).

The EAC's history dates back to its initial establishment in 1967, followed by its dissolution in 1977. On 30 November 1993, the Agreement for the Establishment of the Permanent Tripartite Commission for East African Co-operation was signed. The Secretariat of the Permanent Tripartite Commission was launched on 14 March 1996, marking the beginning of full cooperation operations. The Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community was signed on 30 November 1999. The EAC was re-established on 7 July 2000, when the Treaty entered into force. Initially, the original three partner states - Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda - ratified the treaty. Subsequently, Rwanda and Burundi joined the EAC on 1 July 2007 after acceding to the Treaty on 18 June 2007. On 20 November 2009, the Protocol for the Establishment of the EAC Common Market was signed, and on 30 November 2013, the Protocol for the Establishment of the EAC Monetary Union was signed. South Sudan became a full Member of the EAC on 15 August 2016 after acceding to the Treaty on 15 April 2016. The Democratic Republic of the

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Congo, the Community's newest member, joined the EAC on 11 July 2022, after acceding to the EAC Treaty on 8 April 2022 (EAC official website, 2023).

The EAC represents an ongoing effort to revive the regional integration that existed in East Africa nearly fifty years ago. It has the potential to foster economic and political cooperation across various areas. However, the EAC has yet to establish the necessary institutions for market integration. Trade disputes continue to be resolved in national courts, and there is a lack of sufficient pooling of sovereignty. To achieve middle-income status, the EAC must promote interdependent economic activities and economies of scale. Investing in high-quality infrastructure is crucial, but it requires attracting private finance. Political challenges have long hindered progress, as private investors perceive multi-country projects as riskier. Nonetheless, the EAC can turn the multi-country aspect into an advantage by utilizing governments' oversight to enhance credibility. Differences in economies, especially with South Sudan and Uganda being oil exporters, pose challenges for a monetary union. Previously, East Africa's economies were more similar, but structural differences now exist within the EAC (Collier: 14-15).

The EAC is among the fastest growing regions. Growth rates have picked up strongly in the EAC countries over the last two decades hence outpacing the rest of Sub-Saharan African (SSA) since 2000. During 2005–2010, per capita income growth reached 3.7 percent a year in the EAC, compared to 3.2 percent for SSA as a whole, and almost quadruple the rate achieved in the previous 15-year period. Part of the recent high growth is “catching up” after years of very poor growth. In the last part of the 20th century, the region suffered periods of severe civil strife and bouts of economic instability (Babu et al, 2015: 75). Also, this is crucial as countries strive to create effective measures aimed at attracting and retaining the vital healthcare workforce within the healthcare systems of the EAC (Muthuri et al, 2020: 20).

Progress has been made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the EAC. Most EAC countries have made significant strides towards universal primary education and reducing child mortality rates. Tanzania and Uganda have experienced substantial



poverty reduction due to strong income growth. However, Kenya, despite having the lowest poverty ratio, and Burundi have made limited progress over the past decade, and poverty remains high, particularly in Burundi, Rwanda, and Tanzania.

The region's high population growth, close to 3 percent annually over the last two decades, may hinder efforts to improve social indicators. The recent growth trajectory is insufficient to achieve middle-income status and significant poverty reduction by the end of the decade, which is the objective of most EAC countries. To attain these goals, the region needs to achieve an average real per capita GDP growth rate of about 5.5 percent per year for the remainder of the decade, which is approximately two percentage points higher than the last five years. Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda, with per capita incomes below the regional average, need to grow by about 7-8 percent annually per capita to meet the target. Kenya, already close to middle-income levels, could achieve this goal sooner if current growth rates continue. Burundi, the poorest of the EAC members, will require more time to reach the same level of economic progress (McAuliffe et al.; 17).

Institutionally, the EAC encourages member countries, especially in the expansion of education; concentrates on expanding and intensifying the integration process among its member nations to bolster progress and advancement for its increasing community. Both mortality rates are generally experiencing a decrease, and in the education sector, a majority of metrics, encompassing enrollment, graduation, progression, and literacy rates, demonstrated enhancements (UNECA, 2015: 4).

Agency, on the other hand, refers to the ability of individuals or groups to make choices regarding tangible or intangible matters of interest. It involves the freedom and capacity to pursue important goals or values. It is the process of freedom and opportunity, encompassing various achievable functions. In the context of popular participation within the EAC region, the focus on process and opportunity could lead to empowering human agency and, consequently, fostering an East African identity. Issues of interest are influenced by the broader opportunity structure, encompassing formal and informal rules and norms within the institutional, social, and political context in which actors pursue their interests.

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It is the connection between EAC citizens and the integration process that the chapter contributors emphasize as crucial for enlarging the sense of East Africanness and East Africanization. In other words, the EAC must foster an institutional environment that promotes inclusivity, openness, accountability, and effective agency. Such an approach has the potential to advance East Africanness, East Africanization, and democratization within the region (Adar et al, 2020: 347).

The EAC integration has facilitated the emergence of trade opportunities, as all member states have witnessed economic growth as a result of the integration process. However, the extent of the benefits that partner states derive from integration depends on their respective levels of economic development. When a partner state possesses a relatively sizable industrial sector, it is more likely to reap greater benefits compared to others. This is evident in the case of the EAC, where Kenya, boasting a relatively large industrial sector, stands to gain more than its counterparts. Inadequate institutions lack the authority to enforce and execute agreements.

This is attributed to partner states' reluctance to relinquish their sovereignty, which has consequently led to sluggish harmonization and policy coordination. The presence of security challenges and instability in the region creates an environment unfavorable for investors. This is exemplified by conflicts and tensions between communities, further impeding the integration process. The active involvement of the private sector and the citizens, who are the ultimate beneficiaries of the integration process, is notably absent. The participation of citizens has yet to be formalized, as they lack avenues for direct involvement, in contrast to the EU, where citizens directly participate in electing representatives for the EU Parliament through political parties (Anami, 2023: 767).

In response to these concerns, partner states within the EAC are actively involved in intra-regional development and operation of power generation. However, these efforts face obstacles as countries tend to prioritize the strengthening of their national electricity infrastructure. Each government within the EAC has devised energy access objectives and policies. Kenya is taking the lead with a goal of achieving 100% energy

access by 2030. Uganda aims for a minimum of 98% energy access by 2020, while Rwanda has set a target of 70% access by 2017. Burundi aspires to attain 25% energy access by 2020.

Furthermore, endeavors are underway to enhance the region's long-term energy security. This is being pursued by advocating for energy policies that promote the diversification of energy types and supply sources. The EAC region is working towards increasing the utilization of renewable energy sources, including hydropower, geothermal, wind, solar, and modern biomass. This diversification aims to vary the electricity mix and shield countries from the fluctuations in global petroleum prices (EAC Report, 2016: 9-10).

In today's era, where the challenges of globalization require increased cooperation between countries to promote socioeconomic development, the EAC initiative and concept are anticipated to enhance the political and economic influence of the region, which is abundant in various natural resources like forests, minerals, exotic wildlife, and water. The primary goal of establishing the EAC is to strengthen regional cooperation, infrastructure, and development through comprehensive political, economic, and cultural integration among member states. Areas of cooperation include commerce, technology, healthcare, environmental concerns, and tourism. Additionally, the EAC collaborates on political issues such as defense, security, foreign affairs, and judicial matters. Under the EAC's framework, the pan-nation region will have a common currency, a common legislative assembly, a shared language, and joint initiatives in research, regional transportation, and resource utilization (Katembo, 2008: 111).

## ECOWAS: REGIONALISM IN WEST AFRICA

On the 28th of May 1975, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was established by the Heads of State and Government of fifteen West African countries in Lagos, Nigeria. The Treaty of Lagos was signed by Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Senegal, and Togo, with the mission to promote economic integration in

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the region. Cabo Verde joined in 1977, while Mauritania withdrew in 2000 and later signed an associate-membership agreement in 2017. The ECOWAS region spans an area of 5.2 million square kilometers and includes the member states of Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Senegal, and Togo. ECOWAS aims to promote collective self-sufficiency among its member states and create a large trading bloc through economic cooperation (ECOWAS official website, 2023).

Initially, ECOWAS focused on economic integration and development in the West African sub-region, as well as safeguarding member states' political independence and territorial integrity during the Cold War. The organization relied on legal instruments such as the ECOWAS Protocol on Non-Aggression (adopted on 22 April 1978) and the ECOWAS Protocol Relating to Mutual Assistance on Defence (adopted on 29 May 1981). ECOWAS adhered to international law principles of state sovereignty, non-intervention, and collective self-defense based on the UN Charter.

However, due to conflicts and humanitarian crises in the sub-region, ECOWAS adapted to new challenges. It revised its treaty in 1993 and adopted an updated version in Benin Republic on 24 July 1993 (Because the 1990s were primarily marked by armed confrontations in Africa and the Balkans subsequent to the end of the Cold War. These hostilities led to immense anguish and hardship for millions of individuals, with the world bearing witness to some of the most severe humanitarian crises and widespread atrocities since World War II.).

Subsequently, on 31 October 1998, during a meeting of Heads of State and Government in Abuja, ECOWAS adopted the Framework Establishing the ECOWAS Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping, and Security. On 10 December 1999, ECOWAS also adopted the Protocol Relating to the ECOWAS Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, and Resolution, Peacekeeping, and Security. Together, these instruments form the intervention legal regime of the Economic Community of West African States (Iyi, 2016: 1-5).

The integrated economic activities within the region, with a combined GDP of \$734.8 billion, encompass industry, transport, telecommunications, energy, agriculture, natural resources, commerce, monetary and financial issues, as well as social and cultural matters. In 2007, ECOWAS transformed its Secretariat into a Commission, with a President, Vice President, thirteen Commissioners, and the Auditor-General leading the way. As part of its renewal process, ECOWAS is implementing critical programs to deepen cohesion and remove barriers to full integration. The goal is to create an "ECOWAS of the People: Peace and Prosperity to All" by 2050, allowing the estimated 300 million citizens in the community to take ownership of this vision. ECOWAS is headquartered in Abuja, Nigeria (ECOWAS official website, 2023).

ECOWAS provides leadership and coordination to member countries to ensure full integration; although inadequate and low-efficiency, it focuses on the following programs: in the areas of developing transport corridors, energy development and agricultural infrastructure, capacity building for financial integration and enhanced capacity, ebola, climate change adaptation, women and youth (African Development Bank Paper, 2020).

As per the Treaty of Lagos, the main objective behind establishing the Community was to accelerate economic and social development to improve the living standards of the people. To achieve rapid economic growth, the founding fathers of ECOWAS aimed to create a customs union allowing internal free trade among members, a common external tariff, free labor mobility, and the free movement of services and capital between member states. They believed that expanding trade through a customs union would foster the growth and development of member states. However, several factors have hindered the trade performance of most African countries, including ECOWAS members.

These factors include a narrow production and export base, dominated by low-value products like raw materials and primary commodities, high trade costs, tariff and non-tariff barriers to intra-African trade, and limited access to the international market. Moreover, the region's weak performance in world trade is evident in its minimal share in global exports. The ECOWAS region is considered the least

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industrialized area in terms of manufacturing to GDP, according to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (2013) (Iyoha and Okim, 2017: 24-25).

ECOWAS, which tries to overcome the difficulties mentioned above by determining strategies similar to Vision 2020 and 2050 and tries to fill the gaps by solving the problems, encourages the member countries in the following matters: (i) peace and security (ii) good governance (iii) development of the region's resources, (iv) promotion of the private sector, (v) economic and monetary integration. For instance; Substantial advancements have been achieved in terms of solidifying the unified market process, particularly concerning the unrestricted movement of individuals, the trade openness initiative, and, most importantly, the formation of the Customs Union, with the activation of the Common External Tariff (CET) in 2015 (ECOWAS Commission, 2022: 16, 22).

It is well-known that all the countries in ECOWAS have gained independence, with some using English as their main language and others being Francophone countries. Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde, former colonies of Portugal, use Portuguese as their official language. Despite their linguistic differences, all these countries were once under the burden of colonial imperialism. The improvement of living standards in West Africa depends on the successful accomplishment of political, economic, and legal tasks set by the Community. However, there are legal and non-legal obstacles that hinder the Community's policies on economic integration and improving the people's living conditions in the region (Ukaigwe, 2016: 3-4).

ECOWAS has put forward the following concrete studies for development on a regional basis: In May 2002, the Heads of State and Government in West Africa made the decision to internalize the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) agenda by establishing internal partnerships, ensuring local ownership, and seeking external support to execute NEPAD's plan of action. This plan encompasses peace, security, democracy, and political governance; economic and corporate governance; bridging infrastructure gaps; human resource development, particularly in education and healthcare, and market access. The ECOWAS infrastructure program encompasses significant initiatives in the energy

sector, air and sea transportation, as well as road networks, ICT, and telecommunications. This includes hydroelectric dam projects spanning six countries in the sub-region, thermal power plants, the West Africa Power Pool, and the West Africa Gas Pipeline project. In the telecommunications sector, efforts have focused on connecting West African capitals through direct microwave links and increasing telecoms traffic within ECOWAS. To facilitate air and sea transportation, ECOWAS leaders have endorsed plans for the establishment of ECOAIR, a regional airline, and ECOMARINE, a regional shipping line. In the pursuit of market integration, ECOWAS has worked towards enabling the free movement of individuals within the ECOWAS region by eliminating visa and entry requirements. (Chambas, 2007: 8-9).

Over time, ECOWAS has created and restructured various institutions and specialized agencies. The institutions include West African Health Organization (WAHO) and Inter-governmental Action against Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing in West Africa (GIABA). The specialized agencies include West African Monetary Agency (WAMA), Regional Agency for Agriculture and Food (RAAF), ECOWAS Regional Electricity Regulatory Authority (ERERA), ECOWAS Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (ECREEE), West African Power Pool (WAPP), ECOWAS Brown Card, ECOWAS Gender Development Centre (EGDC), ECOWAS Youth & Sports Development Centre (EYSDC), West African Monetary Institute (WAMI), and ECOWAS Infrastructure Projects Preparation and Development Unit (PPDU).

Notably, the ECOWAS website no longer portrays the Authority of the Heads of State and Council of Ministers, as well as the Economic and Social Council, as institutions of ECOWAS. However, detailed information will be provided on the Authority of the Heads of State and Council of Ministers (Ukaigwe, 2016: 53-54).

During the initial years of gaining independence, West Africa witnessed the emergence of a post-colonial civil society movement. This movement aimed to challenge political mismanagement and military interventions in national politics. Alongside resisting authoritarian regimes, the West African national civil society movements criticized the unpopular macro-economic policies imposed by the Structural

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Adjustment Programme (SAP) of the 1980s, dictated by the liberal international financial regime. During the post-Cold War era, these civil society organizations (CSOs) focused on promoting democratization and conflict prevention at the national level. Despite not always fitting the traditional definition of civil society, these civic groups actively participated in struggles for democratization and developmental initiatives throughout the West African states (Kogbe, 2023: 60).

ECOWAS' efforts to boost trade have led to increased intra-regional trade, but the West African region's share in global trade has remained notably low. This indicates that the customs union has not yielded the desired trade expansion within the region. Consequently, the subregion has not been able to fully harness the advantages of trade, including increased foreign investment, improved living standards, job creation, and enhanced industrial production, among other benefits. Several factors contribute to this situation, including heavy reliance on primary products for trade, product uncompetitiveness in the region, lack of convertible currency, prolonged crises in certain countries within the region, as well as inadequate infrastructure connecting the members of the customs union, among other factors (Akperan and Kayode, 2010: 37).

An examination of the situations in Guinea and Guinea Bissau, particularly since 2009, demonstrates a dedication to close collaboration and the alignment of political stances between ECOWAS and the AU. The AU's Peace and Security Council (PSC) serves as the primary decision-making body at the continental level. Concerning the Guinean matter, especially following the December 2008 coup d'état, these two organizations have consistently worked to harmonize their positions and present a unified front within the International Contact Group, which they jointly lead. The AU PSC's declarations of targeted sanctions against the leaders of the CNDD junta, along with the actual imposition of these sanctions, helped strengthen and lend credibility to the diplomatic initiatives undertaken by ECOWAS (Yabi, 2010: 54).

ECOWAS has made significant progress towards its goals, despite facing obstacles that hinder regional development. Analyzing these challenges is crucial to address the general impediments the Community faces. A comprehensive framework exists to achieve integrated West



Africa, involving trade, infrastructure, private sector participation, and free movement of goods, services, and people within the Community.

Achievements include completing the West African Gas Plant (WAGP), establishing the West African Highway, and implementing the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS). Efforts to create a borderless West Africa by transitioning from ECOWAS of states to ECOWAS of peoples by 2020 are underway. Democratization and increased private sector participation have contributed to the region's economic growth. Institutions like the ECOWAS Tribunal and ECOWAS Parliament, along with self-organizing groups, have fostered a sense of community spirit and integration culture among the member states. (Ogbonna et al, 2013: 105-106).

## COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF EAC AND ECOWAS

The decision to examine African sub-regions separately is based on their distinct characteristics, including the presence of strong regional groups, normative developments, and political contexts. To analyze the impact of overlapping institutions on the Regional Organizations' behavior and the African Union's approach to multiple organizations, a broader range of cases was considered to avoid drawing conclusions from a single sub-region or country. Not all Regional Economic Communities (RECs) have been equally involved in condemning unconstitutional changes of government, which is influenced by the actions of RECs, countries, and the African Union (AU). Data collection was affected by different roles played by political actors, resulting in asymmetry in data access and availability across cases. The normative documents do not specify how the AU delegates the responsibility of leading mediation following an Unconstitutional Change of Government (UCG), under the principle of subsidiarity. Therefore, when a conflict-affected country is a member of multiple RECs, the AU's provisions are limited to calling for the action of relevant stakeholders to restore constitutional conditions (Ribeiro, 2022: 48-49).

The prevailing trend in the literature has been to avoid placing African

regionalisms in the context of broader systemic trends. Instead, studies of African regionalism have been limited to the narrower field of African studies. In this approach, regionalism in Africa is assumed to be guided by a unique logic, different from that found in other parts of the world, due to Africa's distinctive political-economic context.

These studies emphasize the significance of understanding "the role and influence of the African state" to comprehend African regionalism. The nature of sovereignty for many post-colonial African states, according to this perspective, differs fundamentally from the Westphalian model that originated in Europe. The Westphalian model of sovereignty is based on both negative and positive aspects. It entails formal and legal recognition by the international community (negative sovereignty) as well as the ability to provide political goods such as law and order to citizens (positive sovereignty). In contrast, the African states that emerged after decolonization were often characterized by only negative sovereignty, lacking the institutional capacity and legitimacy necessary for positive sovereignty (O'Reilly, 2019: 15-16).

At a continental level, especially in Africa, the notion of unity assumes paramount significance. A strong sense of unity deeply rooted: the shift to democracy would not have been feasible without the prevalence of a spirit of unity and numerous acts of brave compassion from individuals throughout the African continent. Consequently, this idea forms the foundation of numerous legal frameworks in Africa. (Pitrone, 2023: 258). Regionalization means full solidarity.

While the fundamental objectives of regional economic organizations (REOs), such as promoting economic growth, development, and integration, remain consistent over time, these organizations can undergo significant transformations when faced with security threats. Terms like "crises" and "critical junctures" are used to describe these phenomena, and scholars suggest that certain constraints may be relaxed during these periods, allowing unique factors to have a greater influence. However, it is essential to consider systemic, organizational, and ideational factors to understand the decisions made by actors regarding organizational changes. The propositions related to systemic and power-related factors, organizational factors and functional needs,

and ideational and social factors are discussed in the context of regional integration (Brown, 2018: 13).

There are theories that have been brought into focus to explain regional integrations. These can be grouped under two headings: a] Political Science Theories, and b] Economic Theories to integration. While in Economic Theories are the Customs Union and the Optimal Currency Area; Political Science Theories are Realism, Functionalism, Neo-Functionalism, Intergovernmentalism, Transactionalism, Institutionalism and Regime Theory. The study explored various regional integration theories with different focuses. Socio-political and economic issues are interconnected and dependent on each other. Regional integration is a multifaceted process (Anadi, 2005: 134-153).

The EAC and ECOWAS discussed in this study were more or less influenced by the above-mentioned theoretical approaches during their formation and subsequent processes. A comparative analysis of these two integrations will now be presented.

**Geographical Scope:** EAC; Encompassing countries such as Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, South Sudan and Democratic Republic of the Congo the EAC operates in East Africa. ECOWAS; In West Africa, the ECOWAS covers countries like Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Ivory Coast, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo.

**Number of Members:** EAC; Comprising 7 member countries. ECOWAS, encompassing 15 member countries.

**Economic Integration:** EAC; It promotes economic integration through measures like the establishment of a common market and efforts towards a common currency, known as the East African Shilling. ECOWAS; It supports economic integration through initiatives such as customs unions and free trade zones. Additionally, the ECOWAS has plans for a common currency called "ECO."

**Political Stability and Security:** EAC; The EAC endeavors to achieve political stability and preserve peace. It possesses the ability to intervene

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in regional crises and conducts peacekeeping operations. ECOWAS; The ECOWAS works on achieving regional stability and security through political solutions and peacekeeping operations. Under the framework of ECOMOG (Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group), it has carried out peacekeeping operations.

Social Development and Human Rights: EAC; Engaging in activities related to social development, such as education, healthcare, women's rights, and children's rights, the EAC also formulates and implements policies to protect human rights. ECOWAS; Focused on protecting human rights, children's rights, women's rights, and worker's rights, the ECOWAS develops and implements policies related to social development and human rights.

Trade and Economic Growth: EAC; Working towards facilitating trade, reducing trade barriers, and increasing trade among member countries, the EAC aims to promote economic growth and create job opportunities. ECOWAS; It targets facilitating trade through measures like free trade zones and customs unions to enhance economic growth and improve the welfare of member countries.

EAC and ECOWAS share similar objectives regarding regional integration, but they differ in terms of geographical scope, the number of members, economic integration measures, political stability and security, social development, and trade. Each organization develops policies and programs tailored to the dynamics and needs of its respective region.

The two organizations that make the most efforts in the context of regional integration in Africa are EAC and ECOWAS. When it comes to the implementation of the free movement of individuals, two organizations have made substantial progress in realizing their established instruments: ECOWAS (100%) and EAC (96%). Regarding social integration, ECOWAS and EAC have demonstrated commendable performance. Concerning trade integration, both ECOWAS and EAC have achieved scores exceeding 75%.

In Africa, apart from ECOWAS and EAC, which have established various institutions associated with political and institutional integration, such as a court of justice and a regional parliament, the other Regional

Economic Communities (RECs) are progressing at a comparatively slower pace. In recent years, the EAC has recognized infrastructure as a vital cornerstone in realizing its integration goals. Infrastructure stands out as one of the most crucial facilitators of successful regional integration, given its pivotal role in easing various activities, including trade, agriculture, tourism, labor mobility, and resource movement.

The EAC places emphasis on five facets of infrastructure: Road, Railway, Aviation, Communications, and Inland Waterways. Out of the 286 projects designated as priority infrastructure developments by the Heads of State in the East African Community, a total of 35 have been successfully completed and are now in operational status. Regarding other dimensions like finance, currency, infrastructure, and the environment, ECOWAS demonstrates relatively weaker performance in comparison to those aforementioned areas. In fact, the scores could have been less favorable if it were not for ECOWAS's inclusion of West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA), a sub-regional community encompassing 8 out of the 15 ECOWAS member states. UEMOA's notable accomplishments in the realms of finance and currency represent significant assets for ECOWAS. Considering these collective achievements, the evaluation concludes that ECOWAS has achieved a performance level that, while lower, is still deemed acceptable. One of the contributing factors to these performance ratings for ECOWAS is the organization's struggles in executing protocols, plans, and programs pertaining to finance, infrastructure, and currency. Certainly, these initiatives exist, but for various reasons, their implementation has progressed slowly. (African Integration Report, 2021: 18-24, 66, 78).

Within the framework of EAC and ECOWAS; this research has recognized the economic, cultural, political, and African identity dimensions within the context of the quest for reintegration. The central point is that Africa necessitates a distinct form of transition, one that involves minds liberated from the legacy of colonization, transitioning towards a new era that benefits African citizens. This period should focus on the realization of Africa's sovereignty as a whole, rather than just the power of individual states. The vision entails the actualization of free movement, infused with the values and principles of Pan-Africanism, and

a genuine commitment to the unity, independence, and sovereignty of Africa (Kidane, 2018: 93-94).

### CONCLUSION

This study aims to present the institutional structures of EAC and ECOWAS and examine the contributions of these two organizations to the development in Africa within the context of integration. The study is based on a literature review. The comparative study of two regional integrations (EAC and ECOWAS) highlights the significance of this article. It has been observed that there are academic articles, theses, reports, official websites of EAC and ECOWAS, research papers, and books available on regional integration efforts, particularly in Africa, such as EAC and ECOWAS. However, the number of academic studies and research conducted in Türkiye on regional integrations is limited compared to other fields. In general, the quantity and scope of studies related to EAC and ECOWAS in Turkish academic literature are narrower compared to more common regional integration organizations like the EU. This indicates the need for further research and academic interest to be encouraged in this subject.

EAC (East African Community) and ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States), two regional integrations, play an important role in the context of the African continent and make a range of contributions. They strive for political stability and the preservation of peace among member countries, supporting stability and security in the region through mechanisms such as conflict resolution, prevention of political crises, and peacekeeping operations. They prioritize social and economic development, aiming to reduce social inequalities, improve living standards, and protect human rights.

They develop and implement policies in areas such as labor and child rights, healthcare, education, and women's rights. They promote solidarity among member countries and support cooperation in areas such as information sharing, interpersonal relationships, technology transfer, and joint projects. These organizations facilitate economic growth by promoting job opportunities, enhancing welfare, reducing trade barriers through measures like customs unions and free trade

zones, and encouraging economic integration among member countries to facilitate trade and motivate economic growth. All of these actions contribute to fostering friendly relations among countries in the region and strengthening regional integration.

On a global scale, regional integration organizations such as EAC and ECOWAS enhance regional representation and promote global cooperation, supporting efforts to find solutions to global issues by collaborating with continental and international actors. This contributes to the development of more effective and comprehensive policies at the global level. Through their efforts in humanitarian and social development, EAC and ECOWAS contribute to social justice and pave the way for global sustainable and equitable development. By promoting economic development and investments, EAC and ECOWAS enhance the welfare of member countries while also contributing to global economic growth. These organizations support the growth of global trade and facilitate trade through the establishment of free trade zones, thus promoting global economic integration. EAC and ECOWAS play a significant role worldwide and serve as essential actors for regional stability and a secure world.

EAC and ECOWAS have identified areas where improvements are needed for deeper economic integration, counter-terrorism efforts, ensuring human and societal security, industrialization, achieving economic diversification, enhancing infrastructure development, reducing trade barriers, and ensuring political stability. These integrations need to further develop these areas. The potential strength of these two integrations lies in areas such as environmental protection, sustainable development, security, and peace. Efforts should be made to unleash this potential and implement measures to enhance social and economic development, promote trade, and improve functionality. These potential contributions and functionalities demonstrate that regional integration organizations, specifically EAC and ECOWAS, can play a significant role in Africa and globally in terms of economic, social, and political aspects.

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