

Comparative Study of Southern Africa Development Commission (sadc) and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in Conflict Management: The Case of Southern and Western Africa Sub-Regions

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Abstract

The persistent conflicts in different parts of Africa have continued to negatively affect the progress of the region in many of its sectors. This research comparatively delves into their effectiveness and approaches to addressing conflicts in their respective regions. Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) are regional economic communities established to promote economic integration, peace, and stability within Southern and West Africa, respectively. A qualitative method of study is adopted for this work. Secondary sources were obtained from books, Journals, conference proceedings, newspapers, magazines, and internet sources. Data collected was analysed through descriptive and content analysis. The structural-functional theory is adopted as the underpinning theory of analysis. The findings reveal that ECOWAS and SADC have played vital roles in conflict management in Africa. It is concluded that they have applied different strategies in achieving their objectives set for conflict management. The study recommended that cooperation among regional organisations will improve the success of conflict management in Africa. The Policy Implication of this work is that it will help policymakers to redesign their policies on matters of conflict. It is therefore suggested that further studies should focus on the cooperation of world organizations in conflict management.

Keywords: comparative study, conflict, development, subregion, ecowas, sadc.

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

African political systems have consistently been vulnerable to recurring disruptions of peace and stability, a persistent issue primarily attributable to the actions of various armed groups and individuals (Chidozie and Joshua, 2015; UN, 2023). These armed groups have resorted to employing highly destructive methods, as documented by Adeyeye (2017). Alarming as it may be, recent times have witnessed an increase in the severity of these threats, with terrorism emerging as a significant and alarming force. This pernicious influence of terrorism has been underscored and emphasized by Ewi and

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Anning (2006), who have accentuated its detrimental impact on the threat landscape, contributing to a massive upswing in civilian casualties.

Consequently, the rapid and exponential rise in terrorism and other forms of violence in the post-independent African context has served as a wake-up call, sparking extensive and far-reaching discussions aimed at unraveling the underlying causes behind this distressing surge. Onor et al (2022) maintained that there are several factors responsible for many African problems. Notably, these causes encompass a broad range, ranging from the proliferation of insurgencies, full-scale interstate conflicts, and protracted civil wars, all of which contribute to instability and insecurity across the continent.

Academics and researchers have diligently delved into the roots of this complex issue, identifying critical factors that contribute to violence and instability in Africa. In particular, poor economic conditions, low levels of education, and historical determinants have emerged as pivotal contributors (Kieh, 2009; Joshua, et al 2021). Furthermore, the breakdown in security itself might be indicative of a broader and worrisome trend - the declining state capacity, a development exacerbated and compounded by the intricate web of racial, ethnic, tribal, and religious divisions that intertwine within African societies.

Amidst this prevailing landscape of instability, the Southern and Western regions of Africa have suffered from conflicts and violence, experiencing an unfair proportion of the turmoil. Alongside the devastating civil conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone, these regions have witnessed disturbing acts of violence, manifesting in countries like Cote d'Ivoire. Equally disconcerting is the continued escalation of terrorism's impact in member countries of regional organizations, such as Mozambique, Nigeria, and Niger, among others.

These regions, struggling with their state capacity to effectively address and mitigate conflicts, have found recourse in the intervention and support of regional organizations. Across the vast expanse of Africa, several regional organizations play indispensable roles, with the South African Development Community (SADC) leading the way in the Southern region. Established in 1992, SADC initially focused on fostering economic integration among Southern African states before expanding its mandate to include defense and security issues, as a direct consequence of the anti-apartheid struggle (Albuquerque and Wiklund, 2015).

On the other hand, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) serves as the predominant regional organization, bearing the crucial responsibility of facilitating and coordinating collective actions in the Western sub-region. Founded in 1975, ECOWAS came into being with the explicit purpose of promoting economic relationships and unity among member states. Over time, the organization's mandate underwent evolution and adaptation, responding to the proliferation of conflicts in the region (De Wet, 2013). The early protocols of ECOWAS strengthened signatory states to address diverse forms of local and global crises, with leaders recognizing the need for a more enduring, fortified security framework after Liberia's collapse into lawlessness during the 1980s (Anning, 2006).

With their prominent and pivotal positions, both SADC and ECOWAS have taken center stage in managing conflicts within their respective regions, particularly in the post-Cold

War era. This period witnessed the launch of various peace operations, which led to the development and implementation of numerous strategies and approaches to tackle the ever-looming threat of violent conflict. Nonetheless, despite several decades since their establishment, it remains critically important to subject these organizations' conflict management responses to thorough examination and assessment of their successes and challenges.

To address this pressing need for evaluation, this study seeks to embark on an exhaustive and in-depth exploration and analysis of the conflict management mechanisms operating on the African continent. The study endeavours to delve deeply into the internal structures of these regional organizations, dissecting and scrutinizing the pivotal mechanisms and frameworks that facilitate the implementation of conflict management programs within their domains. The anticipated findings and outcomes of this meticulous study hold immense promise, as they are expected to provide invaluable insights for enhancing conflict management strategies, thus fortifying, and bolstering regional peace, stability, and prosperity in Africa.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

African political systems have long grappled with recurring disruptions of peace and stability, often attributed to the activities of various armed groups and individuals. These security threats span a complex array of issues, ranging from rebellions to civil wars and terrorism, posing significant challenges to both the West African and South African sub-regions. Consequently, there is an urgent and critical need for strengthening the linkages between security, democracy, and governance in these regions.

In recent times, the severity and frequency of these security threats have escalated, amplifying concerns over the increasing fragmentation of political authority across societies. Moreover, the rise of sub-state armed actors exerting political influence and the fragmentation of loyalties among official military and security groups add further complexity to the security landscape (Anning, 2006). To address these pervasive challenges, effective conflict management and resolution techniques are essential to identify and tackle the root causes of conflicts proactively. However, as state capacities across the African continent decline in their ability to effectively manage these conflicts, regional organizations have assumed a pivotal role. These organizations act as mechanisms for pooling collective resources and strengths to compensate for state capacity deficits, which exacerbate security and conflict situations.

Despite the engagement and efforts of regional organizations, it is crucial to comprehensively examine and assess the effectiveness of the conflict management responses employed by the South African Development Community (SADC) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The central research problem to be addressed in this study is the evaluation of the efficacy of SADC and ECOWAS in managing and mitigating conflicts and violence in the Southern and Western regions of Africa.

The study aims to undertake an in-depth and rigorous investigation to illuminate the challenges confronted by SADC and ECOWAS as they endeavour to assist and enhance state capacity in addressing conflicts and violence within their respective regions. By

critically analysing the historical context, the evolution of mandates, and the operational performance of these regional organizations in conflict management, this study seeks to provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of regional responses to violence and conflict in Africa.

The ultimate objective is to make substantial contributions towards enhancing future conflict management strategies within SADC and ECOWAS, with the overarching goal of fostering sustainable peace, stability, and security in the Southern and Western regions of Africa. Through an interdisciplinary approach, including qualitative data analysis, case studies, and expert interviews, the research will identify and analyze the strategies and initiatives undertaken by SADC and ECOWAS to address conflicts and violence. Additionally, the study will assess the coordination and cooperation between regional organizations and member states, as well as their engagement with international partners and stakeholders, to shed light on critical pathways for enhancing their conflict management responses.

Thus, the research seeks to address a significant gap in understanding and evaluating the effectiveness of conflict management approaches within the African continent, with a specific focus on SADC and ECOWAS. By providing valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities faced by these regional organizations, the study aims to add to the collective pursuit of peace, stability, and prosperity in the Southern and Western regions of Africa.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Generally, the study seeks to examine the conflict management approach and strategies of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern Africa Development Commission (SADC).

In specific terms, it aspires to attain the following objectives:

1. Ascertain the differences in the institutional structure of ECOWAS and SADC, and how these differences impact their conflict management approaches.
2. Identify the key similarities and differences in conflict resolution mechanisms adopted by ECOWAS and SADC
3. Ascertain the extent of reliance of ECOWAS and SADC on military and diplomatic instruments in conflict management.
4. Identify the major challenges facing ECOWAS and SADC in their conflict resolution effort, and how they address them.

1.4 Research Questions

The following questions guide the study:

1. How do the institutional structures of ECOWAS and SADC differ, and how does this impact their conflict management approaches?
2. What are the key similarities and differences in the conflict resolution mechanisms employed by ECOWAS and SADC in conflict management?

3. To what extent do ECOWAS and SADC rely on diplomatic versus military interventions in conflict management?
4. What are the major challenges facing ECOWAS and SADC in their conflict management effort?

1.5 Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses stated in alternative form have been formulated to guide the study.

H1: The institutional differences between ECOWAS and SADC significantly influence their conflict management approaches.

H1: ECOWAS and SADC share certain similarities in their conflict management mechanisms.

H1: ECOWAS and SADC rely on diplomatic interventions and military interventions in conflict management.

H1: ECOWAS and SADC encounter major challenges and obstacles in their conflict management.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The significance of this thesis lies in its comprehensive examination of conflict management approaches in two prominent regional organizations, ECOWAS and SADC. By addressing the research questions, the study shall shed light on crucial aspects of their institutional structures, conflict resolution mechanisms, and intervention strategies. The findings will offer valuable insights into the differences and similarities between these organizations, allowing policymakers and scholars to better understand their effectiveness in managing conflicts within their respective regions.

This study would, through its research questions, provide critical knowledge for policymakers seeking to strengthen regional organizations' conflict resolution capabilities through its exploration of the institutional structures of ECOWAS and SADC. Furthermore, identifying key similarities and differences in their approaches would enable the identification of best practices and potential areas for improvement in conflict resolution efforts. Importantly, its analysis would also provide valuable insights into their preferred methods of intervention, allowing policymakers to gauge their effectiveness and assess the implications of opting for one approach over the other. Also, the investigation of the major challenges and obstacles faced by ECOWAS and SADC in their conflict resolution efforts and how they address them would offer valuable lessons for enhancing their conflict management capabilities and inform strategies for overcoming barriers to successful resolution.

Overall, this study would contribute significantly to the field of conflict management and regional organizations by offering a comprehensive analysis of ECOWAS and SADC's conflict resolution approaches. Its findings would provide practical guidance for policymakers and contribute to the academic understanding of conflict management in regional contexts.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The scope of the study is to conduct a comprehensive examination of conflict management approaches in two regional organizations, ECOWAS and SADC.

Therefore, this thesis will focus on describing the institutional structures of both ECOWAS and SADC to understand their impact on conflict management approaches. It will also analyze the conflict resolution mechanisms employed by these organizations to identify similarities and differences in their strategies.

Furthermore, the study will examine their reliance on diplomatic versus military interventions in managing conflicts. Lastly, the research would investigate the major challenges faced by both organizations in their conflict resolution efforts and explore how they should address these challenges. By addressing these research objectives, the study aims to contribute valuable insights to the field of conflict management in regional contexts and offer practical guidance for policymakers.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

During this study, the researcher envisaged to encounter several limitations that should be acknowledged. Firstly, data availability and access proved to be a challenge. A comprehensive examination of conflict management approaches in ECOWAS and SADC required access to a vast amount of data from various sources, including official documents, reports, and interviews. However, the availability and access to such data were not always straightforward, especially as the organizations were not transparent or if the data was not readily accessible.

Secondly, time constraints were an issue. Conducting a comprehensive examination of two prominent regional organizations ECOWAS and SADC is inherently time-consuming. The study involved gathering data from different periods and analyzing historical trends, which posed limitations on the depth of analysis or the scope of data that could be covered.

Thirdly, it is important to note that the findings and insights that shall be drawn from this study may not be easily generalizable to other regional organizations or conflict contexts. The study shall focus specifically on ECOWAS and SADC and their conflict management approaches, since different regions and organizations may have unique characteristics and dynamics that were not explored in this research.

Additionally, the analysis of conflict management approaches and institutional structures involved subjective interpretation of data and information. Different researchers or analysts may interpret the same data differently, potentially leading to biased conclusions or interpretations. Furthermore, while the study aimed to identify the impact of institutional structures on conflict management approaches, it may not establish causality definitively. Other underlying factors and variables beyond the scope of this study could influence conflict management strategies.

Moreover, it is crucial to recognize that regional organizations like ECOWAS and SADC are dynamic, and their institutional structures, conflict management approaches, and strategies may change over time. The study would capture their current state, but future changes might affect the applicability of the findings in the long term. These limitations

should be taken into consideration while interpreting the study's findings and drawing conclusions.

1.9 Operationalization of Basic Concepts

The terms that will be occurring almost always in this work are given operational definition as follows:

1. African Political Systems: Refers to the structures, institutions, and processes that govern and shape political decision-making, governance, and power distribution across the African continent.
2. Disruptions of Peace and Stability: This signifies the recurring incidents and events that undermine and disturb the tranquillity, order, and harmony within African societies, leading to instability and insecurity.
3. Armed Groups and Actors: Encompasses various organized entities and individuals that employ weapons and violence to advance their interests, objectives, or causes within the context of conflicts and security threats.
4. Security Threats: Refers to a broad spectrum of challenges that pose risks to the safety, well-being, and integrity of individuals, communities, and states, including rebellions, civil wars, and terrorism.
5. Sub-state Armed Actors: Refers to armed entities that operate at a level below that of the state, exerting political influence and control over specific regions or communities.
6. Conflict Management: Encompasses the strategies, policies, and actions aimed at preventing, mitigating, and resolving conflicts in a manner that promotes peace, stability, and reconciliation.
7. Regional Organizations: Denotes intergovernmental entities, such as the South African Development Community (SADC) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), that bring together countries within a specific geographic region to promote cooperation, integration, and collective action.
8. State Capacity: Represents the ability of a state to govern, deliver services, and maintain law and order within its territory effectively and efficiently.
9. Conflict Resolution: This signifies the process of peacefully addressing and settling conflicts, fostering understanding, and finding solutions to disputes.
7. Peace Operations: Represents the collective efforts of regional organizations and international actors to facilitate peacekeeping, peacebuilding, and conflict resolution initiatives in conflict-affected regions.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A contextual overview and evaluation of previously published studies and literature on various issues are provided by the review of relevant literature.

2.1 Conceptualizing Conflict Management

Conflict management is a multifaceted concept that can be interpreted in various ways. However, it is widely acknowledged that effective conflict management encompasses the positive handling of conflicts, as discussed by Nwosu and Makinde in 2014. Nevertheless, there is an ongoing scholarly discourse and debate regarding the true essence of conflict management and its constituent elements. Most existing literature predominantly examines conflict management from a managerial and organizational standpoint. For instance, Rahim (2001) explored conflict management through an organizational lens, delving into various theoretical perspectives and classical viewpoints on conflict, including those from Philosophical figures (such as Plato, Aristotle, Hobbes, Locke, Hegel, Marx, and Dewey), Biological science (Darwin), and Sociology (Simmel, Mayo, Parsons, and Coser) (Rahim, 2001).

Rahim emphasizes the shift from classical theorists who perceived conflict as inherently harmful and in need of elimination to contemporary theorists who advocate for managing and learning from conflicts. Furthermore, the same author critiques the prevalent bias toward conflict resolution, which focuses on reduction, avoidance, and elimination, as opposed to the broader conflict management spectrum, which involves learning, development, and skillful management (Rahim, 2002). Rahim identifies key criteria for effective conflict management, including the promotion of learning and effectiveness, meeting the needs of stakeholders, and adhering to ethical standards. Additionally, the author outlines various styles for handling interpersonal conflicts, such as integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding, and compromising. Furthermore, Rahim underscores the importance of accurate diagnosis as a fundamental prerequisite for appropriate conflict management.

Zartman (2008) recognizes the pivotal role of conflict management in the context of international security and its contribution to conflict resolution through negotiation. Negotiations and conflict are depicted as universal and inherent social practices. Jeong (2010) adds to the discussion by documenting that conflict management encompasses a range of approaches, including compromise, negotiated settlements, courts, and arbitration. The focus is on managing complex conflicts, such as peace-making missions in violent conflicts and ethnic struggles, by seeking win-win solutions.

Tabassum (2020) defines conflict management as an approach to avert, resolve, and prevent disagreements, conflicts, or confrontations. Literature analysis confirms that conflict resolution is now considered to be inextricably linked to human existence. According to Alimba (2018), conflict resolution has taken center stage in human endeavours. According to Howell (2014), conflict management is crucial for efficient institutional operations and influences the social, cultural, and personal growth of those who work there. As per Wong (2010) and Alimba (2018), the primary objective of conflict resolution is to avert the conflict's aftermath, which includes the devastation of lives, relationships, and infrastructure. Since stopping violence fosters a more stable and secure environment where conflict resolution attempts can start to address the root causes of the conflict, conflict management is fundamentally a prerequisite for conflict resolution (Regan, 1996).

2.2 Military Intervention

Military intervention is a multifaceted theme encompassing various topics and interpretations (Ramuhala, 2010). One of the earliest academics to voice concerns about the imprecise definition of "intervention" and its conceptual shortcomings was Rosenau (1969). As a result, there is a dearth of comprehensive information regarding the circumstances that give rise to, maintain, and terminate intervention activity. Kegley and Hermann (1996) further highlight the conceptual ambiguity surrounding military intervention, which can be classified differently based on varying indices.

A well-recognized definition, as articulated by Herbert Tillema in 1989 and also employed by Kegley and Hermann in 1996, initially revolved around conflicts featuring regular foreign military forces resulting in fewer than one thousand fatalities. Over time, Tillema broadened his definition to encompass overt military actions carried out by a nation's regular armed forces on foreign soil, where immediate combat was a distinct possibility (Tillema, 1989). Tillema's definition has a limited scope, as it excludes more discreet manifestations of international intervention, such as covert operations, military alerts, displays of force, and border incursions that do not entail territorial occupation.

Most of the literature examines the emergence of military intervention from an analytical point of view. Forbes and Hoffman (1993) consider several perspectives on the ethics of intervention, integrating theory and history to investigate if and when intervention may be appropriate. Smith (1974) discusses issues like the possibility of escalation, sovereignty, and international law as he looks at important aspects of the evolving global landscape and the potential relevance of armed intervention. Chakrabarti (1974) analyses shifting public perceptions of intervention as a tool of state policy while examining intervention in light of current calls for international control.

Schwarz (1970) investigates intervention and confrontation as doctrine and practice from a historical perspective with a contemporary focus. Dunér (1995) examines the persistent feature of military intervention in the state system and its increase since the end of the Second World War. Regan (1996) assesses third-party intervention in intrastate conflicts, identifying intervention strategies and their relative success rates. Talentino (2005) explores how and why military intervention became a defining feature of the post-Cold War international system, discussing its role in international security.

Krain (2005) analyses the efficacy of military intervention in slowing or stopping genocide and politicide, suggesting that interventions directly challenging the perpetrator or aiding the targets are effective. Rothchild (2006) argues for the use of soft intervention strategies in Africa due to limited interests and public pressures. In conclusion, military intervention remains a complex and evolving subject, shaped by various conceptual interpretations and historical perspectives. Scholars continue to explore its justifications, implications, and effectiveness in different contexts and regions.

2.3 Regional Organizations and Conflict Management Strategies

Conflict management is defined by diversity, evident in the various actions and strategies adopted to prevent, mitigate, and resolve conflicts. This diversity is equally reflected in the array of actors involved in conflict resolution and response. It is widely acknowledged that regional organizations play central roles in contemporary global conflict management

activities. These organizations participate by establishing norms and issuing statements in support of peace and security (Enuka and Nwagbo, 2018). Additionally, they undertake specific normative actions that directly contribute to peaceful conflict management by discouraging regime changes and encouraging the adoption of dispute-resolution mechanisms. Moreover, they intervene to address threats to regional stability and order (Enuka and Nwagbo, 2018).

Regional organisations are involved in diplomatic endeavours, with a specific focus on employing negotiation and mediation techniques to reconcile conflicting parties. Since disputants themselves are frequently the most suited to manage and settle conflicts, diplomatic efforts are acknowledged as essential tools in conflict management. By encouraging contact between disputing parties, particularly in situations where direct discussions appear improbable, these initiatives help to manage conflict. Warring parties are encouraged to engage in negotiations by political pressure as well as the prospect of legitimacy and reputation. Negotiations may be actively participated in by regional organisations and their representatives (Enuka and Nwagbo, 2018).

Hopmann (1996) affirms that regional organizations play an instrumental role in facilitating negotiations, clarifying positions, proposing alternatives, and applying pressure for concessions. Furthermore, these organizations may offer incentives, such as economic or political aid, to foster agreement. Notably, some regional groups take on the responsibility of being guarantors for conflict management agreements, actively participating in the implementation of peace processes.

Regional organisations participate in peacekeeping operations by sending out lightly armed forces in response to continuous hostilities and security threats, continuing along the continuum. Monitoring cease-fires, delivering aid, and taking part in post-conflict reconstruction are just a few of the tasks that peacekeeping operations entail (Diehl, 2008).

Furthermore, as Leggold and Weiss (1998) have shown, regional organisations may from time to time adopt enforcement actions; these constitute the most forceful and resource-intensive form of conflict management. These activities entail extensive military campaigns intended to protect those who have been attacked and bring peace by eliminating the elements that have caused the aggression. The effectiveness of collective military action as a deterrent is essential to enforcement. Enforcement methods fall into two categories: collective defense, which involves traditional military alliances, and collective security, which involves a coalition of governments acting through international organisations to deter or defeat aggressors.

The interventions in conflict management by regional organizations derive from the advantages they possess. Firstly, regional organizations benefit from a form of homogeneity among member states, characterized by shared development levels, historical backgrounds, ethnic or tribal roots, and similar political outlooks. This homogeneity fosters consensus and facilitates the authorization of conflict management actions, as fewer disagreements are blocking strong action. Unlike the United Nations, regional organizations are not constrained by the veto power of leading members, and some have adopted procedures to avoid deadlock (Enuka and Nwagbo, 2018).

Furthermore, these organisations can rely on extremely deep levels of social and cultural identity sharing with the people living in their geographic responsibility area. As some academics have emphasised, local governments and citizens have a natural bond with one another and a natural mistrust of outside interference. Thus, before international forces intervene, calls for regional solutions to conflicts are common. Some in the conflicting states might see the actions of a regional organisation as more legitimate, while others might be more receptive to such actions (Euka and Nwagbo, 2018:22).

2.4 Limitations to the Conflict Management Capabilities of Regional Organizations

Regional organizations play crucial roles in conflict management and often leverage their capabilities effectively. However, their ability to maximize these capabilities is contingent on overcoming specific challenges. In their article, Euka and Nwagbo (2018) assert that these challenges may primarily stem from situational constraints resulting from engagements with external threats to peace and regional powers involved in the conflict. Bryon (1984) suggests that regional organizations frequently refrain from intervening in conflicts that require action against powerful member states. Powerful members may resist pressure to support any action and, in some cases, actively sabotage regional organizations' efforts (Euka and Nwagbo, 2018).

Furthermore, the effectiveness of interventions by regional organizations may be constrained by the presence of power rivalries among member states. Diehl (2000) observes that these rivalries not only give rise to intricate conflicts but also hinder collective efforts by regional associations. Regional conflicts and grave threats to peace often stem from these rivalries.

The authority and mandates that regional organisations acquire from their member states have a significant impact on their ability to take on significant responsibilities in conflict management. Conflict management is associated with regions that have weak or nonexistent security institutions when no regional organisation is assigned to handle the crisis (Hemmer and Katzenstein, 2002). An exemplary example is the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), which prioritises social and economic cooperation above all else. As such, it is ill-suited to directly address conflicts such as the Indo-Pakistani dispute, unless it chooses to do so through an indirect, functionalist peacemaking process (Diehl, 2008).

Similarly, other regional organizations, such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), grapple with limitations stemming from their security mandates. ASEAN's actions have primarily been confined to normative declarations. While the organization has taken steps to clarify its decision-making processes, it has not committed itself to employing military force and continues to uphold its principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of its member states.

2.5 Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

On May 28, 1975, in Lagos, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was founded as a symbol of regional collaboration and the conclusion of ten years of previous international operations. At the time of the Treaty's signature, fifteen heads of state represented ECOWAS (Asante, 2000). Later, in 1976, Cape Verde joined the group as its sixteenth member (ECOWAS, 2007).

Ten years after the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) issued Resolutions 142 and 145 during its seventh session in Nairobi in February 1965, the regional organisation was born, according to Edozien and Osagie (2001). A sub-regional intergovernmental organisation was suggested by these resolutions to be established to coordinate the social and economic development of member states. The diverse economic and social dynamics among the member states of the region caused a delay in the foundation of ECOWAS.

Rodriguez (2011) highlighted that creating economic groups among independent states posed practical difficulties, leading to hesitation, and politicking from 1965 to 1972, despite the institutional support provided by the ECA, which organized research and conferences on economic integration in West Africa. The community was founded because of a sequence of meetings that were started in 1972 by General Gowon of Nigeria and President Eyadema of Togo (Edozien and Osagie, 2001). Both leaders decided to unite the Anglophone and Francophone nations to create the "heart" of a West African Economic Community. Although there were worries that linguistic differences would prevent members of the Communauté Economique de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (CEAO) from joining the larger regional organisation, this did not happen in the end (Ezenwe, 2002).

2.6 ECOWAS Interventions

ECOWAS boasts a rich history of conflict resolution interventions within the sub-region. When assessing its pivotal role in addressing regional conflicts, it becomes evident that ECOWAS possesses one of the most sophisticated mechanisms for promoting peace in Africa (Obi, 2009).

This impression can be explained by several things, one of which is the significant contribution made by the ECOWAS Cease-Fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) to the restoration of peace in times of crisis such as the Mano-River conflicts that involved Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau, Cote d'Ivoire, and Liberia.

There were several reasons why ECOWAS/ECOMOG's operations in the Liberian civil wars from 1987 to 1996 and from 1999 to 2003 were appropriate. The idea of "African solutions to African problems" propelled the involvement, which went beyond stopping additional deaths and the humanitarian disaster brought on by migrants (Obi, 2009). Other nations that have had similar interventions include Sierra Leone (1991), Guinea-Bissau (1998), Côte d'Ivoire (2010), and the Gambia (2017).

While ECOMOG and ECOMIS efforts may be credited with helping to restore peace in Liberia and Sierra Leone, it is important to recognise that other actors were also instrumental in assisting these missions. The British government organised diplomatic backing for UN action in Sierra Leone, while the United States gave logistical support to the ECOMOG force in Liberia. To liberate British captives held by rebel forces, the UK temporarily sent paratroopers into the country. Additionally, the UK and France mediated the Cote d'Ivoire civil war, which resulted in the Lanis-Marcoussis Peace Accord in 2003.

The establishment of an inclusive Transitional Government of National Reconciliation and a cease-fire agreement between the warring parties were made possible by the Peace Accord. To help the peace process and clear the way for peaceful elections, ECOWAS

then sent out a cease-fire monitoring mission known as ECOMICIC, which was primarily made up of forces from Francophone West African nations like Senegal, Benin, Niger, Togo, and Ghana (Obi, 2009). In addition, France continued to operate a military force (LICORNE) in conjunction with the ECOWAS cease-fire monitoring unit.

In May 2003, France played a key diplomatic role within the UN, and the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1479, establishing the UN Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (MINUCI) and sending seventy-six military liaison officers to support ECOWAS and French peacekeeping troops on the ground. Subsequently, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1524(2004), which established the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) and transferred MINUCI and ECOMICIC to UNOCI in April 2004.

With the passage of further UN resolutions like 1865 and 1880, these missions were prolonged until January 2010 (Obi, 2009), with the main objective being the resolution of post-election conflicts in Côte d'Ivoire (2010) and The Gambia (2016/2017). These initiatives demonstrate ECOWAS's dedication to maintaining its current norms on defense, mutual aid, and stopping unlawful government transitions. They also highlight the organization's goal of managing election-related disputes to prevent major civil wars.

To ease tensions and persuade Laurent Gbagbo to accept the results of the election and give Alassane Ouattara the reins of power, the AU and ECOWAS both dispatched diplomatic missions and arranged high-level talks in Côte d'Ivoire.

Before the AU and ECOWAS appointed a panel of five in late January 2011, there was this mediation (Cook, 2011). Even when Gbagbo first refused to concede and cede power amicably, the African Union persisted in assisting ECOWAS's peace initiatives through diplomatic means. The sides held to their stances, but AU Chairman Jean Ping even asked former South African President Thabo Mbeki to negotiate (Cook, 2011).

On December 24, the chiefs of state of the ECOWAS threatened military action, but no force was used. Later, ECOWAS dispatched President Obasanjo, a former military ruler of Nigeria, to offer an ultimatum; but this, like earlier attempts, did not result in a breakthrough (Cook, 2011). Gbagbo's isolation was becoming more apparent even as late as March 2011, when mediation efforts by the AU, ECOWAS, and other third parties had very modest results. ECOWAS refrained from directly intervening militarily in Côte d'Ivoire, in contrast to The Gambia. Rather, the de-escalation of tensions following the elections in December 2010 was mostly facilitated by conflict resolution mechanisms like negotiation, mediation, and interventions by governments and international non-governmental organizations.

In addition to Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Côte d'Ivoire, various third parties also play a significant role in conflict settlement on behalf of ECOWAS. ECOWAS has made political stability and social integration among its member nations a priority ever since it was founded in 1975 (Elgstrom, Bercovitch, and Skau, 2013; Obiozoe, Nwachukwu, and Nwachukwu, 1999). The refugee crisis that followed the civil conflicts in Sierra Leone (1991) and Liberia (1989) showed how instability in one nation may have a significant effect on the entire region. As a result, to foster stability and unity, ECOWAS has continuously participated in regional peace initiatives. It has done so by utilizing a variety of tactics, including diplomacy, mediation, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding.

2.7 Southern Africa Development Community

The South African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) in 1980 was when the Southern African Development Community (SADC) had its start. This group later changed its name to SADC after it was formally established in Windhoek. The SADCC demonstrated the traits of a security community and emphasised the need to guarantee a safe area in Africa (African Union, 2007). When the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) and the Frontline States (FLS) combined in 1992, SADC was created.

The Frontline States—Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Zambia—first met as an unofficial political coalition to attain political liberation and decrease the region's dependency on South Africa during the apartheid era (Hull and Derblon, 2009). However, as Baur and Taylor (2011) point out, the SADCC's primary objectives were to coordinate development assistance and achieve economic emancipation. The group was created by Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

The transformation of SADCC into SADC was catalyzed by significant geopolitical changes in the early 1990s, including the independence of Namibia and the end of apartheid in South Africa in 1994 (Burgess, 2009:2). Unlike its predecessor, SADC aimed to foster more extensive economic cooperation and integration in response to evolving socio-economic, political, and security imperatives. In pursuit of its mission, SADC adopted the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) in 2003 and the Strategic Indicative Plan of the Organ (SIPO) in 2004, clearly articulating its economic and security objectives (as highlighted by Van der Vleuten and Hulse in 2013).

The literature on SADC highlights its vision of creating a common future characterized by economic well-being, improved living standards, social justice, peace, and security in Southern Africa (Nieuwkerk, 2001). Scholars have recognized SADC's commitment to promoting economic growth alongside security mechanisms, leading to significant regional security achievements documented in various treaties and protocols.

The role of the SADC Secretariat, headquartered in Gaborone, has been of interest in institutional studies. Scholars emphasize its evolving functions and responsibilities, impacting regional security initiatives and enhancing operational efficiency (Nieuwkerk, 2001). However, concerns have been raised about decision-making power within SADC, mainly resting with member states, leading to challenges related to the autonomy and independence of the Secretariat (Isaksen and Tjønneland, 2001). To address these challenges, scholars recommend strengthening the Secretariat's capacity and improving the monitoring and evaluation of policy implementation.

The SADC Declaration and Treaty have been focal points of research on cooperation among member states concerning human security, non-military security, foreign diplomacy, and regional peace (Nieuwkerk, 2001). These foundational documents underscore the principles of state sovereignty, national security, peace, stability, the rule of law, democracy, and good governance as integral components of the regional cooperation framework.

The 1992 SADC Treaty holds significant importance in the literature, solidifying the region's commitment to peaceful coexistence and security under democratic rule and governance (Isaksen and Tjønneland, 2001). Moreover, studies have examined the impact of agreements such as the Agreement on Combatting Crime, which expanded SADC's membership to include Namibia, South Africa, Mauritius, the Seychelles, and the Democratic Republic.

Scholars have also explored the institutional mechanisms established by the SADC Treaty, such as the Summit of Heads of State and Government, the Tribunal for Treaty Interpretation, the Council of Ministers, and the Standing Committee of Officials (Cilliers, 1999). These mechanisms have been scrutinized for their effectiveness in ensuring oversight and operationalization within the regional organization.

The Organ on Politics, Defence, and Security (OPDS), a well-known SADC institution, has drawn scholarly attention for its role in advancing cooperative security efforts and peace promotion through dialogue, arbitration, and mediation (Ngoma, 2005). Scholars have investigated how the regional security dynamics are influenced by the guiding principles of the Organ, which prioritise equality among member states, human rights, democracy, and respect for sovereignty.

2.7.1. Theoretical Framework

The study is grounded in the Structural-Functional theory as its theoretical framework. This theory, pioneered by Almond and Powell, emphasizes that the essential and pivotal aspects of political systems are their functions, rather than their structures. According to this perspective, structures are only comprehensible in the context of the functions they serve (Kitchen, 2016; Merton, 1968).

During the 1960s, the school of structural functionalism had a significant impact on American political scientists, with prominent theorists like Gabriel Almond, Bingham Powell, David Apter, and Lucian Pye advocating for this approach. Notably, Almond played a central role as the intellectual leader and founder of the sub-field of political development (Ifeanyichukwu, 2014).

According to Ifeanyichukwu (2014), in the Structural-Functional theory, a political system is an organised framework that serves a variety of purposes, including distributive functions. The origins of this theoretical viewpoint can be found in Aristotle's writings and other ancient Greek philosophy (Susser, 1992). According to Fisher (2010), it has a long history in the social and biological sciences and originated in 17th-century France with Montesquieu's theory of the separation of powers. The idea behind this division of powers is that certain tasks are best carried out separately to maintain security and stability.

In the 1960s, Gabriel Almond and Bingham Powell introduced the structural-functional approach to comparing political systems. They argued that this approach was ideally suited for comprehending political systems, as it offered insights into the institutions (structures) and their respective functions (Potis, 2015). Furthermore, they stressed the importance of placing these institutions in a meaningful and dynamic historical context to fully grasp their significance.

As was previously indicated, Almond and Coleman (1960) classified seven functions into inputs and outputs that are shared by all political systems. These include political communication, rulemaking, rule application, rule adjudication, interest articulation, interest aggregation, and political socialisation. The remaining three functions deal with policy outputs, while the first four are related to the input side of a system's operation. Political communication plays a crucial role in bridging the gap between inputs and outputs, creating a feedback loop that sustains the system. Unlike Easton's system analysis, which primarily focuses on 'demands and supports,' Almond and Coleman's framework for categorizing inputs and outputs in political systems is comprehensive and has paved the way for a multifaceted approach to the study of politics (Fisher, 2010).

Applying structural functionalism to the roles of regional organizations in conflict management shows that these organizations serve crucial functions in maintaining stability and harmony within their respective regions. They provide mechanisms for conflict resolution, develop norms and rules to govern member states' behaviour and promote collective security through alliances. Additionally, regional organizations work proactively to prevent conflicts, offer humanitarian assistance and peacekeeping missions, and provide resources and capacity building to enhance conflict management capabilities.

Furthermore, regional organizations act as platforms for institutional cooperation and coordination among member states, fostering a sense of regional identity and unity that reduces tensions and facilitates peaceful conflict resolution. Overall, structural functionalism helps us understand how regional organizations play integral roles in managing conflicts and contributing to regional harmony and development.

2.8 Gap in Literature

While many studies have been dedicated to examining the conflict management approaches of these regional organizations individually, there is a lack of comparative studies. Additionally, there has been limited attention given to describing the institutional structures of these organizations and how they intersect or impact their conflict management approaches and effectiveness.

METHODOLOGY

Research methodology involves the methods and procedures used for the collection and analysis of materials relevant to the study. Methodology can also be seen as the relationship between theoretical stance and how research is carried out. The type of research method adopted for any study is determined by the nature of the study itself. It is important to note that most methodologies adopted in social science research may not apply to other fields, such as Arts and Physical Sciences. Therefore, the purpose of the research work directs the method to be used in conducting the research. A research method dictates the scope of the study, sources of data collection, tools for data analysis, as well as the limitations of the study.

While data analysis methods can be classified into quantitative and qualitative approaches, data collecting methodology explains the selected data sources. In this sense, one could characterise the study methodology as interpretative, which is concerned with

comprehending the essence or significance of the social environment from the individualised perspective of the individuals or events in question. As a result, qualitative observation procedures are frequently the focus of the interpretive approach.

3.1 Research Design

According to Enukoha, Okeme, and Usoro (2006), the nature and types of designs applied in any study are determined by the researcher's intentions in conducting the research. For this study, the historical design serves as the guiding principle, given that the intention is to evaluate the conflict management regimes adopted by the ECOWAS and SADC. Historical research analyses and interprets historical facts, events, and attitudes. It covers all of human history, which is as vast as life itself, but the information must be understood historically as a component of social development rather than as discrete beliefs, occurrences, or pieces of information (Osuala, 2005).

3.2 Area of the Study

The area of study selected for this study is the West and Southern Africa, which form the jurisdiction of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern Africa Development Commission (SADC). West Africa is a vast expanse of territory that is comprised of 20 countries viz: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo. Southern Africa on the other hand Southern Africa, is a region comprising the countries of Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

3.3 Population of the Study

The population of the study is drawn from the countries that make up the Southern and Western regions of Africa. Collectively, these regions are populated by a total of 511,709,297 (Worldometer, 2023).

3.4 Sample Techniques

As the adoption of appropriate sampling technique plays a pivotal role in ensuring the robustness and validity of research findings, the choice of sampling methods is driven by the need to purposefully capture relevant cases and stakeholders within the context of the comparative study of the Southern Africa Development Commission (SADC) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in conflict management across Southern and Western Africa sub-regions. By carefully employing purposeful sampling, this study aims to address the intricate complexities inherent in its research objectives, ensuring that selected cases offer a comprehensive understanding of the conflict management dynamics within the chosen regions. In applying the purposeful sampling technique, the study focused on conflicts in the Great Lakes region in Southern Africa and the Sahel region in Western Africa.

3.5 Sources of Data Collection

Secondary data constituted the major source of data for this study. This is because the conceptual problem under investigation could be addressed using secondary data. Additionally, the major reason for relying mainly on secondary data is that information

and debates on conflict management are found in documented materials. It would be impractical, if not impossible, to generate a sample size that represents the generality of opinions of millions of citizens of the member states of the sub-regional organizations on their divergent views on the conflict management style adopted by ECOWAS and SADC.

3.6 Instrument for Data Collection

The method of data collection for this thesis is the qualitative method, which involves the use of secondary sources of data. The researcher would extensively utilize desk survey literature about conflict management, including documented standard texts, specialized publications, journals, news, periodicals, and other secondary sources of information.

According to Nachmias and Nachmias (2000), there are three main explanations for the increased use of secondary data, namely conceptual, methodological, and economic reasons. These reasons are briefly examined below.

Conceptual Reasons: In certain research scenarios, secondary data may be the only available option for studying specific research problems. When faced with such situations, researchers are compelled to adopt secondary sources of data.

Methodological Reasons: This reason is based on the method, approach, or attitudes under study. The data collection method includes an explanation of the choice of sources of data chosen by a researcher.

Economic Reasons: The economic reason is based on the fact that primary research can be a costly endeavour, and the expenses involved may not be affordable for independent researchers, and postgraduate, and graduate students. Using existing data (secondary sources) is considerably cheaper than collecting new data.

Rich, precise, and reliable data are produced by qualitative research, which adds to a deeper comprehension of the situation (Anderson, 2006). Theory and analysis are always interacting with one another. Researchers analyse qualitative data to look for trends, such as changes over time or potential causes between variables (Anderson, 2006). In this study, the researcher heavily relied on the internet to source data on conflict management regimes of ECOWAS and SADC, as well as documentary materials, which aided in the examination, analysis, and interpretation of the generated data. Data was also sourced from journals, bulletins, conference papers, theses/dissertations, textbooks, encyclopedias, newspapers, magazines, articles, committee reports, and other national, regional, and global publications.

3.7 Validity of Instrument for Data Collection

Validity is defined as the extent to which an instrument can measure what is expected to be measured, in terms of prediction, correction, contents, and general knowledge (Osuala, 2005). The instrument of data collection was subjected to scrutiny, and subsequent validation, by my supervisor.

3.8 Reliability of the Instrument

The degree to which an instrument produces consistent results is referred to as reliability. A test is considered dependable if it regularly measures the same thing. The test-retest method was used to guarantee the instrument's dependability.

3.9 Method of Data Analysis

For this thesis, the researcher has adopted the content or textual analysis method to analyse data. A methodology used in the social sciences to examine communication content is called content analysis. Instead of comparing content based only on listeners' impressions, it entails summarising any type of content by counting different characteristics of the content, allowing for a more impartial evaluation. Analysed content can take any form, however, it is frequently written down before examination. Print media, television shows, other recordings, the internet, and live events can all be considered sources.

Print media (articles from newspapers, magazines, books, and catalogs), other writings (web pages, ads, boards, posters, and graffiti), broadcast media (radio shows, news items, TV shows), other recordings (pictures, drawings, videos, films, and music), live situations (speeches, interviews, plays, concerts), and observations (gestures, spaces, and items in stores) are a few examples of content instruments.

A common quantitative technique in political science, history, and philology is content analysis. It enables researchers to incorporate substantial amounts of textual data and methodically identify significant structures within its communication content, hence developing qualities like keyword frequencies. Nonetheless, to offer insightful interpretations of the material being studied, such massive volumes of textual data need to be meticulously examined.

Dad Robertson, for example, developed a coding frame to compare American and British party rivalry patterns. The Manifesto Research Group carried it further in 1953 to use a comparative text analysis approach to examine political parties' policy statements. Since the early 1980s, content analysis has grown in significance as a method for evaluating media profiles and gauging the effectiveness of public relations campaigns. As part of media assessment or analysis, it is paired with media data, such as circulation, readership, number of viewers and listeners, and frequency of publication.

Furthermore, futurists have employed content analysis to pinpoint trends. John Nisbitt, for instance, utilised content analysis of US media to produce his well-known 1982 study on "Megatrends" (Babbie, 2010). The underlying premise is that frequently repeated words and phrases typically represent significant communication issues.

As such, simple metrics are the foundation of quantitative content analysis; these include keyword frequencies, radio and television time counts, and column centimeters/inches for newspapers. Content analysis extends beyond simple word counts, though. Any communication material, including speech, written text, interviews, and photos that are categorised and classed, can be examined qualitatively through content analysis.

Although content analysis frequently examines written words, in some instances, when the analysis's findings are presented as percentages and numbers, it might be viewed as a quantitative method. Since the data used to test the hypotheses are primarily qualitative and only come from secondary sources, the analysis of the data in this study was based on the secondary sources that were found in the research.

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter centers on the presentation of results and discussion of findings.

4.1 Organizational Structures of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) currently consists of fifteen member countries, boasting a collective population of approximately 230 million people. Notably, Nigeria stands as the most populous member of ECOWAS. The official languages used by the ECOWAS member states are as follows: English is the official language in Liberia and the former English colonies of Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone; Portuguese is used in the former Portuguese colonies of Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau; and French is spoken primarily in former French colonies like Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Senegal, and Togo.

The foundation for ECOWAS was laid in 1975 through a treaty, with the overarching goal of fostering cooperation, integration, and the establishment of an economic union in West Africa. This treaty primarily aimed to enhance living standards, drive economic growth, nurture relationships among member states, and contribute to the overall progress and development of the African continent (ECOWAS, 1975).

In 1993, the Revised Treaty was introduced to expedite the integration process in West Africa, ensuring peace and security, as outlined in Article 4 - Fundamental Principles. It also led to the establishment of new supranational institutions. These institutions encompass the executive arm, comprising the Conference of Heads of State and Government, the Council of Ministers, and administrative support from the Executive Secretariat. Additionally, it introduced the legislative arm, known as the Community Parliament, the Economic and Social Council, responsible for trade policy matters, and the Community Court of Justice for judiciary-related issues. Furthermore, ECOWAS established financial institutions, including the ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development, ECOWAS Regional Investment Bank, ECOWAS Regional Development Fund, and various specialized agencies.

The Revised Treaty brought five key innovations, such as the application of supranational decisions, expanded community programs to include economic and fiscal policy harmonization, self-financing budgets for institutions via the introduction of the community levy, and cooperation in political matters.

The ECOWAS Parliament (ECOWAS-P) was established under the 1993 Revised Treaty, initially designed as a platform for dialogue, consultation, and consensus-building to promote integration (ECOWAS Parliament, 2006). However, it operates in an advisory capacity and lacks specific decision-making authority within the community. The Parliament offers recommendations to relevant community institutions but does not possess binding power over national governments. Its members are not directly elected; instead, they are chosen by the national parliaments of member states.

The ECOWAS Parliament is composed of 115 seats, with each of the fifteen member states holding at least five seats. The remaining seats are allocated proportionally based on population, resulting in Nigeria having 35 seats, Ghana 8, Côte d'Ivoire 7, and Burkina

Faso, Guinea, Mali, Niger, and Senegal each having 6 seats. Other countries, such as Benin, Cape Verde, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Togo, possess 5 seats each (ECOWAS Parliament, 2006).

The Parliament assumes a consultative role on various issues, encompassing human rights, telecommunications, health, education, and treaty revisions. Although it functions as a deliberative body rather than a full-fledged legislature, it maintains a regional focus and provides continuity to political dialogue while contributing to technical analysis of social issues about regional integration (RI).

Efforts have been undertaken to elevate the ECOWAS Parliament into a fully-fledged legislative body, with procedures initiated in August 2012 to attain this status through a supplementary draft protocol submitted to the Authority of Heads of State and Governments (ECOWAS Parliament, 2012). Despite challenges associated with working within established legal frameworks and protocols, the Parliament plays a vital role within the regional framework, enhancing ECOWAS's effectiveness in addressing regional matters.

4.1.1 ECOWAS Interventions in Conflicts

Since its establishment as an economic group, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has evolved into a vital organization for security and conflict management in the region. Throughout the 20th century, it has successfully intervened in various conflicts, contributing to stability and peace in West Africa.

Liberia

In May 1990, the Liberian Council of Churches, in conjunction with Muslim leaders and prominent Liberian figures, made an appeal to the United Nations for assistance, but their request was declined due to the non-interference clause about member states' internal affairs (Aboagye, 1999). Additionally, ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) also sought intervention but encountered resistance in their efforts. At the 13th Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS in Banjul, Gambia, former Nigerian President Ibrahim Babangida proposed the establishment of a Standing Mediation Committee (SMC).

This proposed committee, consisting of four members, was intended to mediate in inter or intra-state conflicts. Although peace talks were slated for July 1990 between President Doe's government and the NPFL (National Patriotic Front of Liberia), the NPFL rejected the ceasefire offer, perceiving it as an invasion force. Nevertheless, the ECOWAS Standing Mediation Committee proceeded with the creation of an ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in Liberia, to restore order in the country and prepare for elections (Adibe, 1997).

The ECOWAS Peace Plan entailed an immediate ceasefire, the surrender of arms, the establishment of an interim government, the conduct of free and fair elections overseen by ECOWAS, and cooperation with the SMC (ECOWAS, 1990). The deployment of ECOMOG troops played a crucial role in stabilizing Liberia, despite encountering challenges related to a lack of pre-deployment training, limited geographical knowledge, and insufficient logistical support (Aboagye, 1999).

Sierra Leone

The Sierra Leonean conflict, like the Liberian civil war with the NPFL, began with a small number of RUF fighters but escalated over six years, leading to RUF gaining control in 1997. The Kabbah government attempted to resolve the civil war through discussions with the RUF, resulting in the Yamoussoukro peace agreement in November 1996. However, RUF's refusal to disarm and surrender their arms led to a coup in 1997, overthrowing Kabbah's presidency (Osita, 2006). ECOWAS, the OAU, and other organizations worked towards resolving the coup, and eventually, ECOMOG, with the help of the Sierra Leone Civil Defense

Force removed the military junta, reinstating President Kabbah in 1998. A ceasefire agreement was signed in May 1999, followed by the Lomé Peace Accord in July 1999 (Reno, 2000). The United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) was established to support the peace agreement. Despite some setbacks, the conflict was resolved, and Kabbah was re-elected in 2002 (World Report, 2009). ECOMOG faced challenges due to Sierra Leone's economic situation, unfamiliarity with the topography, and lack of proper communication and logistics (ECOMOG Summit, 1997).

Gambia

In Gambia, President Jammeh initially accepted his electoral defeat in January 2017 but later retracted his acceptance and called for another election, claiming "unacceptable abnormalities" (Hartmann, 2017). ECOWAS, together with the AU and the UN, recognized Barrow's government as legitimate, and Jammeh's refusal to step down was seen as a threat to regional peace. ECOWAS initiated negotiations, but Jammeh's resistance led to the threat of military intervention. Eventually, Jammeh agreed to step down and went into exile in Equatorial Guinea (Oladipo, 2017). ECOWAS formed the ECOWAS Military Intervention in The Gambia (ECOMIG) to ensure peace during the transition period.

4.1.2 ECOWAS Conflict Management Mechanisms

Aggression in West Africa persisted in increasing in the late 1970s, giving rise to the myth that security and economic integration could not coexist. At first, there were no security-related clauses in the Treaty of Lagos. In response, the Protocol on Non-Aggression (PNA), the ECOWAS's first defense cooperation pact, was created in April 1978. To prevent intrastate conflicts, participants in the PNA were obliged to abstain from engaging in or promoting acts of aggression (ECOWAS, 1978). Third-party intervention was not, however, adequately addressed by this protocol.

Subsequently, a second security-focused agreement known as the Protocol on Mutual Assistance in Defence (PMAD) was established during a summit in Sierra Leone in 1981. However, it wasn't until 1986 that the PMAD became operational. This protocol stipulated that, in the event of a conflict, ECOWAS would assist, upon written request from the Head of State of the affected member state, in the form of a fully armed and combat-ready military unit composed of personnel from member states (ECOWAS, 1981). Unfortunately, this protocol exclusively addressed external threats and didn't extend to internal conflicts. The civil wars in Sierra Leone and Liberia during the 1980s highlighted the limitations of the PMAD.

Following the signing of the revised ECOWAS treaty in July 1993, additional commitments were made to enhance the swift and effective prevention and resolution of both intra and inter-state conflicts (ECOWAS, 1993). As part of these efforts, the Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping, and Security was adopted on October 31, 1998, and came into effect on December 10, 1999, in Lomé, Togo (ECOWAS, 1999). Commonly known as the Mechanism, it significantly improved ECOWAS' conflict prevention and resolution strategies and effectively bridged the gap between the PNA and the PMAD. Additionally, the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance (2001) was one of ECOWAS's earlier initiatives.

The core organizations within ECOWAS include the ECOWAS Community Parliament, the Executive Secretariat, the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, and Resolution, Peace and Security, the Authority of Heads of State and Government, the Council of Ministers, the Community Court of Justice, and six Specialized Technical Commissions (Bakhoun, 2010). These organizations, including the Mediation and Security Council (MSC) of ECOWAS, play a vital role in shaping and implementing the organization's peace and security objectives. The primary framework for matters related to peace and security is the Office of the Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace, and Security (PAPS).

Other organizations within ECOWAS include WACSOF, the Inter-Governmental Action Group against Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing in West Africa (GIABA), and the Office for Humanitarian Affairs of the Commission. The Council of Elders, the ECOWAS Standby Forces (ESF), and the Defence and Security Commission (DSC) constitute the three principal organizations within the MSC. The Mediation and Security Council holds significant influence as the institutional decision-making body for regional peace and security within the system. Tasked with representing the Authority of Heads of State and Government, the MSC plays a pivotal role in making decisions essential to the mechanism, such as mediation interventions or peacekeeping deployments (Abass, 2000, 215).

For Peace Support Operations (PSO), the ECOWAS Standby Forces (ESF) were formed, with the military, law enforcement, and civilian elements gathered from ECOWAS member nations (ECOWAS, 1999). The ESF's logistical, administrative, and technical needs are evaluated by the Defence and Security Commission (DSC). The DSC consists of the Committee of Chiefs of Defence Staff, which oversees military affairs, and the Committee of Chiefs of Security Service, which offers recommendations on subjects about the police and civilian community.

The Council of Elders was established to engage in preventive diplomacy. It is made up of well-known and esteemed individuals who have been selected to act as ECOWAS's facilitators and mediators (Ismail 2008, 25). In certain crises, the Council of Elders frequently goes on preliminary and exploratory expeditions. The mandates issued under previous protocols enabled ECOWAS to achieve a great deal of work once it decided to concentrate on conflict resolution and prevention. Nonetheless, there were problems with the 1999 Mechanism's provisions about conflict prevention.

As a result, in 2008, the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF) was established to enhance the achievement of peace and security in the region more effectively and sustainably (ECOWAS, 2008, para. 27). The primary objectives of the ECPF involve diffusing tensions, preventing the outbreak of conflicts, and averting conflict escalation and recurrence. To realize these objectives, it becomes imperative to address a diverse range of issue areas, including Human Rights and the Rule of Law, Peace and Security, Preventive Diplomacy, Early Warning, Natural Resources and Governance, Democracy and Political Governance, Women's Rights, Media, Cross-Border Initiatives, Youth Empowerment, Peace Education, and Humanitarian Assistance (ECOWAS, 2008, para. 42).

The ECPF simplifies the implementation process by offering a comprehensive framework for conflict management that incorporates ongoing ECOWAS activities. However, there are still challenges to be surmounted, such as securing adequate funding for the project.

One crucial component of the ECPF is the Early Warning Observation and Monitoring System, which aids ECOWAS in anticipating potential conflicts and enabling timely responses. This system monitors social, political, and humanitarian developments in the subregion, in addition to issues related to peace and security. The ECOWAS Early Warning and Response Network (ECOWARN) plays a pivotal role in achieving this goal, with the Observation and Monitoring Centre (OMC) serving as the central hub of the early warning system.

Created in 1990 to intervene in the Liberian civil war, the ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) evolved into a vital tool for preserving regional peace and was eventually included in the new conflict management structure. ECOMOG, which mostly consists of troops from ECOWAS member states, reacts to security crises.

It has air, marine, and land components in its hierarchical command structure. Depending on the intensity of the conflict at hand, ECOMOG can swiftly transition between peacekeeping and peace enforcement. Additionally, it keeps an eye on ceasefire agreements and enforces them when sides to a conflict don't follow through on their obligations. Article 33(1) of Chapter VI of the UN Charter, which encourages nations to pursue peaceful resolutions of disputes by discussion, mediation, arbitration, and other peacebuilding interventions, serves as the foundation for ECOMOG.

4.2 Organizational Structures of SADC

The member states of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) decided to establish an institutional framework to fulfill the mandate of the newly formed organisation. As previously mentioned, the 1992 SADC structure was later modified, and the new framework is currently made up of several important structures, including the Secretariat, the Integrated Committee of Ministers, the Council of Ministers, the Troika, the Organ on Politics, Defence, and Security Cooperation, the Standing Committee of Officials, the Tribunal (which is currently suspended), and the SADC National Committees (SADC 2001: Article 9).

The Summit of Heads of State and Government

The heads of state and government of the participating nations convene at the Summit, which functions as the highest level of organization within the SADC. SADC's top institutions as SADC's top institutions, oversee the general direction, function control, and goal achievement (SADC 1992: Article 10). Twice a year, in August and September in member nations, it meets to elect a new Chairperson and Deputy. The decisions of the Summit are binding and are accepted by consensus.

In addition, President Mugabe's fraudulent elections and human rights abuses in Zimbabwe were not adequately addressed by the SADC Summit. This silence and lack of criticism raised concerns about the rule of law within the organization. However, in the case of Madagascar's coup in 2009, the Summit took a firmer stance and refused to recognize the coup leaders, resulting in the suspension of the country from all SADC institutions.

The Troika

The SADC Chair, Incoming Chair, and Outgoing Chair make up the Troika system. The Troika functions at the levels of the Summit, the Organ on Politics, the Defence and Security Committee, the Council, and the Standing Committee of Senior Officials. It was established by the Summit in August 1999. When necessary, other members of the Troika may join. The organisation can carry out activities, carry out decisions effectively, and give SADC Institutions policy direction thanks to this technology.

The Organ on Politics, Defence, and Security Cooperation

The Organ sometimes referred to as the OPDSC, oversees upholding security and peace inside the SADC. The SADC Treaty formally established it in its current form, and the Protocol, which was adopted in 2001, expanded on its definition. The Organ's specific goals include safeguarding the area from instability, fostering political cooperation, creating regional coordination on security and defense issues, and resolving disputes amicably (Ndlovu 2013: 62). The Organ's overall goal is to promote peace and security in the region. The Organ is organised into several committees, and the Chairperson oversees the overall direction of policy and the accomplishment of the organization's goals.

The Council of Ministers (COM)

Each member state appoints at least one minister to the Council of Ministers, which is normally in charge of foreign policy and financial and economic planning. It provides advice to the Summit on general policy and development issues while supervising SADC's operations and program execution. The nation presiding over SADC chairs the Council, which convenes four times a year.

The Integrated Committee of Ministers

A new organisation called the Integrated Committee of Ministers was created to guarantee cross-sectoral activity coordination, harmonisation, and policy direction. It is accountable to the Council and is made up of at least two ministers from each member state. It meets once a year. The four primary areas of integration specified in the SADC Treaty are overseen by this committee.

The Standing Committee of Officials

The Standing Committee of Officials, which are the actual operational component of SADC, is vital to the organisation. Members of this group, who serve as technical advisors to the Council of Ministers, are representatives from each member state, ideally from ministries in charge of finance or economic planning.

The Secretariat

The main executive and administrative body for SADC, with its headquarters in Gaborone, Botswana, is the SADC Secretariat, which oversees managing the group's activities. A four-year renewable term nominated by the Summit serves as its head of state or government. Regarding finance and administration, as well as regional integration, the Executive Secretary is supported by two Deputy Executive Secretaries.

The SADC Tribunal

The SADC Treaty was signed in 1992, establishing the SADC Tribunal as the organization's judicial branch. Its duties include monitoring adherence to the treaty's articles and resolving disputes that are brought before it. But in 2010, the Summit put a halt to the Tribunal's authority and started examining its purview and mandate.

SADC National Committees (SNC)

SADC National Committees are made up of important representatives from the member nations' governments, businesses, and civil societies. Their goal is to guarantee widespread and efficient involvement of interested parties in the creation and execution of policies, as well as in the planning, carrying out, and overseeing of projects.

With some influence from the European Union (EU) and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the institutional framework of SADC has progressively come into its own.

The Summit of Heads of State and Government is the primary forum for decision-making within SADC, which maintains an intergovernmental structure largely answerable to its member nations. However, certain mindsets carried over from SADC's erstwhile, the SADCC, continue to shape the organization's frameworks, which has occasionally impacted SADC institutions' effectiveness.^{4.3} SADC Conflict Management Structures

The 1992 SADC Treaty

Reiterating the region's commitment to establishing a robust collective territorial security system through the rule of law, the 1992 SADC Treaty fortifies the idea of constitutionalism. Thus, it is generally accepted that the Treaty altered the organization's legal position and provided a framework for maintaining peace and security in the sub-region. The Treaty is acknowledged as one of the organisations established to advance regional peace and security.

Furthermore, according to Mabaleng (2012), the Treaty mandates that every member state create a protocol on cooperation in international relations, politics, diplomacy, peace, and security. It is required of all member nations to participate in and set the rules for the body (Desmidt and Hauk, 2017). The 1992 SADC Treaty was amended in 2001 in the

wake of the end of the Cold War and South Africa's apartheid regime. Within SADC, these modifications brought changes to policies, processes, and organisational structures.

One significant change was the Organ on Politics, Defence, Security, and Cooperation (OPDSC) institutionalising security and political cooperation (Isaksen and Tjonneland, 2001). The modified Treaty, however, gave internal political issues like democracy and governance less weight. The SADC Treaty had to be modified in light of these reorganisations to account for institutional changes within the group.

SADC Protocol on Politics, Defence, and Security

Approved by the 2001 SADC Summit in Windhoek, the SADC Protocol on Politics, Defence, and Security is a key agreement that directs efforts to alter conflicts in the sub-region. The Organ's goals, organisational framework, roles, and protocols are described in the Protocol. "The general objective of the Organ is to promote peace and security in the region," according to Article 2(1). Notably, Article 11 of the convention specifies the Organ's specific duties, authorities, and methods for handling, managing, and resolving issues. As a result, the Organ specifically addresses issues related to security and peace.

According to Article 11 of the convention, the Organ is authorised to step in when there is a threat to regional stability and security, including civil wars, insurgencies, military takeovers, genocide, ethnic cleansing, and human rights violations.

In addition, the Protocol assigns the Organ the responsibility of handling issues about intelligence, defense, collaboration, and crime prevention among SADC member states (Nyakudya, 2013:42). In this sense, the code of conduct requires the Organ to settle disputes amicably. "Preventive diplomacy, negotiations, conciliation, mediation, good offices, arbitration, and adjudication by the international tribunal (Article 11(3a))" are among the methods listed in the convention for bringing about peace.

Force is only used as a last option when all other avenues of relief are exhausted. This mandate supports the Organ's efforts to try and change the ongoing disputes in the area. In addition, SADC developed the Strategic Indicative Plan of the Organ (SIPO), which offers tactics and directions for carrying out the Protocol, to guarantee its successful implementation. In addition, the SADC operationalized the Organ by establishing the Mutual Defence Pact (MDP).

The Strategic Indicative Plan for the Organ (SIPO)

The SIPO is a five-year plan that describes possible strategies for accomplishing the goals mentioned in the Protocol (Mabaleng, 2012). The OPDSC was tasked by the Summit in 2002 with creating a document that would outline the Organ's strategies and actions (SADC Communiqué, 2003). The principal objective of the SIPO is to institute a political and security environment that is both peaceful and stable throughout the area (SADC Communiqué, 2003).

However, SIPO tried to address too many priority areas and lacked a suitable framework for monitoring and evaluation, as highlighted by Mabaleng (2012). As a result, the paper devolved into a kind of "Wishlist" and lost its comprehensive execution plan. This shortcoming can be essentially linked to the original SIPO's dysfunction.

A draught of SIPO II was approved during the 2003 SADC Summit of Heads of State and Government after the original SIPO document's flaws were identified. In August 2010, the final document was authorised, superseding the initial SIPO (Mabaleng, 2012).

In November of 2012, SIPO II was finally launched. It gives more importance to preventing conflict, upholding human rights, and advancing democracy. Although the paper has drawn criticism, especially for its aspirational character, several academics have commended SIPO for helping to operationalize the Organ. The Mutual Defence Pact, the successful launch of the SADC Standby Force, and the conversion of the Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Cooperation Organisation (SARPCCO) into the Inter-State Politics and Diplomacy Committee (ISDSC) are just a few of the concrete accomplishments that Van Nieuwkerk (2012: 10) claims the regional organisation has witnessed.

Furthermore, the document facilitated the establishment of the Regional Early Warning Center (REWC) and the SADC Electoral Advisory Council.

SADC Mutual Defense Pact (MDP)

The SADC Heads of State and Government signed the Mutual Defence Pact in Tanzania in 2003. Its roots are in two controversial combined military actions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Lesotho (Mabaleng, 2012). According to SADC (2003), the Pact helps the Organ become operational in the field of defense and security issues. It also delineates guidelines for cooperative measures in the event of a military assault.

The Pact specifies what should happen if a member state is attacked. Article 6(1) provides that "an armed attack against a member state shall be considered a threat to regional security and shall prompt immediate joint action by all member states." Additionally, according to Organ recommendations, the Summit must approve this move (Article 6(2)).

In addition, the Pact states that any armed attack and any subsequent acts must be reported right away to the UN Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council for appropriate permission (Article 6(3)). The Pact combines the elements of a conventional mutual defense pact with the cornerstones of a peace-building treaty to promote regional measures targeted at increasing confidence within SADC (Solomon, 2016).

The Troika System

The Troika system supervises the operation of SADC institutions, which include the Standing Committee of Officials (SCO), the Organ, the Council, the Integrated Committee of Ministers (ICM), and the Summit. The Chair, the Incoming Chair, and the Outgoing Chair make up this trio, which acts as the organization's coordinator and steering committee (Article 9(a)(2)). The structure gives these trio the authority to act quickly and on behalf of the entire institution when necessary. Usually, during regular policy meetings, these decisions are taken (Hull and Derblom, 2009).

4.4 Answers to Research Questions

This section provides answers to the research questions raised in Chapter One. In this section, answers will be presented for the following research questions:

1. How do the institutional structures of ECOWAS and SADC differ, and how does this impact their conflict management approaches?
2. What are the key similarities and differences in the conflict resolution mechanisms employed by ECOWAS and SADC
3. To what extent do ECOWAS and SADC rely on diplomatic versus military interventions in managing conflicts within their respective regions?
4. What are the major challenges and obstacles faced by ECOWAS and SADC in their conflict resolution efforts, and how do they address them?

Question 1:

The research question at hand explores the contrasting institutional frameworks of ECOWAS and SADC and their consequent impacts on their approaches to managing conflicts. This investigation involves a comparative analysis of the organizational structures of these two regional bodies.

ECOWAS and SADC, with their distinct characteristics and goals, exhibit contrasting organizational structures. ECOWAS focuses on West African nations, comprising fifteen (15) member states and using three official languages—French, English, and Portuguese—reflecting colonial legacies. Conversely, SADC encompasses Southern African countries with sixteen (16) member states, each using their native languages for official communication.

The inception and objectives of these organizations further differentiate them. ECOWAS was established in 1975 to bolster economic cooperation, integration, and development in West Africa. In contrast, SADC emerged in 1992 with the primary aim of fostering regional integration, economic growth, and collaboration in Southern Africa.

The supranational institutions within ECOWAS and SADC are distinct as well. ECOWAS features entities like the Community Parliament, the Economic and Social Council, and the Community Court of Justice, which facilitate dialogue and hold advisory roles. SADC, on the other hand, relies on the Summit of Heads of State and Government, the Troika, and the Organ on Politics, Defence, and Security Cooperation for decision-making and regional cooperation.

The legislative functions differ between the two bodies. ECOWAS possesses the ECOWAS Parliament, a consultative body promoting dialogue and consensus, although its recommendations are not binding. In contrast, SADC lacks an equivalent legislative body, often reaching decisions through consensus, resulting in enforceable agreements.

Both organizations maintain judicial arms, but their roles differ. ECOWAS operates the Community Court of Justice, responsible for resolving issues related to the organization's activities. In contrast, SADC's Tribunal had its powers suspended in 2010, prompting a subsequent review of its scope and authority.

In terms of representation, members of the ECOWAS Parliament are chosen by national parliaments, facilitating a consultative role. Conversely, SADC lacks a corresponding parliamentary structure.

In summary, the organizational differences between ECOWAS and SADC stem from geographical focus, historical context, objectives, and decision-making approaches. Although both aim to enhance cooperation and development in their regions, their unique attributes mirror the distinct challenges and priorities of West Africa and Southern Africa, respectively.

These differences in organizational structures between ECOWAS and SADC carry significant implications for their approaches to managing conflicts within their respective regions. These disparities stem from their historical backgrounds, regional dynamics, legal frameworks, institutional capacities, and geopolitical influences. While both organizations are committed to fostering peace and security in their regions, their strategies are tailored to address the specific challenges and priorities of West Africa and Southern Africa.

ECOWAS has grappled with frequent instability and civil wars, necessitating a more targeted and refined approach to conflict management. In contrast, SADC, with a different historical context, might prioritize economic and political integration as a strategy to prevent conflicts.

The legal instruments and frameworks established by ECOWAS for conflict prevention, management, and resolution are comprehensive and provide a structured framework for intervention. However, SADC might lack a similarly extensive collection of conflict-specific instruments, which could potentially impact its effectiveness in managing conflicts.

Structurally, ECOWAS has dedicated institutions like the Mediation and Security Council, ECOWAS Standby Forces, and the Defense and Security Commission, allowing for swift decision-making and coordination during conflicts. On the other hand, SADC's multifaceted structure, designed for broader regional integration, might not be as streamlined for rapid conflict management decisions.

ECOWAS tends to take a proactive role in conflict resolution, often leading efforts to resolve disputes. The Mediation and Security Council's direct authority enables ECOWAS to take swift action. SADC, on the other hand, might prioritize consensus among member states, which could potentially slow down decision-making during crises.

The regional dynamics play a pivotal role. West Africa's history of violent conflicts has led ECOWAS to develop a robust conflict management approach. In contrast, SADC, though not exempt from conflicts, might rely more on economic and political integration strategies to prevent conflicts.

Geopolitical influences also differ, with ECOWAS facing challenges like terrorism and piracy that require a more interventionist approach. SADC might encounter issues like resource disputes and governance concerns, shaping a more diplomatic conflict management approach.

In conclusion, the divergent organizational structures of ECOWAS and SADC result from their historical backgrounds, regional dynamics, goals, and decision-making processes. While both organizations aim to promote peace and security, their unique

approaches reflect the specific needs of West Africa and Southern Africa. These differences profoundly impact how they manage conflicts and crises within their regions.

Question 2:

The second research question delves into the heart of the matter: it seeks to uncover the fundamental similarities and differences that define the conflict resolution mechanisms adopted by ECOWAS and SADC. Both regional organizations have dedicated considerable effort to crafting and implementing conflict resolution strategies, all with the primary goal of effectively addressing and mitigating conflicts that arise within their respective domains. Although there are observable parallels in their approaches, it is equally apparent that there exist nuanced distinctions that mirror the unique attributes and priorities inherent to each organization.

Unquestionably, there are several key points of convergence in the conflict resolution strategies employed by both ECOWAS and SADC:

1. **Preventive Diplomacy:** An essential cornerstone shared by ECOWAS and SADC is their commitment to preventive diplomacy. Both organizations place considerable emphasis on this strategy, recognizing its crucial role in pre-empting the escalation of conflicts. Their diplomatic efforts are aimed at mediating disputes, facilitating negotiations, and fostering dialogue among parties involved in conflicts, all to nip potential conflicts in the bud.
2. **Mediation and Facilitation:** Another commonality is the utilization of mediation and facilitation techniques. These methods are widely integrated into the conflict-resolution efforts of both organizations. By employing these techniques, they aim to draw opposing parties to the negotiation table, where they can collaboratively forge solutions that are agreeable to all parties involved. Often, the role of the mediator is entrusted to respected individuals or groups possessing the necessary credibility and trust.
3. **Peacekeeping Operations:** ECOWAS and SADC also share a common commitment to peacekeeping operations. Both have established mechanisms that enable them to deploy peacekeeping forces to conflict zones. These forces play a pivotal role in overseeing ceasefires, maintaining security, and cultivating an environment that fosters effective conflict resolution.
4. **Use of Force as a Last Resort:** Another unifying aspect is the recognition of force as a last resort. While both organizations maintain a steadfast preference for peaceful negotiation and dialogue as the primary means of conflict resolution, they also acknowledge that there are instances when intervention through force may be necessary to address situations where peaceful methods prove inadequate.

However, the areas where differences emerge within their conflict resolution strategies are just as notable:

1. **Scope and Focus of Conflicts:** Given its historical background marked by internal conflicts and civil wars, ECOWAS often contends with conflicts rooted in rebel movements, coup attempts, and ethno-political tensions. In stark contrast, Southern Africa has encountered a relatively lower frequency of large-scale violent conflicts. Conflicts in the SADC region more often center around disputes over resources, governance issues,

and power dynamics, factors that inevitably shape the organization's approach to conflict resolution.

2. **Institutional Structure:** ECOWAS boasts a dedicated Mediation and Security Council (MSC) that shoulders the responsibility of conflict prevention, resolution, and peacekeeping. The MSC is endowed with the authority to make decisions on interventions and peacekeeping missions. In SADC, the coordination of conflict resolution mechanisms takes place through the Organ on Politics, Defence, and Security Cooperation. Decision-making processes within this structure are often governed by the requirement of consensus among member states, which, although inclusive, could potentially result in delays during moments of crisis.

3. **Legal Instruments and Protocols:** ECOWAS has meticulously constructed comprehensive legal frameworks and protocols that guide conflict prevention and resolution. The Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping, and Security stands as a testament to their structured approach. In contrast, while SADC does possess protocols related to politics, defense, and security, they might not exhibit the same level of specificity in terms of conflict resolution as their ECOWAS counterparts.

4. **Mediation Approaches:** ECOWAS often adopts a more hands-on, interventionist role in mediating conflicts. Cases such as their interventions in Liberia and Sierra Leone, involving the deployment of peacekeeping forces and direct negotiations, illustrate this proactive approach. On the other hand, SADC tends to lean more towards diplomatic and consensus-based mediation. While their mediation efforts often include the participation of regional leaders and esteemed figures, they might not encompass the same degree of direct intervention observed within ECOWAS.

5. **Geopolitical Context:** The West African geopolitical landscape is fraught with challenges like transnational terrorism, piracy, and rebel movements. These challenges necessitate a more assertive and direct approach to conflict resolution within the ECOWAS framework. In contrast, the Southern African geopolitical context is characterized by an emphasis on issues such as migration, resource management, and governance. This context often lends itself to a conflict resolution approach that prioritizes diplomacy and dialogue.

In the closing analysis, the shared overarching objectives of both ECOWAS and SADC revolve around the promotion of peace and stability within their respective regions. Nonetheless, the intricacies of their conflict resolution mechanisms bear testament to the influence of unique historical contexts, regional dynamics, institutional structures, and challenges they encounter. These disparities reflect the rich diversity of conflicts and priorities that characterize West Africa and Southern Africa.

Question 3:

The third research question says: To what extent do ECOWAS and SADC rely on diplomatic versus military interventions in managing conflicts within their respective regions?

Both ECOWAS and SADC adopt a multifaceted approach to conflict management within their respective regions, encompassing both diplomatic and military interventions. However, the extent to which each organization relies on these strategies can vary based on historical context, the nature of conflicts, and regional dynamics. ECOWAS has historically demonstrated a commitment to employing both diplomatic and military interventions, often guided by a pragmatic understanding of the complexity of conflicts in West Africa.

Diplomatic Interventions: Diplomacy plays a significant role in ECOWAS's conflict management strategy. Preventive diplomacy, mediation, and negotiation are central components of the organization's approach. ECOWAS has a track record of engaging in diplomatic efforts to mediate disputes, facilitate dialogue, and promote peaceful resolutions. This is evident in its involvement in various peace processes, such as in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Côte d'Ivoire.

Military Interventions: ECOWAS recognizes that in certain situations, diplomatic efforts alone might not be sufficient to bring about stability and peace. As a result, the organization has not shied away from deploying military interventions when necessary. Notable instances include the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) operations in Liberia and Sierra Leone, where peacekeeping forces were deployed to restore order and support peace processes. These interventions involved a combination of military force and diplomacy to address complex conflicts.

SADC, while also employing a combination of diplomatic and military strategies, has often exhibited a greater emphasis on diplomatic solutions to conflicts within its region.

Diplomatic Interventions: SADC places significant emphasis on diplomacy as a means of conflict management. The organization prioritizes regional cooperation, negotiation, and mediation. Its approach often involves engaging regional leaders, respected figures, and diplomatic efforts to facilitate dialogue and consensus among conflicting parties. Diplomatic efforts were evident in SADC's involvement in mediating conflicts in countries like Zimbabwe and Madagascar.

Limited Military Interventions: Compared to ECOWAS, SADC's history has seen fewer instances of direct military interventions. The organization tends to prioritize peaceful solutions and regional stability through diplomatic means. However, SADC has also demonstrated a willingness to consider military options in certain situations, such as the deployment of forces during the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The extent to which ECOWAS and SADC rely on diplomatic versus military interventions can be influenced by several factors:

1. **Conflict Dynamics:** The nature and complexity of conflicts play a significant role in determining the appropriate intervention strategy. ECOWAS's experience with internal conflicts and civil wars has necessitated a more balanced approach between diplomacy and military intervention. SADC's focus on regional stability and governance challenges has led to a greater emphasis on diplomacy.
2. **Regional Support:** The support and willingness of member states to contribute to military interventions can impact the feasibility of such actions. ECOWAS has been able

to garner more robust military support from its member states, enabling it to engage in direct military interventions when needed.

3. **Conflict Severity:** The severity of conflicts and the potential for violence can also shape intervention strategies. In highly volatile situations, both organizations may lean more towards military interventions to rapidly restore stability.

4. **International Partnerships:** The involvement of external actors and international organizations can influence the choice between diplomatic and military interventions. Funding, resources, and logistical support from international partners can enable more effective military interventions. In conclusion, both ECOWAS and SADC recognize the value of both diplomatic and military interventions in conflict management. The extent to which they rely on each strategy varies based on their distinct regional contexts, historical experiences, conflict dynamics, and the support they receive from their member states and international partners.

Question 4:

The fourth research question considers the significant challenges and obstacles that ECOWAS and SADC encounter in their pursuit of conflict resolution within their respective regions. It also examines the strategies they deploy to overcome these complexities.

Both ECOWAS and SADC face an array of challenges as they strive to achieve effective conflict resolution. These predicaments stem from the intricate nature of conflicts, the diverse composition of member states, the nuances of regional dynamics, and the constraints of limited resources. While both organizations are proactive in addressing these challenges, they encounter unique hurdles that significantly shape their strategies.

These major challenges and obstacles manifest in the following terms:

1. **Diverse Member States:** Both organizations encompass countries with varying political systems, economic conditions, and levels of development. This diversity can lead to differences in priorities, interests, and willingness to contribute resources to conflict resolution efforts.

2. **Resource Constraints:** Limited financial resources and capacity can hinder the effectiveness of conflict resolution initiatives. Funding shortages may impact the deployment of peacekeeping forces, mediation efforts, and the implementation of peace agreements.

3. **Sovereignty Concerns:** Respect for national sovereignty can sometimes impede intervention efforts. Member states may be reluctant to allow external involvement in their internal affairs, hindering timely and effective responses to conflicts.

4. **Lack of Political Will:** The political will to implement conflict resolution strategies can vary among member states. Some governments might be hesitant to commit to peaceful resolutions due to vested interests or political considerations.

5. **Complexity of Conflicts:** Conflicts within both regions often have deep-rooted causes, such as ethnic tensions, historical grievances, and power struggles. Addressing these underlying issues requires sustained efforts beyond immediate ceasefire agreements.

6. **Fragmented Armed Groups:** Some conflicts involve multiple armed groups with varying agendas, making negotiations and peace agreements more challenging to achieve.
7. **External Interference:** Conflicts in the regions can be influenced by external actors seeking to advance their interests, complicating the resolution process.

To address these challenges, ECOWAS has resorted to various strategies:

1. **Norms and Protocols:** ECOWAS has established norms and protocols that allow for diplomatic intervention in cases of conflict. The organization's legal frameworks outline procedures for mediation, negotiation, and peacekeeping.
2. **Mediation and Security Council (MSC):** The MSC plays a vital role in conflict resolution. It can make decisions on interventions and peacekeeping missions, providing a platform for quick and coordinated responses.
3. **Economic Leverage:** ECOWAS's member states leverage their economic ties to encourage peaceful resolutions. Economic sanctions or incentives can be used to influence parties involved in conflicts.
4. **Regional Peer Pressure:** The organization employs peer pressure among member states to encourage cooperation and compliance with conflict resolution efforts.

For SADC, its attempts to address the challenges it faced have engendered the following approaches:

1. **Mediation and Diplomacy:** SADC places a strong emphasis on mediation, facilitated by respected regional leaders and figures. Diplomatic approaches are used to foster dialogue and consensus among conflicting parties.
2. **Diplomatic Troika:** SADC's Troika system, consisting of the current, incoming, and outgoing chairpersons, plays a role in conflict resolution. It provides guidance, oversight, and mediation efforts.
3. **Regional Economic Integration:** SADC's focus on economic integration is seen as a way to prevent conflicts by promoting development and cooperation, indirectly addressing some root causes of conflicts.
4. **Southern African Development Community (SADC) Organ:** This organ coordinates security and defense issues, ensuring a collaborative approach to conflict prevention and resolution.

In conclusion, while both ECOWAS and SADC encounter common challenges in their conflict resolution efforts, they address these obstacles through a combination of diplomatic strategies, regional frameworks, legal protocols, and leveraging their political and economic influence. The effectiveness of these approaches varies based on the specific context of conflicts, the willingness of member states to cooperate, and the extent of international support.

4.5 Test of Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1:

H1: The institutional differences between ECOWAS and SADC significantly influence their conflict management approaches, leading to distinct strategies for addressing conflicts.

The data at hand unequivocally corroborates the hypothesis positing that the disparities in institutional frameworks between ECOWAS and SADC wield considerable influence over their approaches to conflict management, resulting in distinctive strategies for conflict resolution. Evidentiary support for this assertion is abundantly apparent through the myriad disparities in organizational structures, decision-making methodologies, legal constructs, and representative entities that exist between ECOWAS and SADC.

ECOWAS, for instance, is characterized by a dedicated set of institutions tailored for the effective management of conflicts. These include the Mediation and Security Council, the ECOWAS Standby Forces, and the Defense and Security Commission. This focused approach facilitates swift decision-making and coordinated action during crises. Conversely, the multifaceted structure of SADC appears to be less conducive to expeditious conflict management decisions.

Moreover, the proactive stance adopted by ECOWAS in conflict resolution, often culminating in its leadership of dispute resolution efforts, is emblematic of an organization that exercises direct authority through mechanisms like the Mediation and Security Council. In contrast, SADC's emphasis on consensus among member states may lead to comparatively sluggish decision-making processes, particularly in times of acute crises.

The significance of the comprehensive legal instruments and frameworks established by ECOWAS cannot be overstated. These structured frameworks provide a solid foundation for intervening in conflicts. Conversely, SADC's potential shortfall in possessing a commensurately extensive array of conflict-specific instruments could conceivably impinge on its effectiveness in managing conflicts.

The historical backdrop and regional dynamics also underpin the distinctive strategies of these organizations. ECOWAS, a product of a history punctuated by violent conflicts, has naturally evolved a robust approach to conflict management, marked by rapid and coordinated responses facilitated by its dedicated institutions. Conversely, SADC's strategic orientation may incline more towards economic and political integration as a means of pre-empting conflicts.

Notably, the approach each organization takes to conflicts is further swayed by the geopolitical circumstances they confront. ECOWAS, grappling with challenges such as terrorism and piracy, finds itself inclined towards interventionist strategies. In contrast, SADC, confronted with issues like resource disputes and governance concerns, seems predisposed to a more diplomatic mode of conflict resolution.

In summation, the profound dissimilarities in the organizational frameworks and decision-making modalities of ECOWAS and SADC are intrinsically linked to their historical origins, regional exigencies, objectives, and approaches to decision-making.

The implications of these differences resonate resoundingly in their conflict management methodologies. This analysis emphatically reinforces the hypothesis that the institutional disparities between these regional organizations manifest in divergent strategies for addressing conflicts within their respective spheres of influence.

Hypothesis 2:

H1: While both ECOWAS and SADC share certain similarities in their conflict resolution mechanisms, differences emerge due to the historical contexts and regional dynamics of West Africa and Southern Africa. These differences shape how conflicts are addressed and managed by the two organizations.

The available information does indeed support the hypothesis that while ECOWAS and SADC share certain similarities in their conflict resolution mechanisms, the historical contexts and regional dynamics of West Africa and Southern Africa result in distinct differences in how these two organizations address and manage conflicts. In West Africa, historical conflicts have often manifested as internal strife, civil wars, rebel movements, and coup attempts. These experiences have likely influenced ECOWAS' approach to conflicts, leading to an emphasis on direct intervention, peacekeeping, and swift resolution to prevent further escalation. In contrast, Southern Africa has encountered fewer large-scale violent conflicts. Instead, conflicts in this region tend to center around resource disputes, governance issues, and power dynamics. This difference has likely contributed to SADC's focus on diplomatic and consensus-based mediation, given the comparatively lower occurrence of violent conflicts.

The presence of the dedicated Mediation and Security Council (MSC) within ECOWAS suggests a more centralized and potentially expedited decision-making process in conflict resolution. This centralized authority enables rapid interventions and peacekeeping missions, aligning with the urgency often required in the West African context. Conversely, SADC's consensus-based decision-making process within the Organ on Politics, Defence, and Security Cooperation might lead to more cautious and deliberate actions. While this approach is inclusive, it could result in slower responses during critical moments.

Furthermore, ECOWAS' comprehensive legal frameworks and protocols reflect a methodical approach to conflict resolution. The Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping, and Security exemplifies their commitment to addressing conflicts systematically. On the other hand, while SADC possesses protocols related to politics, defense, and security, the level of specificity in conflict resolution might vary. This indicates that SADC's approach is potentially more adaptable and flexible to the specific dynamics of the region.

In terms of mediation approaches, ECOWAS tends to take a proactive and interventionist role in mediating conflicts, as demonstrated in cases like Liberia and Sierra Leone. This approach aligns with the urgency of addressing ongoing conflicts and instability. In contrast, SADC's preference for diplomatic and consensus-based mediation is in harmony with the nature of conflicts in Southern Africa, which frequently revolve around disputes related to resources and governance. This approach is aimed at fostering long-term stability and cooperation.

The challenges posed by transnational terrorism, piracy, and rebel movements in West Africa necessitate a more assertive approach to conflict resolution, as evidenced by ECOWAS' active involvement in these conflicts. In Southern Africa, the focus on migration, resource management, and governance requires a conflict resolution strategy centered on diplomacy and dialogue. These challenges are often intricate and less overtly violent. The stability of a nation greatly depends on its leadership (Chukwudi et al, 2019). In summation, the provided information corroborates the hypothesis that differences arising from historical contexts, regional dynamics, and the nature of conflicts significantly shape how ECOWAS and SADC manage and address conflicts. The similarities and disparities highlighted in this analysis underscore how these organizations adapt their strategies to tackle the distinct challenges and priorities of West Africa and Southern Africa, respectively.

Hypothesis 3:

H1: ECOWAS and SADC predominantly rely on diplomatic interventions rather than military interventions in managing conflicts within their respective regions.

The hypothesis that "ECOWAS and SADC predominantly rely on diplomatic interventions rather than military interventions in managing conflicts within their respective regions" can be assessed by examining the characteristics and historical practices of both organizations.

ECOWAS places significant emphasis on diplomatic efforts, with preventive diplomacy, mediation, and negotiation forming the core components of its conflict management strategy. Noteworthy instances of ECOWAS mediating conflicts in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Côte d'Ivoire underscore its commitment to peaceful resolutions through diplomacy. While ECOWAS does acknowledge the necessity of military interventions in specific situations like Liberia and Sierra Leone, such interventions are not its primary recourse. Instead, they are employed when diplomatic avenues alone prove inadequate in restoring stability and peace.

In contrast, SADC places a pronounced focus on diplomacy, regional cooperation, negotiation, and mediation. Its involvement in conflict mediation in Zimbabwe and Madagascar highlights its diplomatic orientation. SADC's historical record indicates fewer instances of direct military interventions, as it leans more toward diplomatic solutions and regional stability. Nonetheless, the organization is not wholly averse to considering military options.

Upon analysis, it is apparent that both ECOWAS and SADC do prioritize diplomatic interventions as a primary conflict management approach. Their emphasis on mediation efforts, preventive diplomacy, and regional cooperation underscores this commitment. However, the hypothesis asserting their predominantly diplomatic reliance is not entirely accurate. While both organizations do emphasize diplomacy, they also recognize the exigency of military interventions in specific circumstances. ECOWAS, through its deployments in Liberia and Sierra Leone, demonstrates a willingness to resort to military forces when diplomacy alone falls short. Similarly, SADC's actions during the Democratic Republic of Congo conflict reveal its openness to military solutions when required.

In summation, while diplomacy indeed constitutes a central facet of ECOWAS and SADC's conflict management strategies, it is not entirely valid to claim that they overwhelmingly rely on diplomatic interventions over military ones. The extent of their employment of each approach hinges on multifarious factors, including the nature of conflicts, regional dynamics, member state support, and the severity of conflicts.

Hypothesis 4:

This section delves into an analysis of the hypothesis positing that both the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) face substantial challenges in their conflict resolution efforts. It further asserts that these challenges are met through a combination of strategies. By deconstructing the provided information, we can assess the validity of this hypothesis.

The landscape of conflict resolution, as encountered by ECOWAS and SADC, is marked by intricate challenges stemming from the diverse nature of conflicts and the intricate web of member states' dynamics. These challenges encompass disparities in political systems, economic conditions, and levels of development among member states, leading to divergent priorities, interests, and contributions to conflict resolution. Initiatives are hampered by resource constraints, impacting areas ranging from peacekeeping deployments to mediation efforts and the implementation of peace agreements. The principle of national sovereignty sometimes acts as a barrier to intervention, with states resisting external involvement in internal matters, thus hindering timely and effective responses to conflicts. The varying degree of political will, grounded in vested interests and political considerations, further varies among member states, and can deter commitment to peaceful resolutions. The complexity of conflicts, driven by factors such as historical grievances, ethnic tensions, and power struggles, demands ongoing participation beyond simple cease-fire agreements. Fragmented armed factions' complicate negotiations and accords, while other parties trying to further their own agendas only make the resolution process more difficult.

By taking a diverse approach, ECOWAS and SADC both demonstrate an unrelenting commitment to tackling the difficulties. The Economic and Social Council of Africa (ECOWAS) has established guidelines, procedures, and laws that distinguish diplomatic interventions, mediation procedures, and peacekeeping operations. The role of the Mediation and Security Council (MSC) is crucial.

role in conflict resolution, streamlining decisions regarding interventions and peacekeeping missions. ECOWAS member states harness economic leverage to incentivize peaceful resolutions through mechanisms such as sanctions and incentives. Additionally, the organization fosters peer pressure among its members to boost cooperation and compliance with conflict resolution initiatives.

In contrast, SADC has devised distinctive strategies to navigate its challenges. The organization places a pronounced emphasis on mediation and diplomacy, leveraging the participation of respected regional leaders to facilitate dialogue and consensus among conflicting parties. The Troika system, comprising current, incoming, and outgoing chairpersons, contributes to conflict resolution by providing guidance, oversight, and mediation. SADC's prioritization of regional economic integration indirectly addresses

conflict causes by fostering development and cooperation. The coordination of security and defence matters by the SADC Organ supports a collaborative approach to both prevention and resolution.

The information presented unequivocally corroborates the hypothesis. ECOWAS and SADC indeed grapple with significant challenges and obstacles in their efforts toward conflict resolution. Moreover, they exhibit a proactive disposition in confronting these hurdles through a synthesis of strategies. Both entities leverage diplomatic tactics, exploit regional frameworks, adhere to legal protocols, and wield political and economic influence to surmount challenges. However, the efficacy of these approaches is contingent upon the specific context of conflicts, the degree of cooperation among member states, and the level of international support.

4.6 Summary of Findings

The following findings emerged from the analysis of data and testing of hypothesis:

1. The contrasting institutional frameworks of ECOWAS and SADC significantly shape their conflict management strategies, evident through disparities in organizational structures, decision-making approaches, legal frameworks, and historical contexts that lead to distinct approaches in addressing conflicts.
2. ECOWAS and SADC share certain conflict resolution mechanisms, historical contexts and regional dynamics lead to distinct differences in their approaches; ECOWAS focuses on direct intervention and swift resolution due to historical conflicts, while SADC emphasizes diplomatic mediation for resource disputes and governance issues, with organizational structures and legal frameworks reflecting these strategies accordingly.
3. While both ECOWAS and SADC prioritize diplomatic interventions as a primary approach in managing conflicts within their respective regions, the assertion that they predominantly rely on diplomatic interventions over military ones is not entirely accurate, as their strategies consider multifarious factors, including the nature of conflicts, regional dynamics, member state support, and the severity of conflicts.
4. Both ECOWAS and SADC face complex conflict resolution challenges stemming from intricate conflicts and member state dynamics, including political differences, economic conditions, and resource constraints affecting peacekeeping and mediation; while employing multifaceted strategies, ECOWAS utilizes diplomatic protocols, mediation, and peacekeeping with the Mediation and Security Council as its core, coupled with economic leverage and peer pressure, and SADC emphasizes mediation involving respected leaders through the Troika system, as well as economic integration and coordinated security efforts, though the effectiveness of their strategies hinges on specific conflict contexts, member state cooperation, and international support.

4.7 Discussion of Findings

The findings extracted from the data and analysis of hypothesis 1 shed light on the pivotal role played by the distinct institutional frameworks of ECOWAS and SADC in shaping their respective strategies for conflict management. This observation underscores the significance of organizational design and structure in influencing the approaches these

regional organizations adopt when addressing conflicts within their regions. The disparities in organizational structures are key determinants of how ECOWAS and SADC approach conflict management. ECOWAS, with its dedicated institutions like the Mediation and Security Council, ECOWAS Standby Forces, and Defense and Security Commission, demonstrates a focused and streamlined mechanism for making decisions and coordinating actions during crises. This structure enables rapid responses and intervention, particularly vital in the context of West Africa, where historical conflicts have often required immediate attention to prevent escalation. On the other hand, SADC's multifaceted structure, although accommodating broader regional integration goals, might be less conducive to swift decision-making in conflict situations. This structural distinction not only reflects the organizational priorities but also influences the pace and effectiveness of conflict resolution efforts. Moreover, the analysis points out variations in decision-making approaches between ECOWAS and SADC. ECOWAS' proactive role in conflict resolution, exemplified by its direct involvement in mediating conflicts like Liberia and Sierra Leone, suggests a willingness to take on a leadership role in resolving disputes.

This approach is closely tied to the organization's structure, which enables rapid responses. In contrast, SADC's emphasis on consensus-based decision-making, embodied in its Organ on Politics, Defence, and Security Cooperation, promotes inclusivity and cooperation but might result in slower responses during critical junctures. These distinct decision-making paradigms are intricately linked to the organizations' institutional designs and historical contexts, which in turn shape their conflict resolution strategies. Additionally, the legal frameworks established by ECOWAS and SADC offer insights into their respective strategies. ECOWAS' comprehensive protocols for conflict prevention, management, and resolution underscore a systematic and structured approach to addressing conflicts. This approach aligns with the need to swiftly restore stability in a region historically plagued by internal strife. Conversely, SADC's emphasis on diplomacy and negotiation is reflected in its protocols related to politics, defence, and security. This more adaptable and flexible framework corresponds to the types of conflicts prevalent in the Southern African region, which often centre around resource disputes and governance issues.

Through the analysis of data presented for hypothesis 2, the findings highlight the dual nature of conflict resolution mechanisms shared by ECOWAS and SADC, while underscoring the distinctiveness rooted in historical contexts and regional dynamics that shape their respective approaches. This nuanced interplay between commonalities and disparities provides valuable insights into the multifaceted strategies these regional organizations employ in managing conflicts within their regions. The commonalities in conflict resolution mechanisms between ECOWAS and SADC indicate a shared recognition of certain foundational principles and strategies. Both organizations place emphasis on mediation and negotiation as crucial tools for conflict resolution. This shared focus suggests a broader commitment to peaceful dialogue and cooperative solutions to mitigate tensions and disputes. However, it is the historical contexts and regional dynamics that give rise to divergent strategies within this shared framework. ECOWAS' historical backdrop, marked by a history of internal strife, civil wars, and political upheavals, has had a profound impact on its approach to conflict resolution. The

organization's emphasis on direct intervention and swift resolution can be attributed to the urgent need to prevent further escalation and instability. This approach is a response to the challenges posed by historical conflicts that demanded decisive action to restore peace and stability. The organizational structures and legal frameworks established by ECOWAS are tailored to enable such interventionist strategies, as seen in the dedicated institutions like the Mediation and Security Council and the ECOWAS Standby Forces. Conversely, SADC's historical experiences, characterized by fewer large-scale violent conflicts and a focus on resource disputes, governance issues, and power dynamics, have shaped its approach towards diplomatic mediation.

The emphasis on consensus-based solutions and negotiation aligns with the nature of conflicts prevalent in the Southern African region. SADC's organizational structures and legal frameworks reflect this diplomatic orientation, exemplified by the Troika system and protocols related to politics, defence, and security. This finding illustrates that these organizations' strategies are not arbitrary but deeply rooted in the historical trajectories and unique challenges faced by their respective regions. The shared emphasis on mediation underscores a commitment to dialogue and cooperation, while the divergent approaches reflect the necessity of tailored strategies.

Analysis of Hypothesis Three provides findings that underscore the nuanced interplay between diplomatic and military interventions as conflict management strategies employed by both ECOWAS and SADC. While both regional organizations do indeed prioritize diplomatic interventions as a primary approach to conflict resolution, the assertion of an exclusive reliance on diplomatic means over military ones requires further examination within the broader context of multifaceted considerations. It is evident that both ECOWAS and SADC prioritize diplomacy as a primary conflict resolution strategy. Diplomatic interventions, including negotiation, mediation, and consensus-building, are pivotal tools employed by these organizations to address conflicts within their respective regions. This shared emphasis on diplomacy reflects a commitment to peaceful and cooperative approaches to conflict resolution, promoting stability and fostering regional cooperation. However, the assertion that ECOWAS and SADC predominantly rely solely on diplomatic interventions over military ones warrants scrutiny. The consideration of multifarious factors significantly influences the strategies adopted by these organizations. The nature of conflicts plays a pivotal role. In instances where conflicts involve internal strife, civil wars, or ethnic tensions, diplomatic approaches are often prioritized to prevent escalation and promote reconciliation. On the other hand, conflicts which are exacerbated by availability of arms (Adejumo et al, 2021) are characterised by external aggression, transnational terrorism, or piracy may necessitate a more interventionist stance. Regional dynamics also play a crucial role in shaping the strategies of ECOWAS and SADC.

The differing historical contexts, socio-political dynamics, and geopolitical challenges within West Africa and Southern Africa can lead to variations in the organizations' conflict management approaches. The level of member state support for diplomatic versus military interventions, as well as the severity and urgency of conflicts, further contribute to the nuanced decision-making process. In essence, while diplomatic interventions constitute a central pillar in the conflict resolution strategies of both ECOWAS and SADC, it is imperative to acknowledge the context-dependent nature of

their approaches. The complex interplay of factors such as conflict nature, regional dynamics, member state support, and conflict severity shapes the balance between diplomatic and military interventions. This recognition underscores the adaptive and pragmatic nature of these organizations in tailoring their strategies to the specific challenges they face, ensuring a holistic and contextually relevant approach to conflict management.

According to the analysis of Hypothesis Four, the findings underscore the shared complex challenges that both ECOWAS and SADC encounter in their conflict resolution efforts, arising from intricate conflicts and the diverse dynamics among member states. These challenges span political differences, economic disparities, and resource constraints, which collectively impact peacekeeping and mediation initiatives. The multifaceted strategies adopted by these regional organizations reflect their nuanced responses to these challenges, emphasizing the adaptability of their approaches. The shared challenges in conflict resolution highlight the intricate nature of the conflicts that ECOWAS and SADC confront. Political differences among member states, economic conditions, and resource constraints introduce layers of complexity that demand comprehensive strategies. The fact that these challenges are common to both organizations underscores the need for flexible and contextually sensitive approaches to conflict management.

CONCLUSION

The multifaceted strategies employed by ECOWAS and SADC reflect their recognition of the multifarious nature of the challenges they face. ECOWAS, with its emphasis on diplomatic protocols, mediation, and peacekeeping facilitated by the Mediation and Security Council, demonstrates a structured approach aimed at swift and coordinated conflict resolution. The incorporation of economic leverage and peer pressure further reinforces the organization's commitment to achieving peaceful resolutions through cooperation. SADC's strategy, characterized by mediation involving respected leaders through the Troika system, and economic integration coupled with coordinated security efforts, illustrates its recognition of the importance of diplomacy and collaboration.

These strategies align with the regional dynamics and conflicts that tend to centre around resource disputes, governance issues, and power dynamics in the Southern African context. However, the effectiveness of these strategies is contingent upon various factors. Context matters significantly; the specific nature of conflicts, the degree of member state cooperation, and international support all influence the outcomes of these strategies. It is this interplay of factors that ultimately shapes the success of conflict resolution efforts undertaken by both ECOWAS and SADC.

Recommendations

To build a comprehensive framework for conflict resolution in Southern and Western Africa, it is advised that there is a pressing need to foster collaboration and knowledge-sharing between these regional groups, using the diplomatic prowess of SADC and the proactive stance of ECOWAS.

Higher peace and prosperity in these sub-regions can also be attained by expanding capacity-building programmes and fortifying conflict avoidance techniques.

Sustained stability should place a high priority on regional integration and coordinated conflict management.

It is also vital that these regional organisations balance their relationship with world powers to open room for assistance in times of overwhelming conflict.

It is important to build economic strength with good collaboration of world powers to ensure proper socio-political and economic management.

Conflict of Interest

All the authors of this article have agreed to publish in your journal and do not have any form of conflict of interest.

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