Doctoral Dissertation

Cooperative Institutionalization of Conflict Prevention in Regional Subsystem: A Case Study of West Africa

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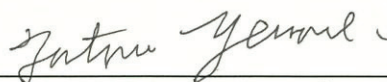
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Declaration

I hereby declared that this doctoral thesis is in its original form. The ideas expressed and the research findings recorded in this doctoral thesis are my own unaided work written by me REUBEN JOSEPH BABATUNDE LEWIS. The information contained herein is adequately referenced. It was gathered from primary and secondary sources, which include elite interviews, personal interviews, archival scholarly materials, technical reports by both local and international agencies and governments. The research was conducted in compliance with the ethical standards and guidelines of the Graduate School for International Development and Cooperation (IDEC) of Hiroshima University, Japan.

Signature…………………………………….

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Acknowledgement

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Glossary of Abbreviation and Acronyms

AAFC   Allied Armed forces of the Community

ACRI   Africa Crisis Response Initiatives

             Africa

AQIM   Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb

AU   African Union

CBO   Community Based Organization

CDD   Centre for Democracy and Development

CODESRIA   Council for the Development of Social Sciences Research in Africa

CSO   Civil Society Organizations

DCAF   Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces

EBID   ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development

ECOMOG   ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group

ECOSAP   ECOWAS Small Arms Programme

ECOWARN   ECOWAS Early Warning and Response Network

ECOWAS   Economic Community of West Africa States

ECPF   ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework

EW   Early Warning

EWS   Early Warning Systems

GDP   Gross Domestic Product

GIABA   Intergovernmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West

GPPAC   Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict

GSPC   Salafist Group for Preaching Combat

ICG   International Crisis Group

IFMC   Inter-Faith Mediation Committee

IIP   International Institutions Programme

INTERPOL   International Criminal Police Organization

IPATT   International Peace Keeping Assistance Training Team

KAIPTC   Kofi Annan International Peace Keeping Training Centre

MARWOPNET Mano River Women's Peace Network

MCPMR   Mechanism for Conflict Prevention Management Resolution

MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MRU	Mano River Union
MSC	Mediation and Security Council
NCCP	National Coordinating Committee for Peace
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
NSA	Non State Actors
OAU	Organization for African Unity
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PSC	Protocol on Peace and Security Council
REC	Regional Economic Communities
RIA	Regional Integration Arrangement
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SALW	Small Arms and Light Weapons
SMC	Standing Mediation Committee
TFP	Technical Financial Partners
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WAANSA	West Africa Action Network on Small Arms
WACSI	West Africa Civil Society Institute
WACSOF	West Africa Civil Society Forum
WANEP	West Africa Network for Peace Building
WAPCCO	West Africa Police Chief Committee
WASSN	West Africa Security Sector Network
WSSN	West Africa Security Sector Network

ABSTRACT

This study is an attempt to present a new conceptual perspective to the practice of conflict prevention in the regional subsystem of West Africa. Conflict prevention mechanisms are veritable tool to prevent violence and build resilient societies. It constitutes a broad and complex process that demands concerted efforts by institutions and groups towards its operationalization. The multi-dimensional and multi-faceted agendas and frameworks, and the process-based nature of its organization and implementation make its outcomes unpredictable and hard to evaluate. Recognizing these analytical challenges in previous studies, this dissertation conceptualizes recent trends of cooperation amongst multiple actors for prevention of conflict in West Africa through a new conceptual approach of cooperative institutionalization of conflict prevention in regional subsystem. In this regard, the primary research question is what are the existing institutional capacities for conflict prevention? how can institutional cooperation and partnership between sub-regional, state, non-state and local actors help to institutionalize conflict prevention? and how and in what way institutions converge in taking action to respond to risk and vulnerabilities to conflicts in the sub-region?

West Africa remains one of the most advanced regional subsystems in Africa with regards to building architecture for peace, conflict management and prevention. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) as a regional grouping has successfully taken leadership roles in building the foundation for peace making and peacekeeping as well as institutional frameworks towards conflict management in the sub-region. It operates the most sophisticated early warning system in Africa, and has strategic advantage in peacekeeping and enforcement systems as well as an operational architecture to manage conflict that may emerged within and across states. There are regional initiatives and national processes as well as local platforms that are constantly emerging to tackle conflict issues. These new frameworks are laying emphasis on collective action to build a preventive regime in the sub-region. It requires that regional cooperation and integration lay emphasis on conflict prevention and must be operationalized through institutional cooperation across sectors and institutions for its realization.

West Africa with its complex security and conflict dynamics and its strategic advantage of a wide area of regional network among institutions and groups engaged in preventive actions, fits well in the framework of a regional subsystem in which the structure of cooperative institutionalization of initiatives towards prevention can be conceptually analyzed.

Therefore, part of the study focuses on developing a framework to understand institutional cooperation in a regional subsystem showing the network of relational arrangement between and across regional, national and local setting. This framework does not stand on its own and can change to fit institutional context operating vertically and horizontally across sectors and institutions. It can be cooperative institutionalization of conflict prevention mechanisms within and between, state-governments, regional organizations, Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), and local actors.

Cooperative institutionalization as a theoretical approach established in this study, conceptualizes any network of relational arrangement of institutions at different levels of a subsystem in taking decisions or actions towards managing conflict prevention. In this regard, the study's methodology applies a case study approach to analyse various practices of preventive actions, and understudy, observed and collected data on patterns of institutional cooperation from different levels of institutional sectors in West Africa.

The study covers normative case studies, institutional case studies, operational case studies, presented in Chapter Five and Six and country-based case studies analysed in Chapter Seven within the analytical framework of cooperative institutionalization of conflict prevention. These case studies include operationalization of early warning system, preventive diplomacy and the ECOWAS Standby Force as well as development of National Infrastructures for Peace (NI4P). They form the analytical discourse for institutionalization of conflict prevention in West Africa. From analyses in these cases presented, the study finds that cooperation is always possible between regional, state, non-state and sub-state structures in the subsystem. The study conclusion from theory, concepts and case studies is that presence of regional organizations, civil society groups, traditional systems of dialogue and reconciliation

and democratic regimes etc., that cut across communities is a readily available platform for institutions to cooperate vertically and horizontally. It is the premise for cooperative institutionalization of conflict prevention mechanism in responding to potential risk factors to conflict and insecurities within the context of West Africa.

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1. Introduction

The idea and practice of conflict prevention is considered to be more than extremely controversial in all kind of settings. On the academic and research domain, there are disagreements over its meaning, scope and conceptual composition. Whilst for practitioners in the peace building community, they view it as broad, unattractive and hard to evaluate. Both scholars and practitioners disagree over its conceptual scope as well as its organizational arrangements. However, the practice of conflict prevention is organized around different programs and processes that are divided into Direct or Operational and Structural or Deep Prevention. The former deals with immediate actions that respond to risk of impending conflict such as mediation, early warning, military deployment, dialogue, reconciliation etc.; whilst the latter deals with long term responses that involves good governance and development initiatives.[1] However, in recent years the idea of Systematic Prevention has emerged which aims to tackle conflict risk factors and human security concerns such as transnational terrorism, arms proliferation, drug trafficking, health epidemic, cross border armed criminality, climate change etc., which affect communities across countries.

Considering the transnational nature of these threats, the operationalization of conflict prevention has been quite challenging especially in societies coming out of conflict and for communities that are impoverished and incapacitated to deal with conflict risk factors.[2] The transnational nature of risk of conflict has led to increase cooperation between governments and social groups in taking action to institutionalize mechanisms for conflict prevention. However, the practice of conflict prevention has not been conceptualized within the prism of institutionalization and in the context of regional subsystem as a whole. In this regard, there is the need for research work that

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[1] United Nations (referred to as "UN" hereafter) (2001), Report of the Secretary General on the Prevention of Armed Conflict, A/55/985-S/2001/574, United Nations Secretariat, New York; UN (2005) A More Secured World: Our Shared Responsibility, Report on UN Secretary General High Level-Panel on Threats Challenges and Change; UN (2006) Report of the Secretary General on the Prevention of Armed Conflict, A/60/891.
[2] Ibid.

present a holistic conceptualization of conflict prevention that recognizes the cooperative interaction among multiple actors. This conceptual gap between theory and recent practices needs further exploration, which is part of the purpose of this study. For the purpose of clarity, the term 'regional subsystem' refers to geographical zone of cooperation and interaction within a given sub-region in Africa.[3] This study focuses on the subsystem of West Africa, and is used as an exploratory case study to reconceptualise recent development in the practice of conflict prevention through the lens of institutionalization.

This introductory chapter presents the background to the study and the use of West Africa as a case study. Firstly, it puts the research into perspective through 1) the lens of Regional Conflict Formation (RCF) in the subsystem, 2) the sub-region's evolving framework for conflict prevention and the development of national infrastructures for peace, and 3) the nexus between collective prevention and institutionalization.[4] These issues are analysed to identify existing research gaps that are useful to the conceptual organization of the study. The chapter also presents the purpose of the study, research questions, basic assumptions, and summary of the theoretical and conceptual framework. It also explains the research methodology, key contributions and organization of the thesis. Ultimately, the aim of this chapter is to establish the background, rationale and overarching scope of the dissertation.

1.2. Background

The discourse on conflict prevention in both theory and practice is evolving and realizing its ultimate goal of avoiding or constraining the occurrence of violent conflict. This is probably one of the prime challenges we face today in building resilient, peaceful and transformative societies. Following the end of the Cold War, contemporary conflicts witnessed dramatic changes in their evolution and projection across societies.[5] These changes have created new levels of insecurity and violence

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[3] See more details on Anda, Michael, O. (2000), International Relations in Contemporary Africa. University press of America, U.S.A.

[4] Vayrynen, Raimo (1984), Regional Conflict Formation: An Intractable Problem of International Relations, *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 21, Issue 4., pp. 337-359.

[5] See details on Kaldor, M. (2012), *New Wars and Old Wars: Organized Violence in A Global Era,* Stanford University Press, Stanford, California.

that goes beyond a single state and have become embedded across regions and regional subsystems creating a zone of interlocking conflict with global implications.

Different regions have pursued different approaches fitting in context to cultural or conventional setting. Their successes and failures have been chancily defined by the conflict setting itself, political willingness, international support, institutional arrangements as well as national and regional processes. Conflict prevention has taken the form of normative frameworks, international advocacy, fact-finding, early warning system, preventive deployment, peacekeeping, as well as the establishment of demilitarized zones.

In Africa, the pattern of regional conflict formation has stimulated regional cooperation with the purpose of preventing spillovers to other countries. Most regional organizations have developed some kind of institutionalized conflict prevention mechanism, which overtime gained momentum towards ending violent conflicts in the region.[6] The Organization of African Unity (OAU) Declaration on the Political and Socio-economic Situation in Africa in June 1990 and its adoption in May 1991 during the Kampala Leadership Forum established the normative principles in addressing conflict issues at national and regional levels as the key to maintain peace and security in the continent. Between 1993-1995, heads of state concluded and agreed to establish a Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (MCPMR) in order to provide for effective management and prevention of conflict.

In 1998, the United Nations Secretary General's report on *The Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Livelihood in Africa*, present an agenda for conflict prevention that goes beyond the realms of preventive diplomacy and called for greater concentration on preventive initiatives to be embedded in international support to the continent's long term peace, security and development processes. [7] Furthermore, this report gains more relevance when, in 2001, the Secretary General put forward a report on *The Prevention of Armed Conflict* which

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[6] Hettne, B., and Soderbaum, F. (2006), Regional Cooperation: A Tool for Addressing Regional and Global Challenges, in Meeting Global Challenges: International Cooperation in the National Interest. Cross-Cutting Issues, *International Task Force on Global Public Good*, p.206; See also, Wallensteen, P. (2015), *Understanding Conflict Resolution*, Sage Publication Ltd. p.203.
[7] UN (1998), Report of the Secretary-General on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa, A/52/871-S/1998/318, para.20.

called for a new generation of Conflict prevention activities by maintaining that states have the primary responsibility to prevent conflict. It also maintains that the UN's role is to help build national efforts and capacity for conflict prevention.[8]

However, the prospect of sub-regional approach to conflict prevention developing successfully in Africa as a whole is still low because states remain the basic building blocks for decision making to realize multi-national security and prevention regimes.[9] This is a reflection of the challenges for integration and cooperation across sub-regions as well as poor institutionalization and management of policies and programs.[10]

This assertion speaks to the fact that 'regional cooperation processes are largely initiated and designed in Africa to promote the interests of political leaders, rather than the more generally assumed goals of increasing the size of economic markets, ensuring the rights of citizens or overcoming capricious national boundaries'.[11] In every conceivable policymaking process by political leaders, the quest towards institutionalization of conflict prevention systems and structures are controlled to promote their security interest. In some cases, regional conflict prevention project fails to bear fruits as a result of lack of political commitment and willingness to enact and institutionalize regional frameworks at country level. As Janie Leatherman argued when analyzing institutionalization in Europe after the end of the Cold War, she suggests that 'a key aspect of institutionalization rest on the implementation of and durability of commitment and rules as evidence by participants compliance with them and the domestication of institutional principles and practice is a measure of effectiveness'.[12] This means that effort at national level to domesticate globalized agenda for conflict prevention is also needed to complement regional cooperation.

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[8] Malan M. (2005), Conflict Prevention in Africa: Theoretical Construct or Plan of Action? *KAIPTC Occasional Paper*, No.3, p.5.

[9] Ebaye, Sunday E.N. (2010), Regional Integration and Conflict Management in Africa, *Africa Research Review*, Vol. 4, p.286.

[10] Hettne and Soderbaum (2006), p.205.

[11] Herbst, J. (2014), Crafting regional Cooperation in Africa. In Acharya, A., and Johnston, A. I., (eds.) *Crafting Cooperation: Regional International Institutions in Comparative Perspective*. Cambridge University Press, p.129.

[12] Leatherman, J. (1993), Conflict Transformation in the CSCE: Learning and Institutionalization. *Cooperation and Conflict*, Vol. 28, p. 407.

In the context of West Africa, which will be introduced in detail in Chapter Two of this thesis, regionalization of the sub region has evolved in the past two decades with development and regional security cooperation forming a core of the integration process. The treaties, conventions, declarations and protocols that form the normative frameworks of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) from its inceptions in 1975, and its institutional arrangement over the years have been the bedrock for cooperation and coordination of its programmes and activities across the sub region.

In the 1990s West Africa's regionalization process shifted in focus from economic priorities to establishment of new norms for collective security to deal with many conflicts and violent civil wars, which had engulfed the sub region. This included peacekeeping, peace-making and humanitarian intervention in different countries. This shift towards collective security and conflict prevention were mostly ad hoc mechanisms, and were fraught with disagreements and lack of political willingness among member states.

The adoption of a new mechanism for conflict prevention in December 1999 and the various normative instruments have been forged by West African governments with ECOWAS leading the way for the sub region's integration process to put premium on conflict prevention. The 1999 Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security, the 2001 Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, the Declaration on a Sub-Regional Approach to Peace and Security in 2003, the Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons in 2006, were adopted with a long term vision of implementation to draw strength in their institutionalization across state and non-state institutions.

The adoption of a conflict prevention framework by ECOWAS in 2008 outlined a new approach towards building preventive regimes in the sub-region. This approach is broad-based bringing together multiple-levels of actors, programs, policies and implementation processes that must be harmonized and coordinated in an

'institutional manner'.[13] To supplement the inefficiency of states level responses to conflict issues, non-state institutions have been developed with regional levels of engagement such as However, different institutions (both state and non-state) have been overwhelmed by coordination of activities, and harmonization of preventive policies that best support the regionalization of conflict prevention. Institutions have been developed with regional levels of engagement such as West Africa Network for Peace Building (WANEP); Intergovernmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa (GIABA) and the ECOWAS Small Arms Programme (ECOSAP) were established as specialized agencies of ECOWAS with regional processes of engagement. There are also government institutions with regional focus such as the West Africa Police Chiefs Committee. These webs of relationship among multiple actors are analysed in Chapter Five of this thesis as case studies on interaction between regional and civil society organizations.

The ECPF emphasizes the link between the sub-region's integration project and collective action of state and non-state actors towards tackling conflict issues across countries. Scholars and policy makers such as Abdel Fattah Musah have posited that the new framework for conflict prevention requires the integration process in the sub-region to give more emphasis on prevention.[14] This requires the integration process to pursue collective action for conflict prevention through institutionalization of programmes.

However, institutionalization of conflict prevention in West Africa can only be made possible on the basis that different sets of institutions undertake activities within their area of engagement that may impact on the prevention of conflict at local and across state levels. Within the last two decades, there is the growing realization that there are many relevant stakeholders in determining the outcome of preventive ventures as a result of the role they play in dealing with conflict situation and the challenges in addressing potential threats to human security. They involved not only state, but also private sectors as non-state actors in recent times, which form a well-organized

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[13] ECOWAS (2008), *ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework*, Mediation and Security Council, Regulation MSC/REG.1/01/08, ECOWAS Commission, Abuja.

[14] Musah A. F. (2009) West Africa: Governance and Security in a Changing Region, *International Peace Institute*, Africa Program Working Paper Series.

network of organizations that operate across borders and help to build a region-wide pattern of operation in dealing with human security concerns.

West Africa is still in a state of fragility with many countries facing governance and leadership constraints as well as institutional vulnerabilities in their political, social and economic infrastructures with increased potential for collapse, implosion, instability, and down to crisis point. However, a new focus on building national infrastructure for peace (NI4P) is being encouraged and pioneered by ECOWAS and other regional non-state actors, to serve as an appropriate state-level response mechanism to situations of conflict and insecurity. [15] NI4P creates network of relationship that connect local communities and national structures as well as national, sub-regional and international processes in West Africa.[16] In recent years, Ghana has established National Peace Council, which is the institutional carrier of its NI4P.[17] This structure was successful in preventing political chaos during its last general election and has been responsible in tackling tribal, religious, sectional and political conflict. Cote D'Ivoire is currently developing similar processes as well as Sierra Leone. This aspect will be argued in Chapter Seven of this thesis through presentation of case studies on national efforts and their linkage to regional and civil society organizations.

The current framework for conflict prevention in the sub-region stipulates that cooperation and coordination rest on vertical and horizontal approach of engagement among various actors in undertaking its implementation. NI4P is a conflict prevention method that responds to this demand as it connects actors and activities which leads to ownership and sustainability of cooperation between state and non-state actors as well as national and sub-regional programs of conflict prevention.

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[15] Chukwuemeka Eze (Executive Director) WANEP (2015) "The Imperative of a National Peace Infrastructure in Reconciliation and Nation Building: The Experience of the Ghana National Peace Council" Presentation at IJRC Conference Addis Abba, Ethiopia, 30 November.
[16] Courtesy of an Interview with Pratt, Memunatu Head Peace and Conflict Studies, Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone, President West Africa Peace Research Association, 28 November, 2015, Freetown, Sierra Leone.
[17] Kotia W. E. and Aubyn Festus K. (2013), *Building National Infrastructure for Peace in Africa: Understanding the Role of the National Peace Council in Ghana*. Kennesaw State University, U.S.A.

Therefore, the conceptual argument of this thesis is to use the case of West Africa in building a critical mass of understanding on how a collective process of institutionalization can be undertaken towards the pursuit of conflict prevention in the sub-region. The study is a bit ambitious in its out lay. It draws relevance from the theories of Neo-liberal institutionalism and social constructivism for a broader understanding of institutions and institutionalization with a view to explain the network of interactions between structures, actors and processes that connect ideas and interest across communities through an analytical framework of cooperative institutionalization in regional subsystem. The framework will be used to conceptualize cooperative institutionalization and applied to case studies on institutional cooperation at different levels in responding to risk factors for conflict prevention in West Africa.

1.3. Constructing a Research Frame

West Africa's conflict prevention processes are broad and continue to evolve bringing on board different methods of responding to potential crisis and insecurities. Many studies have been conducted to understand the dynamics of conflict prevention in West Africa based on ECOWAS peace and security architecture, on peacekeeping and humanitarian intervention, security sector reforms, elections and good governance, mediation, drug trafficking, terrorism, small arms and light weapon; all of which form parts of the processes for conflict prevention.[18]

These studies have been undertaken by academics, researchers, institutions, think-tanks including peace-building structures across the sub-region and beyond. Thus, the

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[18] See more on Adebajo, A. (2004), Introduction. In: Adebajo A. and Ismail I. (ed.), *West Africa's Security Challenges: Building Peace in a Troubled Region*. International Peace Academy, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers; Adibe, C. (2003), Do Regional Organizations Matter? Comparing the Conflict Management Mechanisms in West Africa and the Great Lakes Region. In: Boulden, J., (ed.), *"Dealing with Conflict in Africa: The United Nations and Regional Organizations"*, Palgrave Macmillan, Aning, K., and Bah, Sarjoh, A. (2009), *ECOWAS and Conflict Prevention in West Africa: Confronting the Triple Threats, Centre on International Cooperation*, New York University; Chalachew, T. (2011), *Regional Security in West Africa: Building Regional Security Architecture under ECOWAS in the Post-Cold War Era.* VDM VerlagDr. Muller GmbH & Co.KG; DCAF/ECOWAS (2010), ECOWAS Parliamentary-DCAF Guide for West African Parliamentarians. Geneva; Ebo, A. (2007), *Towards a Common ECOWAS Agenda on Security Sector Reform.* Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces; Yamane, T., (2013), Securing Security Governance in Post-Conflict Situation: A Framework of Conflict Prevention through ECOWARN in West Africa, *Hiroshima Peace Science*, Institute for Peace, Hiroshima University etc.

wide range of practices of conflict prevention seem elusive which makes its application sometimes lukewarm or understood at surface level and less appreciated. The new framework for conflict prevention in the subsystem requires actions to be taken in a cooperative way and in an institutional manner. However, preventive actions have not been analysed in a holistic way in the sub-region of West Africa through the lens of institutionalization. In this regard, as my contribution to knowledge, I will develop an analytical framework to conceptualize conflict prevention through the discourse of cooperative institutionalization that will be useful to analyse organization of cooperation from regional, state and civil society structures to sub-state level processes. The following subsections is an analyses on three critical issues that put this research into perspective in terms of its scope, aim and objectives, conceptual and analytical framework, the use of case studies as part of the research strategy and the analysis of facts and findings.

- **Regional Conflict Formation Approach (Why West Africa)**

The phenomenon of conflicts in West Africa and its spillover effect across communities that increases risk factor for more conflicts and regional insecurity falls within the frame of RCF.[19] In a nutshell, the term RCF was initially used in the 1980s to understand the development of regional sub-systems in the study of international relations, security studies, regional integration and cooperation and regional security complex during the Cold War.[20] However, the connection between RCF approach and regional security complex was initially focused on a conceptual understanding of the governance and management of inter-state security within regions as a result of the Cold War rivalries. It was more based on state-to-state interaction for regional security with little or no room for non-state actors participation in the overall management, needs assessment and evaluation of security within a given regional subsystem.[21] Also, it did not concentrate on contemporary internal conflict issues and response processes in the fields of human rights, transitional justice programs, refugee

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[19] Vayrynen, R. (1984), op. cit.

[20] Buzan, B. (1991), *People, States, and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era* (2 ed.). New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf. p. 190.

[21] See Vayrynen (1984), Also, see Necla Tschirgi (2012), Making the Case for a Regional Approach to Peacebuilding. *Journal of Peace Building and Development*, Vol. 1, No.1, pp. 26-27.

integration and most importantly local approaches to conflict prevention and peace building.

However, in recent time, RCF focuses on the 'regional character of conflict' and the 'complex web of cause and effect that is difficult to understand or address at the level of a single state'.[22] In understudying the conflict dynamic in the Great Lakes Region, Barnett Rubin described RCFs as 'sets of transnational conflict that form mutually reinforcing linkages throughout a region, making for more protracted and obdurate conflicts'.[23] This means that sub-regions that are inter linked by common history, politics and socio-economic processes are met with common vulnerabilities that makes for spill-over and demonstrated effect of conflict across borders within the sub-region. Necla Tschirgi points out, in making a case for a regional approach to peace building agrees, that 'RCF approaches starts with recognition of the multiplicity of factors that leads to conflicts, but it goes beyond the specifics of individual conflicts to examine the complex web of mutual vulnerabilities and risks that create and feed conflict within regions'.[24]

The application of RCF model helps to identify distinct structural characteristics and patterns of conflict formation across sub-regions. In a study undertaken by Juma and Mengistu on 'Infrastructure of Peace in Africa', different conflict causes and sources were identified some of which have a distinct character structure to a specific sub-region.[25] Therefore, establishing conflict-handling mechanism requires an analytical concentration on a specific sub-region for a better appreciation and application of response mechanisms. West Africa is widely considered to be one of the worst affected sub-regions in Africa from the consequences of the end of the Cold War with specific reference to peace, stability, governance and development placing it 'amongst

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[22] Ibid, p. 29.

[23] Rubin, B., Armstrong, A., and Ntegeye, G. (2001), Regional Conflict Formations in the Great Lakes Region of Africa: Structure, Dynamics and Challenges for Policy. *Conference Report, Center on International Cooperation*, New York University and The African Peace Forum, New York/Nairobi.

[24] Necla Tschirgi (2012), p. 30.
[25] Juma, M., Mengistu, A. (2002), The Infrastructure of Peace in Africa: Assessing the Peace building Capacity of African Institutions. Report submitted by the Africa Program of the International Peace Academy to the Ford Foundation, www.ipacademy.org. accessed on 23 April 2016.

the world's most unstable regions'.[26] Within the last one and a half decades Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau, Senegal and Mali and even Nigeria have been 'embroiled in an interconnected web of conflict'[27] that completely destabilized the entire sub-region, creating more weak states that have the potential to collapse or with visible characteristics of politically disintegrating and socio-economically degenerating into crisis point.[28]

The RCF models put this study into a structured research frame of exploring and understanding West Africa's conflict management structures as well as the linkages between the sub-region's intergovernmental body, regional NGOs, regional civil society networks, state governments and local institutions that cooperate towards institutionalizing initiatives to pre-empt and prevent conflict across communities.

- **West Africa's Conflict Preventive Framework- The ECPF and NI4P**

In 2007, ECOWAS secretariat was transformed into a Commission with a new vision to build architecture for Peace and Security. Part of this vision, is the basis for the adoption of the ECPF as a roadmap for conflict prevention. However, this framework requires conflict prevention mechanisms to be integrated across member states. The Framework, by all intent and purpose is well structured, as it intends to engineer the implementation of many different sets of activities that will direct or indirectly impact on the prevention of conflict and promote human security. The framework intends to make conflict prevention programs well harmonized and coordinated with both state and non-state actors implementing activities that are guided by the principles of the framework.

In order to achieve these various objectives, the ECPF, put forward 14 composite mechanisms for prevention which when put together and well integrated amongst states and non-state institutions, will help to tackle threats of violence and insecurities. These 14 components include early warning, preventive diplomacy,

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[26] Adebajo, A. (2004), Introduction. In Adebajo A. and Ismail I. (ed.) *West Africa's Security Challenges: Building Peace in a Troubled Region.* International Peace Academy, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, p.1.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Rotberg, R. (2008), The Failure and Collapse of nations: States Breakdown, Prevention and Repair. In Rotberg (ed.), *When States Fail*, Princeton University Press, p.14.

democracy and political governance, human rights and rule of law, media, natural resource governance, cross-border initiatives, security governance, practical disarmament, women, peace and security, youth employment, ECOWAS Standby force, humanitarian assistance and peace education.

However, the application of the framework requires new approaches for coordination, collaboration and implementation of policies and regional initiatives on conflict prevention. Put into context, the ECPF support the implementation of 'measures and initiatives that go beyond violence management' with 'emphasis now placed on prevention and peace building, including the strengthening of sustainable development, the promotion of region-wide humanitarian crisis prevention and preparedness strategy and the culture of democracy' (ECPF, para.26, p.11). The ECPF draws mandate and legitimacy from variety of conflict prevention policies and normative instruments in the sub region as well as other continental frameworks and international norms, in order to highlight the multi-dimensional nature of pursuing conflict prevention processes.

Furthermore, a new approach gaining momentum is the formation of NI4P. Ghana has developed and operationalized its own infrastructure through the establishment of National Peace Council with a legislative act (National Peace Council Act of 2011) recognizing its legitimacy as an institutional mechanism that deals with emerging peace and security issues from national to local context.[29] Similarly at the height of the civil war in Sierra Leone a National Committee for Peace was established and instrumental in reaching to national and local structures to rally support for the country's peace process.[30] A common denominator of these two cases is that they harmonize national and local practices in responding to localize conflicts and context specific issues that threaten stability of the state. This method of response can support the interconnected web of institutional engagement from the sub-regional to national and local levels.

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[29] National Peace Council Act 2011, (Act 818.) Republic of Ghana.
[30] Jusu-Sheriff, Y. (2004), Civil Society. In Adebajo, A. and Rashid, I. (eds.) *West Africa's Security Challenges: Building Peace in A Trouble Region*. International Peace Academy, Lynne Rienner Publishing, pp. 265-290.

- **The Institutionalization/Collective Prevention Nexus in a Regional Sub-system**

Institutionalization means a process of arranging ideas, value systems and structures that gain meaning and value over time. It 'consist of cognitive, normative and regulative structures and activities that provide stability and meaning to social behaviour' across sectors, actors and institutions.[31] For conflict prevention mechanism to work in regional sub-system, they should be institutionalized. They gain strength and viability when they are objectively infused into institutions. In such, an institutionalized framework serves as pillars that uphold collective actions, which become routinized in the social, economic and governance system of the communities. This enforces conformity and performance of duties among actors and across sectors.[32] In the context of collective action for conflict prevention, institutionalizing methodically infuses into organizational structures, response mechanisms to prevent conflict.[33] In a sub-regional framework, institutions are instrumental element for collective action to prevent conflict across communities.

West Africa is overshadowed by an array of risk factors as a result of weak institutions, crisis of governance and economic challenges. In this regard, peace-building institutions are partnering on issues of early warning, security governance, cross border security and countering violence extremism. Their partnership has brought about institutional cooperation amongst them. However, most studies focus on the key peace building issues they work on but with little focus on conceptualizing how, why and in what way institutional cooperation responses to risk factors. This is part of the existing research gaps that is explained in the next section.

1.4. Existing Research Gaps

There are studies that have been undertaken on West Africa's conflict prevention and management programs ranging from peacekeeping operation in Sierra Leone and

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[31] Scott, W. Richard (1995), *Institutions and Organizations. Foundation for Organizational Sciences*, Sage Publication Series, p. 33.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Lund, M. (1996), P*reventing Violent Conflict: A Strategy for Preventive Diplomacy*, United States Institute of Peace, p.176.

Liberia to mediation efforts in Cote d'Ivoire, the pursuit of security sector governance, operationalization of the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework, the Peace and Security Architecture of ECOWAS etc.

The Council for the Development of Social Sciences Research in Africa (CODESRIA) has undertaken series of research on West Africa peace and security architecture notable was a joint project in 2011 on ECOWAS and the Dynamic of Conflict and Peace building in the sub region.[34] Research endeavours have focused on ECOWAS and the state of regionalism and regional integration and the aspect of post-conflict reconstruction in societies coming out of conflict.[35] Other research projects have looked into issues of democratization using the case studies of two or more countries in the sub region.[36] Yamane (2014) establishes a nexus between security governance and early warning system for conflict prevention in West Africa.[37] However, these structural connections can only bear fruits when the process is institutionalized across states.

In a seminal article with the International Peace Institute, Abdel Fattah Musah established the link between regional integration and collective conflict prevention.[38] He maintains that West Africa's integration must put more emphasis on conflict prevention. However, he fails to explain how and in what way his clarion call can gain currency. The Kofi Annan International Peace Keeping Training Centre (KAIPTC) under its conflict management program carried out series of research on the implementation of the ECOWAS conflict prevention framework. Its findings show the framework is being overshadowed by an array of operational, institutional and coordination challenges within ECOWAS as well as between peace building

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[34] Jaye, T., Garuba, D., and Amadi, S. (2011), *ECOWAS and the Dynamics of Conflict and Peace-building.* CODERSIA Publishing.

[35] Francis, D. (2001), *The Politics of Economic Regionalism: Sierra Leone in ECOWAS.* Ashgate Publishing Ltd. England; Fawole, Alade, W. and Ukeje, C. (eds.) (2005), *The Crisis of the State and Regionalism in West Africa.* CODESRIA Publishing, Senegal; Ismail, O. (2008), *The Dynamics of Post Conflict Peace Building in West Africa: Between Change and Stability.* The Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala, Sweden.

[36] Harris, David (2012), Civil War and Democratization in West Africa: Conflict Resolution, Elections and Justice in Sierra Leone and Liberia. I*nternational Library of Africa Studies* 29, I.B. Tauris and Co.Ltd Publishing.

[37] Yamane, T., (2013), Securing Security Governance in Post-Conflict Situation: A Framework of Conflict Prevention through ECOWARN in West Africa. *Hiroshima Peace Science*, Hiroshima University, Vol. 35, pp. 1-17.

[38] Musah A. F. (2009), West Africa: Governance and Security in a Changing Region. International Peace Institute, Africa Program Working Paper Series.

institutions across the sub region. [39] There is lack of awareness, ownership, harmonization, coordination and implementation of the ECPF. Some commentators have argued more on the side of operationalization than institutionalization highlighting technical challenges.

Institutionalization of conflict prevention in West Africa is missing a policy prescription that can harmonize the regional and the national in one side and the national and local unit on the other side. However, a successful case has been the institutionalization of early warning system.[40] But it is still fraught with challenges of early response that should be driven by national and local unit. Another fundamental gap is connecting regional to national infrastructures for peace. This will create a platform for local ownership and give legitimacy to indigenous structures of conflict prevention.[41] Thereby, linking response mechanism from the regional to national and local units.

In all the current literatures reviewed, there is little or no conceptual framework as a unit of analysis linking the sub-region to national and local structures; and there is no clear organization of ideas in whole or in part for the institutionalization of conflict prevention. In this study, an attempt will be made to close these gaps within a framework of cooperative institutionalization. For example, early warning is a mechanism for conflict prevention. It has been operationalized through an institutional partnership between ECOWAS and WANEP.

However, a major gap in its implementation is early response to early warning reports of risk factors to conflict across member states. This study intends to close this gap within a framework of cooperative institutionalization wherein early warning system managed by regional institutions is linked to national infrastructure for peace serving as a method of response at national level. This study will bridge the gap between

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[39] KAIPTC Workshop Report (2010), Enhancing the Operationalization of the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework. Accra, Ghaha.
[40] Lewis, R. Shinoda, H. (2012), Operationalizing Early Warning for Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding in West Africa: A case study of ECOWAS Early Warning System. *Hiroshima Peace Science*. Institute of Peace Science, Hiroshima University, Vol. 434, pp. 1-32.
[41] Courtesy of Interviews with Prof Memunatu Pratt, 28 November, 2015, Freetown, Chukwuemeka Eze, WANEP, Accra Ghana, 28 November 2015, Dr. Kwesi Anning, KAIPTC Accra, Ghana, 1 December 2015.

operational and response processes within a conceptual framework of cooperative institutionalization for conflict prevention in regional subsystem.

1.5. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to re-conceptualize the practice of conflict prevention in West Africa by exploring operational and organizational linkages between and amongst institutions, (i.e. regional, transnational, intergovernmental, state and non-state institutions), as well as structural arrangements, methods and processes. It aims to present a framework for cooperation and partnership across institutions that can be applicable in responding to risk of conflict in the sub-regions.

The study intends to link the process of cooperation between sub-regional, state and non-state actors towards institutionalizing preventive policies and programs. Case studies will be drawn on the development and operationalization of National Early Warning systems, preventive diplomacy, the ECOWAS Standby Force, and the development of national infrastructures for peace, which are all included in the framework for conflict prevention in West Africa.

1.6. Research Question

The research questions underpinning this research are:
- *Primary Questions*
- What are the existing institutional capacities for conflict prevention in West Africa?
- How can institutional cooperation and partnership between sub-regional, state, non-state and local actors help to institutionalize conflict prevention in the sub region?
- *Secondary Questions*
- What is the most appropriate methods of institutionalization of conflict prevention systems at country-level?
- How and in what way do institutions converge and take action to respond to risk and vulnerabilities to conflict in West Africa?

1.7. Basic Assumptions of the Study

Undertaking this study starts off with a general assumption that in the midst of complex issues on violence and political instability that threatens peace and security in West Africa, the region has managed to develop the most comprehensive peace and security architecture in Africa with a conflict prevention framework in which ECOWAS stands as a central pillar towards its operationalization.

The research also assumes that regional peace and security policy frameworks can be well integrated and implemented through regional, national and local efforts across West African states; and that ECOWAS, governments and non-governmental institutions working on conflict prevention and peace building can reconcile and harmonize its programmes within the framework of the ECPF, thereby harmonizing their institutional approaches for conflict prevention.

1.8. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

The study covers theoretical and conceptual analyses on ideas and concepts relevant to this research. It attempts to connect institutions and institutionalization within the perspective of international relations. It analyses liberal ideas of neo-liberal institutionalism in the development and transformation of institutions and connect realist critic and social constructivism in the evolution and transformation of institutions across societies.

A general conceptualization of conflict prevention is done focusing on clarification of definitions, nature, scope and moment for prevention. It covers actors, methods and processes that question the uncertainties of effectiveness towards its practice and institutionalization. Having reviewed various literatures, observed operational processes and undertaken fieldwork with reference to past and current development to conflict prevention, a theory of cooperative institutionalization for conflict prevention in regional subsystem is adopted in Chapter Four and will be applied to case studies in the context of issues, processes, actors, methods and implementation of programs across institutions for conflict prevention in West Africa. The theoretical review in Chapter Three of this thesis will form the conceptual foundation for the establishment

of the analytical framework of cooperative institutionalization of conflict prevention presented in chapter four of this dissertation.

1.9. Methodology

- **Research Strategy**

The research will adopt a qualitative methodology of investigation, which will be reflective of facts and findings. The research strategy includes primary and secondary sources of data collection as well as analysis and review of literatures. The research strategy and methodology includes conceptual explication of cooperative institutionalization to analyse the various case studies as response mechanisms to reduce risk of conflict across communities in the sub-region. Therefore, the research method involves theorizing cooperative institutionalization as an analytical framework to understand findings from case studies.

- **Methods and Data Collection**

The method of research includes field visits which was undertaken in Sierra Leone and Ghana including a one-month internship between mid-November to mid December 2015 at the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC), one of West Africa's key centers of excellence on training and research, and WANEP a regional civil society network implementing and operationalizing peace building programs with presence in 15 countries in the sub-region. An additional two weeks' research trip was done between 24th November-5th December 2016 to Freetown, Sierra Leone.

In this regard, primary sources of data were derived from these two field trips to West Africa. Interviews and discussions were done during the field trips with experts, academics and practitioners in the field of peace building in the West Africa. The interviews were semi-structured with some individual interviews and discussions that were unstructured. Interviews were conducted with senior staffs and researchers of the academic affairs unit at KAIPTC in Accra, Ghana. Also interviewees include executive management staff at WANEP head office in Accra. In Sierra Leone, I

undertook discussions with members of civil society community, peace building academics and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) personnel on peace preservation and conflict prevention. Additional meetings were done with a senior management staff of Institute of Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR) in Nigeria as well as meetings with senior police officers from Sierra Leone to discuss local policing within the context of infrastructure for peace.

Another source of data collection applied in this research is participant observation. As a peace building practitioner coming from West Africa and having worked with the largest transnational peace building network for more than four years traveling across the sub-region, I have had the privilege of involving in various peace building projects and institutional programs for prevention of conflict across communities. I worked with WANEP as the manager for its national early warning system as well as a focal point for the ECOWAS Warning and Response Network Program (ECOWARN). Part of my engagement with WANEP involves implementation of all early warning projects and the operationalization of its early warning system within the organizational framework of the institutions. This involved online information gathering, data collection, analysis and reporting on wide ranging issues that represent potential risk factors for conflict across local communities. Beyond identifying risk factors, I worked on response processes through local community dialogue to manage chieftaincy and land disputes as well as political tensions and build relationships for peace across different community setting in Sierra Leone. In addition, I conducted risk assessment studies with the Early Warning Directorate of ECOWAS in order to ascertain risk factors across communities in the sub-region and to develop response mechanism that will fit into context specific problems of each country.

Also, I worked on training and capacity building for civil society communities and network with many peace-building organizations in Sierra Leone and across West Africa. This has given me a strategic advantage as a participant observer on issues related to conflict prevention and institutional cooperation amongst different levels of actors. This background of work informed this study and its development at different stages of the research processes including its objectives, findings and outcome.

In addition, secondary sources of data collection were also used in the research process. These include extensive analyses on scholarly work in the library as well as journal articles, books, reports from different institutions related to the topic of research, archival documents, magazines, newspapers and other media sources. Extensive research was done on ECOWAS reports, policy briefs on West Africa, key policy documents, monographs, and documentary analysis. A qualitative method of analysis has been used to interpret the data collected through content analyses of facts and findings in meeting the overall objectives of this study.

- **Ethical Consideration**

Every individual interviewed in the course of the research agreed to the process and gave their full consent before the interviews were conducted. This is in conformity with ethical research standards, which call for the protection of the rights of sources from abuse. It also puts the respondents at ease when granting the interview since they are fully aware of how the information will be used. Where possible and where permission was granted, photographs of interview sessions were taken as evidence to be published in the thesis.

1.10.   Key Contribution of the Thesis

- **Theory**

The research design of the study is partly to conceptualize the process of conflict prevention in West Africa using a theoretical approach of cooperative institutionalization of conflict prevention in regional subsystem. There are studies that have been conducted on institutions and institutional theories. Richard W. Scott wrote extensively on the linkage between institutions and organizations and developed pillars and carriers within institutionalization processes. Robert Keohane, Lisa Martin, John Mearsheimer, Peter Hall and Rosemary Taylor etc. have argued on the relevance and irrelevance of institutions and institutionalization in the context of international relations and political sciences.[42]

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[42] See details on Hall, P. and Taylor, R. (1996), Political Science and the Three New Institutionalism. *Political Studies* Vol. 44; Hall, *MPIFG Discussion Paper* May 9; Keohane, Robert, O., and Martin, Lisa, L. (1995), The Promise of Institutionalist Theory. *International Security*. Vol. 20, No. 1, The MIT Press, pp. 39-51; Mearsheimer, John, J. (1995), The False Promise of International Institutions, *International Security*. Vol. 19, No. 3, The MIT Press, pp. 5-49.

Furthermore, other studies have focused on theoretical development of institutions within political, economic, social and cultural spheres as well as conceptualization organization. Similarly, recent studies have looked at institutionalization for conflict management and within regional integration. From my observation in these literatures, there is little evidence on the application of institutionalism to conflict prevention especially within regional subsystem like West Africa. However, Yoram Haftel focuses on the 'effect of regional institutionalization on violent conflict' in his comparative assessment of liberal and realist approaches to cooperation and security. [43] Also, Alexander Siedschlag uses rationalist and reflective institutionalization approaches as a point of reference linking political institutionalization and conflict management in the New Europe.[44]

However, this study sought to conceptualize the process of conflict prevention in a developing regional subsystem. West Africa's Conflict prevention processes have been substantially managed and micro managed by institutions and organizations with different backgrounds, visions, goals of conducting their activities with the broader aim of tackling the threat of violence and insecurities. Also the conflict prevention framework in the sub-region requires 1) Cooperative interaction, 2) Multi-dimensional action, through 3) Institutional methods.[45]

In Chapter Three of this study, a theory of 'Cooperative Institutionalization' is adopted and tested within various institutional processes of conflict prevention across the sub-region. It will also be made applicable in understanding the interconnected web of institutional cooperation between regional, national and local structures (from ECPF to NI4P). This theoretical framework analyses the process of collective action by different institutions as a more instrumental approach to conflict prevention. It explains how and in what way cooperative institutionalization is applicable to conceptualize conflict prevention. It is the missing link to Musah's (2009) argument for integration with emphasis on prevention and supports the neo-liberal arguments on

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[43] Haftel, Yoram, Z. (2004), The Effect of Regional Institutionalization on Violent Conflict: A Shaky Kantian Leg? Department of Political Science and Mershon Centre, Ohio State University.
[44] Siedschlag, A. (2001), Political Institutionalization and Conflict Management in the New Europe-Path-Shaping for the Better or Worse? *APSA Paper Presentation*, September 30- August 2, 2001, San Francisco, U.S.A.
[45] ECOWAS (2008), *ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework*, Mediation and Security Council, Regulation MSC/REG.1/01/08, ECOWAS Commission, Abuja.

the relevance of institutions and its value for cooperation in the context of regional sub-system.

It is hoped that the theory of 'cooperative institutionalization for conflict prevention in regional subsystem' will be useful in conceptualizing linkages between regional, state and non-state processes in responding to risk factors to conflict in insecurities. It is not a perfect theoretical approach but it is one that fits into the conceptual process of conflict prevention in West Africa. It contributes to institutional theories but argues its originality on its application as an analytical tool to understand the practice of conflict prevention in a regional subsystem.

- **Practice and Policy Design**

The study seeks to contribute to the application of recent policy instrument developed by ECOWAS, state governments and non-state institutions in implementation of activities for prevention of conflict across communities in the sub-region. The study pays more attention to the interconnected web of organizational cooperation in the implementation of the ECPF and the integration of programs and activities in that regard. Also, with the current development of national infrastructure for peace in ECOWAS member states, the study deals with the policy design of these structures linking governance processes to local structures. For example, using the case of national early warning systems, the study will establish connection on how risk factors identified in early warning systems are responded to in the form of community dialogue within NI4P.

The study gives policy relevance to the regional integration process of West Africa. It contributes to policy linkages in the harmonization and coordination of preventive measure. This means that the study does not come to make integration policy approach redundant but rather using a cooperative institutionalization framework in support of integration of policy for conflict prevention.

- **Research**

This study provides a new entry point to understand the practice of conflict prevention in West Africa. It presents specific ideas for collective action and cooperative arrangements in making conflict prevention work in the sub-region. It can be used as a theoretical tool for similar research in other sub-regions in Africa and other subsystems in other continents.

Furthermore, institutionalization sometimes sounds vague or a huge terminology within the school of social sciences, but it represents a fundamental theory that is still in search of practice within the field of conflict prevention. It also requires translation from its academic foundations to the realities on the ground and moving it beyond top-down to bottom-up processes that will be relevant in responding to risk factors of conflict.

1.11.   Organization of the Study

This study is an attempt to present a new conceptual perspective to the practice of conflict prevention in the regional subsystem of West Africa. Conflict prevention is always seen as a broad and complex process that demands concerted efforts by institutions and groups towards its operationalization. The multi-dimensional and multi-faceted agendas and frameworks, and the process-based nature of its organization and implementation make its outcomes unpredictable and hard to evaluate. In regional subsystems, overshadowed by interconnected web of conflicts and security challenges, conflict prevention systems and processes are seen as a veritable tool to prevent violence and build resilient communities.

This thesis therefore, postulates that a viable conceptual approach applicable to recent development in the practice of conflict prevention in regional subsystems is 'cooperative institutionalization' of preventive methods and processes by multiple institutions within and across states. This approach requires collective actions by regional, state and non-state institutions in responding to risk of conflict and insecurities. West Africa with its complex security and conflict dynamics and its strategic advantage of a wide area network of regional institutions and groups

engaged in preventive actions fits well into this framework. Therefore, the study assesses current initiatives in the sub-region to form an organized set of conceptual analysis to understand the convergence of institutions, methods, and processes towards institutionalization of conflict prevention across the West Africa community. The structure of the thesis is thus as follows.

Chapter One presents an introductory explanation of the study. It covers a general overview on the idea and practice of conflict prevention and assesses the importance of linking conflict prevention mechanism to the discourse of institutionalization. It provides a lens through which the research will evolve. This includes a discourse on regional conflict formation, initiatives for conflict prevention in the West Africa and the institutionalization/collective prevention nexus in the regional subsystem. It argues that there is little or no clear theoretical framework for institutionalization of conflict prevention as a unit of analysis linking regional subsystem to national and local structures. The chapter also covers the purpose of the study and hypothetical arguments as well as an explanation on the study's research methodology and it contributions in the line of theory, practice and policy design, and in academic research on peace building and conflict preventions.

Chapter Two discusses conflict trajectories and sources of insecurities in the sub-region. It covers a risk assessment of West African countries based on a study conducted by the Early Warning Directorate of the ECOWAS Commission. The assessment covers vulnerabilities, threats and resilience in the last three years of each ECOWAS member states in order to give a region-wide understanding of risk factors to conflicts and the larger representation of threats to peace and security in the sub-region as well as implication for conflict prevention. It also assesses regional responses through normative framework and their relevance to institutionalization of conflict prevention in West Africa.

Chapter Three aims to theorize institutions and institutionalization within the domain of International Relations. The analysis is arranged on the liberal agendas of institutional cooperation, neo-realist notions of anarchy and competitive struggles across communities and social constructivist views on ideas, identities and value systems that are translated into norms, rules and cognitive frame that constrain

behavior and actions of states in ways that fosters interactions and cooperation. Also, it analyses linkages between institution and the state system, and international organizations as well as the concept of institutionalization to the practice of conflict prevention. The latter half of the chapter conceptualizes conflict prevention from its historical perspective to its various theoretical models. The objective of this chapter is to establish conceptual synergies between institutions, institutionalization and conflict prevention.

Chapter Four represents the thesis contribution to knowledge within its academic field of inquiry as it presents a theoretical framework in support of a reconceptualization of conflict prevention in regional subsystems. Arguing from the perspective of International Relations theory on institutions and institutionalization, it theorizes the idea of cooperative institutionalization in regional subsystem as a conceptual framework to analyse the network of institutional interactions of state, non-state and regional organizations in prevention of conflict in the subsystem.

Chapter Five explores the activities of ECOWAS as a regional institution, towards establishing a preventive regime in West Africa. It starts with an assessment on the evolution and complexities of conflict prevention in Africa from the OAU to the African Union (AU) peace and security architecture and constitutive act. It examines early attempts of political and security cooperation decades preceding its formation as a regional organization. It discusses the ECOWAS Conflict prevention framework as a new approach to preventive action and argues on the call for integration with emphasis on collective prevention. The chapter presents three methods for institutionalization of the ECPF across the sub-region with assessment of their strength, potentials, weaknesses and challenges. A practical application of these methods is arranged in the form of case studies to validate their usefulness in the framework of cooperative institutionalization.

Chapter Six presents case studies that give meaning to the conceptual foundation of cooperative institutionalization in the regional subsystem of West Africa and show vertical and horizontal interactions between regional institutions and private sectors as non-state actors. The case studies analysed include institutionalization of early warning system based on ECOWAS/WANEP partnership, institutionalization of

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preventive diplomacy and the implementation of the ECOWAS standby force are assessed to establish an understanding on the convergence of institutions, structures, method and processes within the framework of cooperative institutionalization in the sub-region.

Chapter Seven presents state-level conflict handling mechanisms and response processes towards management of conflict and risk factors. NI4P is analysed as an emerging national response system for management of conflict in the state based on policy developments from the ECOWAS conflict prevention framework. It is being developed by state-governments in the sub-region and four emerging country-level NI4P case studies are presented and analysed within the conceptual framework of cooperative institutionalization for conflict prevention.

The concluding section makes a case for cooperative institutionalization of conflict prevention in West Africa. It presents a complete summary of the entire dissertation including background, methodology, theoretical and conceptual framework, the context of West Africa and conflict prevention and the theoretical framework of cooperative institutionalization in regional subsystem. The conclusion also analyses some key issues that are relevant towards achieving institutional cooperation for conflict prevention as well as concluding analyses of its findings from theory and case studies and final remarks.

Chapter Two: West African Security Dynamics and the Quest for Conflict Prevention

2.1. Introduction

The description of this Chapter is a narration of facts and findings on West African security dynamics and evolving processes for conflict prevention. Considering these analytical issues, a background explanation is presented as a preliminary discussion to understand context specific issues of conflict that are the basis for conceptualizing institutionalization of conflict prevention mechanisms in the sub-region into the broader framework of the study.

The first section of this chapter begins with a background analysis on West Africa including geographic and schematic explanation. This is followed by an analysis of the conflict trajectories in the sub-region as well as sources of insecurities affecting governments and peoples. The third section presents a risk assessment of West African countries based on a study conducted by the Early Warning Directorate of the ECOWAS Commission. The assessment covers vulnerabilities, threats and resilience between 2012 and 2015 of each ECOWAS member states in order to give a sub-regional understanding of threats and insecurities and their potential for regional conflict formation as well as implication for conflict prevention. Lastly, this Chapter delves into the organization and arrangement of normative frameworks for regional cooperation in response to conflict risk factors and insecurity since the inception of ECOWAS in 1975.

The analyses in this Chapter is to establish linkages between risk factors across communities in the subsystem and opportunities for institutional response that will be analysed within a conceptual framework of cooperative institutionalization of conflict prevention in the subsystem.

2.2. West Africa Region

The geographical outlay of West Africa is structured as a region bounded in the West and South by the Atlantic Ocean, the Sahara desert on the North and on the East by the eastern boundaries of present day Nigeria. It has a total surface area of 4.7 million

square kilometers, which is twice the size of Western Europe. The map below gives a geographical image of the structure and size of all the states and neighboring countries within the sub-region.
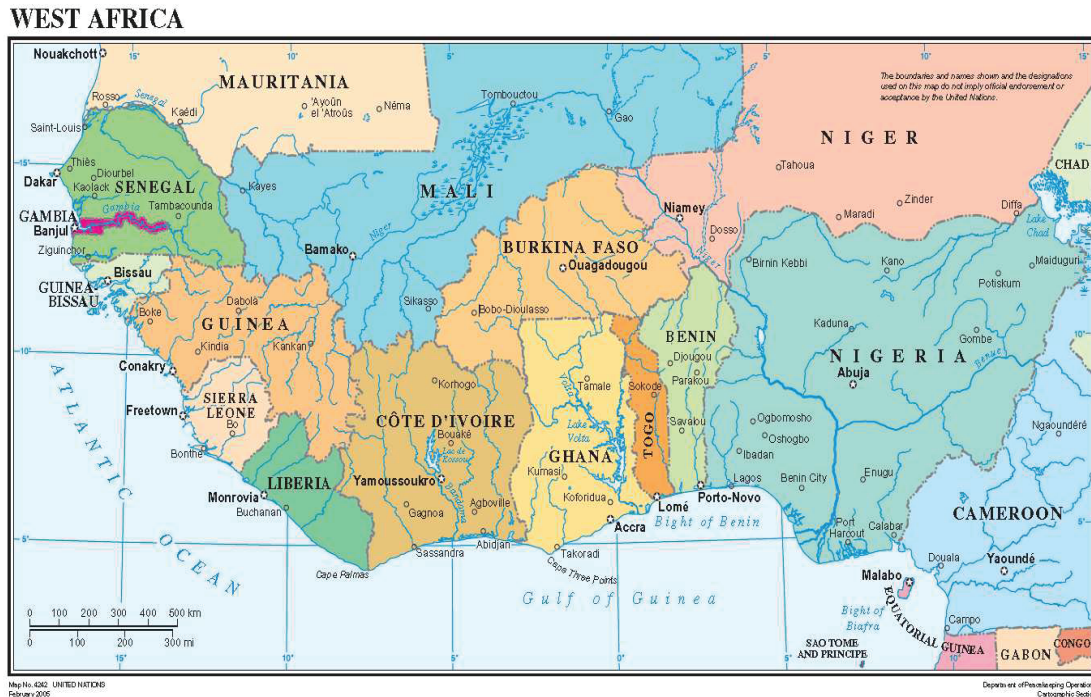
WEST AFRICA

Figure 1: Map of West Africa showing its Geographical Composition of States

Source: UN Cartographic Section, Department of Field Support[46]

West Africa region is comprised of a total of 'sixteen geographically proximate and contiguous states' with an estimated population of 370 million people as of May 2017. This accounts for more than 32 percent of the total population of Africa.[47] The sub-region has developed with different political as well as economic, social and cultural systems of governance. The region is rich in diversity and widely heterogeneous as a result of many ethnic groups with distinct linguistic pattern of communication. However, as the region was largely colonized by Britain and France, the majority of the region's population speaks either French or English with Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde being the only Lusophone countries.

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[46]UN Cartographic Section, Department of Field Support, Website accessed on 20 June 2017.

[47] See more analysis on Francis D. (2006), Uniting Africa: Building Regional Peace and Security Systems, London Ashgate publishing, p. 140.

The sub-region is endowed with a vast array of natural and mineral resources ranging from gold, diamond, bauxite, iron ore, oil and gas and hydrocarbon. However, the majority of rural communities have been involved in agricultural production with commercial values for export abroad. However, in the midst of this plenty, majority of the countries in West Africa are described as underdeveloped or developing states with more than two thirds of the countries ranked within the least developed countries in the world throughout the last decade.

Table 1: Schematic Data of ECOWAS Member States

Country	Surface Area Thousand Sq.km 2014	Capital City	Estimated Population (million) 2014	Major Language/ Languages	Income Per Capita (USD) 2014	Economic Resources	Average Annual GDP Per Capita % growth 2013/2014
Benin Republic	112,6	Cotonou	10.6	French	2,020	Cotton,Oil Mining, Lime Stone etc.	3.8
Burkina Faso	274,2	Ouagadougou	17.6	French,	1,600	Cotton, Peanuts, Sheanuts, Gold	1.0
Cape Verde	4,0	Praia	0.5	Portuguese	6,200	Services, Oil,Gas	1.5
Cote d'Ivoire	322,5	Yamoussoukro	22.2	French	3,130	Coffee, Cocoa, beans/palm Oil	5.9
Gambia	11,3	Banjul	1.9	English	1,580		-2.3
Ghana	238,5	Accra	26.8	English	3,900	Gold, Diamond etc.	1.6
Guinea	245,9	Conakry	12.3	French	1,130	Coffee, cotton, Fruits, Oil Nuts etc.	-2.3
Guinea Bissau	36,1	Bissau	1.8	Portuguese	1,380	Rice, Maize Plantains,Beans Millet etc.	0.1
Liberia	111,4	Monrovia	4.4	English	700	Iron Ore, Timber, Diamonds etc.	-1.7
Mali	1,240,2	Bamako	17.1	French	1,510	Gold,	4.1

Country	Surface Area	Capital	Population	Language	Income per capita	Economic Resources	GDP
						Phosphate	
Niger	1,267,0	Niamey	19.1	French	910	Uranium, Cotton etc	2.7
Nigeria	923,8	Abuja	177.5	English	5,710	Oil, Gas, Lime Stone, Coal etc	3.5
Senegal	196,7	Dakar	14.7	French	2,300	Oil, Cotton, Rice, livestock etc.	1.5
Sierra Leone	71,7	Freetown	6.3	English	1,770	Diamond, Gold, Rutile, Iron Ore etc., Fishing Agriculture	2.3
Togo	56,8	Lome	7.1	French	1,290	Cotton, Coffee, Cocoa, Phosphate etc	2.9

Source: World Development Indictors 2016, World Bank Report, pp. 20-24.

The table above gives a schematic analysis of all ECOWAS member states with key highlight of surface area, estimated population of each country, designated official language, income per capita, economic resources and average annual GDP drawn out from the World Development Indictors of 2016. The table shows that Nigeria carries the largest population in the region with the largest oil and gas deposit making it the biggest economic powerhouse in the sub-region. There are also states that are smaller in population size and economy such as Gambia, Guinea Bissau and Sierra Leone.

Most of the countries gained independence in the 1950s and 1960s, but have been marred by political instability and conflict after they obtained liberation preceded by single party dictatorship or authoritarian civilian regimes. The global impact of the end of the Cold War witnessed weak and failed states in West Africa imploding into large scale civil war that affected the entire sub-region; and, by 1994, the region was described as 'having the potential to become a real strategic danger threatening international peace and security'.[48]

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[48] Kaplan, R. (1994), The Coming Anarchy, *The Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. 273, No. 2, pp. 44-77.

- **Conflict Trajectories and Sources of Insecurities**

The sub region of West Africa is widely considered to be one of the worst affected regions in Africa from the consequences of the end of the Cold War with specific reference to peace, stability, governance and development placing it 'amongst the world's most unstable regions'.[49] Within the last one and a half decade Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau, Senegal and Mali and even Nigeria have been 'embroiled in an interconnected web of conflict' that completely destabilized the entire sub-region.[50] As argued by McGowan, the sub-region has witnessed fifty military-led coups that were successful, forty-three bloody failed coups, eighty-two coup plots, seven civil wars and different situation of political instability that led to conflict.[51]

A fundamental question to ask is what is the main reason for endless antagonism that led to such coups and civil conflict in the sub-region? In responding to these questions, identity and intergroup struggles, revolutionary and factional wars, secessionist concerns as well as resource-based conflict issues have been some of the underlying sources and causes. As David Francis maintained, the sources and causes of conflict in West Africa have emerged from identity (ethnic, religion, nationalism), resources (economic agendas) and patrimonial politics.[52] In some instances natural resources have served as a motivation that fuel violence and prolonged conflict, and at some point built into a region-wide insecurity complex. From existing situations, these issues have sustained instability through the activities of peace spoilers, an operationally viable shadow economy, armed criminality and transnational criminal activities.[53]

Instability in West Africa has led to internal displacement of communities in the Northern part of Nigeria as a result of the Boko Haram insurgencies, refugee flow from Cote d'Ivoire to Guinea and Liberia. As of February 2017, more than one

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[49]Adebajo, A. (2004), Introduction. In Adebajo A. and Ismail I., (ed.), (2011), *West Africa's Security Challenges: Building Peace in a Troubled Region.* International Peace Academy, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, p.1.

[50]Rotberg, R. (2008), op. cit., p.14.

[51] McGowan, P. J. (2006), Coups and Conflicts in West Africa: 1955-2004. *Armed Forces and Society*. Vol. 32, No. 2, pp. 234-253.

[52] Francis, D. (2001), op. cit., p.11.

[53]Francis (2006), op. cit., p. 143.

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hundred and forty thousand refugees are hosted in Mauritania and Burkina Faso.[54] This has led to breakdown of the social fabric of societies, affecting economic growth, collapse of state institutions and destruction of infrastructures, proliferations of small arms and light weapons, spread of diseases such as HIV/AIDS, malaria etc., human rights violations, discriminations with cost and consequences to economic development. This situation stimulates state collapse or failure leading to growing regional fragility as many states lack viable political and economic structures for growth and transformation and the possibility of building a prosperous West Africa.[55]

Furthermore, the state of insecurity within many states has seen the military institutions taking over power creating more complex problem for political transformation and democratization. As mentioned before, the West African region has witnessed more military coups d'état than any other region in Africa, and even in the world. Sierra Leone, Gambia, Liberia, Cote d' Ivoire, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Niger and even the most populous nation in the region, Nigeria, suffered from multiple military coups and mutiny.[56] Liberia descended into civil war in 1989, which spilled over into Sierra Leone in 1991 and later affected Guinea making up the Mano River Basin Conflict. Nigeria was also engulfed in political crisis and military coups in the 1990s, and between 2002 and 2004, and Cote d'Ivoire political crisis imploded into a brutal civil war and became protracted after 2002. As a result of insufficient response to modernized development in the peripheral region of Niger and Mali, there has been a spread of violent Tuareg insurgency movement along the Northern regions of these countries since the 1990s. Togo was embroiled in political conflict in 2005 leading to a military take over, and similar political conflicts spread into Guinea and Burkina Faso. Senegal is still facing a secessionist conflict in the Casamance region that began in the early 1980s. These intrastate conflicts emerged from the struggle and deep desire of people and groups wanting to promote, protect, sustain and uphold their individual and collective identity, security and development.

The state of inequalities, human rights violation, oppression and suppression of groups, armed criminality and transnational criminal activities, diseases, poverty and

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[54] Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat (2017), West Africa Monthly Mixed Migration Summary February 2017 Report. UNHCR, West Africa Office.
[55] Lewis, R. Shinoda, H. (2012), op. cit., p.3.
[56] Francis (2006), op. cit., p. 142.

unemployment have been so glaring that they represent the structural core of human insecurity within and between states in the sub region leading to growing failures of government and collapse of many states. More than two-thirds of the 15 countries within the region have been consistently ranked within the least or low human development index over the last decade in the United Nations Human Development Report.[57]

Also, an emerging element within these human insecurity dynamics is the growing network of terrorism that is expanding its reach from the Sahel states to the west coast of the sub-region. Jihadist movements such as the Salafist Group for Preaching Combat (GSPC), the Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), and Boko Haram are all creating a state of fear, insecurity and violence within countries such as Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Burkina Faso and Nigeria. Thousands of people have lost their lives as a result of the activities of terrorist groups. The OECD 2012 Report on security risk in West Africa asserts that 'the economic cost of this insecurity is enormous, in terms of the loss of human life, the destruction of infrastructure, the interruption of economic activities, the looting of natural resources, corruption, the flight of foreign investors and operators and migration and that these factors hinder economic development and enhancement of human security'.[58]

2.3. West Africa's Risk Assessment for Conflict Prevention

Considering these conflict settings in West Africa, the 2006 UN Progress Report on the Prevention of Armed Conflict stated that 'the most effective way to prevent crisis is to reduce the impact of risk factor'.[59] This means that for conflict to be prevented risk must be identified through early warning systems and appropriate response taken to reduce existing vulnerabilities to conflict in a community. The deficiencies in the political, social and economic spaces of communities in West Africa represent existential risk factors that have the potential to generate conflict. Therefore, in order to conceptualize institutional cooperation for conflict prevention, risk must be identified and linked to the study's objective of reconceptualising the

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[57]UN (2013), Human Development Report. New York.

[58] Wilkinson, H. (2012), Reversal of Fortune: AQIM's Stalemate in Algeria and its new Front in the Sahel, OECD, pp.12-29.

[59] UN Report (2006), op. cit. p. 7.

operationalization of conflict prevention mechanisms. An understanding of the complex web of risk factors across different countries helps to identify commonality of conflict issues that have influenced intersubjective interactions amongst institutions and local communities for cooperative institutionalization of response mechanism to reduce risk of conflicts. Therefore, the objective of this subsection is to assess risk factors and link them to the conceptual and analytical framework.

The Early Warning Directorate at the ECOWAS Commission conducted a Technical Study of ECOWAS member States on risk assessment covering 2012-2015. The study, assesses major risk factors in the sub region on the context of population dynamics, including migration, demography and the youth bulge, contestation over identities based on ethnicity, religion and citizenship, the struggle for and control of natural resources, and the state, elections and democratic struggles. [60] These components highlighted below, explains the multi-dimensional and complex nature of the sub region's level of risk, vulnerability and evolving pattern of instability. In analyzing risk factors, the study puts into context each country's causes and patterns of vulnerabilities, sources of threats and prospects of resilience in order to ascertain the future trends of violence and instability among the various states. The table below gives highlight of each country.

Table 2: Risk Assessment of ECOWAS Member States

Country and status	Vulnerabilities	Threats	Resilience
Nigeria - 4	Ethno-regionalism, religious extremism and corruption	Spread of terrorism and collapse of state authority	Tradition of political compromise during moments of high tension
Mali - 4	Lack of state control over significant parts of the territory	Armed insurrection by radical Islamic groups and returnees from Libya	Willingness of the government to negotiate
Côte d'Ivoire - 4	Strong ethno-regionalism and religious divide, and weak transitional provisions and	State collapse and resumption of war by armed combatants	Determination to return to economic prosperity and restore peace

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[60] ECOWAS/Early Warning Directorate (2012), Risk Assessment, 2012-2015: Technical Study of ECOWAS Member States, ECOWAS Commission, Abuja.

Country and status	Vulnerabilities	Threats	Resilience
	institutions		
Guinea-Bissau - 3	Political instability and ethno-regionalism	Uncontrollable army and political instability	History of credible elections
Burkina Faso - 3	Poverty and drought	Political manipulation for tenure elongation	Leadership has considerable experience in conflict resolution
Niger - 3	Poverty, drought and armed combatants	Breakdown of political regime	A very strong constitution
Senegal - 2	Ethno-regionalism and land tenure conflicts	Political manipulation and tenure elongation	Fairly stable democracy

Country and status	Vulnerabilities	Threats	Resilience
Guinea - 2	Strong ethno-regionalism	Political authoritarianism and manipulation	Long search and hunger for democracy
Ghana - 2	Ethno-regionalism and bifurcated political system	Chieftaincy conflicts and electoral divide	Relatively stable democratic tradition
The Gambia - 2	Ethnicity linked to control of armed forces	Low feasibility of political alternation	Small country where pressure can be applied
Liberia - 2	Ethno-regionalism and the land question	Menace of armed combatants	Successful elections
Sierra Leone - 2	Armed combatants and conflicts over control of mining rights	Electoral tensions and the ethno-regional divide	Fairly stable democracy
Togo - 2	Ethno-regionalism and political instability	Breakdown of political system over elections and control of the army	Relative consolidation of the democratic order
Benin - 1	Poverty and ethno-regionalism	Lack of political dialogue	Democratic tradition
Cape Verde - 1	Drought and immigration	Drug trafficking	Democratic consolidation

Source: ECOWAS (2012), *Risk Assessment 2012-2015, Technical Study of ECOWAS member States*, ECOWAS Commission, Abuja, pp.10-11.

As stated in the study report, the table above summarizes and ranks the risk of violent conflict emerging in each country. One is consider, as the lowest ranking which means the potential for conflict is 'unlikely'; whilst five is the highest which means 'violent conflict is certainly imminent'.

Looking at the highlight above, only 2 out of 15 member countries are recognized as peaceful and stable as a result of 'high degree of regime legitimacy'. The present situation in 7 countries shows 'an increasing level of tension and systemic strains' with violent conflict 'moderately likely'.

In addition, 3 countries (Niger, Burkina Faso and Guinea Bissau) are facing a situation where in state legitimacy is 'increasingly eroded' with the state beginning to lose control over the instruments of power leading to violent government repression and the likelihood of violent conflict. Similarly, the study states that 3 countries (Nigeria, Mali, and Cote d'Ivoire) have a 'high intensity for conflict'. This is because, the situation in these countries are characterized by open warfare among rival groups, mass destruction and displacement of civilian population making violent conflict imminent.[61] The risk assessment finding shows that states capacity for resilience is bleak. However, there is a shortfall in the report in terms of its level of research to assess what capacity (institutional or operational) exist across state and non state actors and regional institutions for conflict prevention.[62]

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[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid.
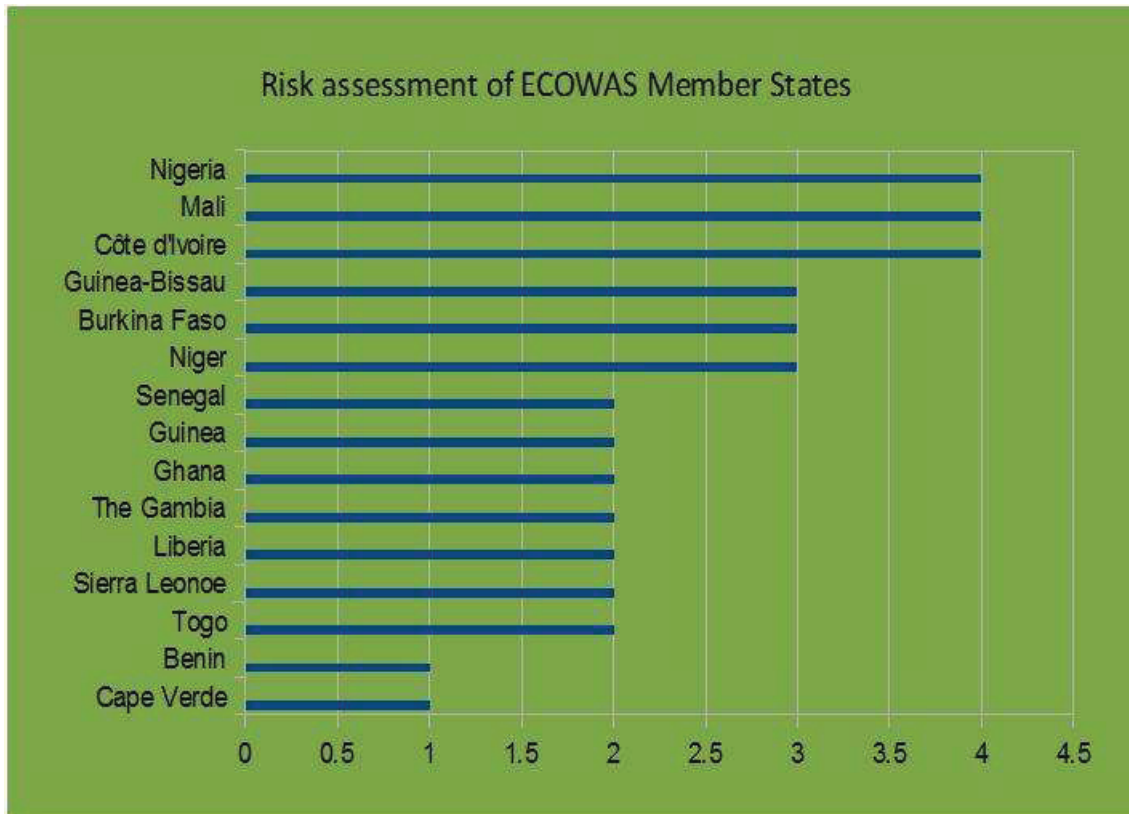
Figure 2: Graphic Presentation of Risk Assessment Table

Source: ECOWAS (2012), Risk Assessment 2012-2015, Technical Study of
ECOWAS member States, ECOWAS Commission, Abuja, p. 12.

The figure above shows a graphic representation of the risk assessment table. It
highlights the ranking of all ECOWAS member states with the lowest risk ranking
being 1 and the highest risk ranking being 4.5. Even though some analyst may argue
that the ranking and table are not a complete representation of the trends of risk,
vulnerabilities and insecurities, it does make a clear case that countries across the sub-
region have certain risk factors which makes them prone to violence, conflict and
instability.

2.4. ECOWAS and Regional Responses to Conflict

In spite of the existing conflict risk, ECOWAS as West Africa foremost regional
organization has been at the forefront of responding to conflict situation across
communities. This sub-section covers subjective analyses on the evolution of
ECOWAS as an institutional structure for regional integration to foster economic
development in the sub-region to its strategic shift of establishing regional norms to

tackle the challenges of political conflicts and civil wars that engulfed the subsystem in the 1990s.

- **Formation of ECOWAS**

The process of regional integration is not a new one in West Africa. In between the struggle for independence and nationalism, the leaders of the sub region went through monumental challenges before a common understanding was fudged for a gradual push towards regional integration. As a result of the fact that countries in the sub region were divided along colonial lines with France and Britain as the region's previous master, the quest for integration was made far more difficult.[63]

The former French-colonized countries in West Africa, in a bid to integrate themselves within a French West African Union, put forward more than five different organizations to build cooperation as well as support some form of integration within their member states. On the other hand, the Anglophone countries grappled with limited activities in the domain of integration. However, some of these attempts at regional integration focused more on building technical and specialized agencies rather than a supranational structure established on set international standards supported by relevant institutional and legal frameworks.[64]

Earlier attempts to create an all-embracing organization, which will group all French and English speaking countries failed. However, Charles Ukeje suggests three major forces that stimulated the gradual process of regional integration. These include '(1) that individual market were too small to promote accelerated development in most countries in the sub region in particular, and Africa at large; (2) that integration would help in far reaching ways to consolidate newly won political independence; and (3) that many lessons can be learned from the demonstration effects of successful regional economic integration in Western Europe'.[65]

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[63]Nduaguibe, M. (1978), *The Law and Politics of ECOWAS*. Faculty of Law, University of Calabar and Imo State University, Nigeria.

[64] Ibid, see more on Onwuka, R. I. and Sesay, A., (ed.) (1985), The Future of Regionalism in Africa, Contemporary African Issues, Macmillian Publishing.

[65]Ukeje, C. (2005), From Economic Cooperation to Collective Security: ECOWAS and the Changing Imperatives of Sub-regionalism in West Africa. In Fawole, Alade, W. and Ukeje, C. (eds.), *The Crisis of the State and Regionalism in West Africa*, CODESRIA Publishing, Senegal, p. 144.

Realizing that these issues have a greater impact on the political and economic viability of states across the sub-region, a series of consultations led to a draft Treaty establishing the ECOWAS and was signed by 15 member states on May 1975. Its formation as described by Francis, was 'an intergovernmental state elitist project based on geographical proximity and mutual independence and coupled with economic and political imperatives'.[66] Article 2(1) entitled aims in the Treaty of the community states that 'it shall be the aim of the community to promote co-operation and development in all fields of economic activity…and in social and cultural matters for the purpose of…increasing and maintaining economic stability and fostering closer relations among its members'.[67]

This means that the objective of ECOWAS is to develop 'a common market that focuses on trade liberalization, harmonization of economic policies and the removal of barriers to the free movement of factors of production' including goods and services. The treaty proposed to implement this objective in 'stage' which are: (1) Harmonization stage, (2) Coordination Stage, (3) development and implementation of collective institutional project and (4) the stage for integration of free trade area with no tariff, a customs union with no intra-regional tariff, a common market which allows free movement of factors of production and the harmonization of economic, fiscal, monetary and agricultural policies of the community.[68]

Furthermore, an institutional Framework was set up to execute the various policies for regional integration. These include, the Authority of Heads of States and Government, the Council of Ministers, an Executive Secretary, a Tribunal for the community and the Fund for Co-operation, Compensation and Development. The integration process in West Africa has been based on functional and neo-functionalist theory which views integration as 'a situation where a group of states decide to cooperate in order to increase their individual and collective interests in performance of some technical, welfare and relatively non-controversial functions'.[69]

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[66] Francis (2001), op. cit., p.23.
[67] See detail on ECOWAS Treaty (1975), op. cit., p. 20.
[68] See detail on Nduaguibe (1978), op. cit., p. 132.
[69] Francis (2001), op. cit., p.31.

New threats of political instability within states and emerging intra-state conflict in the late 1980s led to the establishment of a Revised Treaty which was signed by member states in 1993. This Treaty established an Economic and Social Council, a community parliament and a Community Court of Justice as well as a specialized technical Commission for Political, Judicial, Regional Security and Immigration.[70] This treaty is unique in its own right in that it recognizes in principle the supranationality of ECOWAS. This is because, decisions of the Authority of Heads of state and government becomes 'binding on the institutions of the community's member states within 90 days after adoption by the Chairperson'.[71] However, as Francis noted, 'the treaty of ECOWAS does not create a supranational entity with power over national economies and member state'.[72]

- **ECOWAS and Regional Normative Frameworks and Conflict Prevention**

These unfolding crises required a strategic expansion of the integration and cooperation process to go far beyond economic needs and to develop ad hoc conflict management and response mechanism by ECOWAS to deal with these crises and build support structures for conflict prevention and peace building. However, ECOWAS gradual movement into security and conflict prevention emerged in 1978 when the member states adopted the ***Non-aggression Treaty***, which called on its member states to refrain from the threat and use of force or aggression against each other.[73] This was followed, in 1981 by the ***Protocol on Mutual Assistance on Defence***.[74] These two protocols were 'designed primarily to reinforce state sovereignty by addressing external threats and aggression'.[75] Furthermore, the ***Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, and the Rights of Residence and Establishments*** was adopted in 1979, which 'set out the vision and principles to

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[70]See detail on ECOWAS (1993), *The Revised Treaty of ECOWAS*. ECOWAS Secretariat, Lagos, Nigeria; Kufuor, K.O. (2006), The Institutional Transformation of the Economic Community of West African States. Ashgate Publishing Limited.
[71] Ibid.
[72]Francis (2001), op. cit., p. 25
[73]See detail on ECOWAS (1978), Protocol on Non-Agression, ECOWAS Secretariat, Lagos, Nigeria.
[74] ECOWAS (1981), *Protocol Mutual Assistance in Defence*. ECOWAS Secretariat, Lagos Nigeria.
[75]Musah, Abdul, F. (2011), ECOWAS and Regional Response to Conflict. In Jaye, T., Garuba, D., and Amadi, S. (eds.), *ECOWAS and the Dynamics of Conflict and Peace-building*, CODERSIA Publishing, p.152.

underpin the creation of a borderless sub region with a common community citizenship and equal rights'.[76]

These Treaties focused on external threats to state or regional security and stability, and did not make room for the many intra state civil crises that dominated the sub region throughout the 1990s.[77] However, in 1991 member states of ECOWAS agreed on the **Declaration of Political Principles**, which committed member states to respect human rights, and to promote democracy and rule of law.[78] This declaration represents the first attempt by member states in West Africa to develop norms in response to critical aspects of governance systems that may impact on human security and the long-term prevention of conflict within states.

Traditionally, since gaining independence and ending liberation struggles, governments and regional groupings in Africa have developed security framework that work in the best interest of the state and not the people, and West African governments were no exception.[79] However, with Liberia and Sierra Leone imploding into an all-out civil war, ECOWAS adopted a **Revised Treaty on 24th July 1993** which builds on policies for economic transformation and put the region in a better footing to meet the challenges of globalization and addressing issues pertaining to security, conflict resolution and management. This Treaty tries to re-arrange regional initiatives for conflict prevention in the area of peace keeping, humanitarian intervention and dealing with the complex nature of peace making and processes for post conflict transformation and peace building.[80]

In addition, the 1993 Revised Treaty conferred the status of supranationality on ECOWAS in responding to crisis and conflict prevention. It's Paragraph 2 of Article 58. maintained that member states should 'undertake to work to safeguard and consolidate relations conducive to the maintenance of peace, stability and security

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[76] Ibid.
[77] Kabia, (2011), op. cit., p. 3; Chalachew (2011), op. cit., p. 52.
[78] ECOWAS (1991), *Declaration on Political Principles*, ECOWAS Secretariat, Abuja.
[79] Cillier, J. (2004), Human Security in Africa: A Conceptual Framework for Review, ISS Monograph, p.11 cited in Ismail, O. (2011), ECOWAS and Human Security. In Jaye, T., Garuba, D., and Amadi, S. (eds.), *ECOWAS and the Dynamics of Conflict and Peace-building*, CODERSIA Publishing, op. cit., p.174.
[80] ECOWAS (1993), *Revised Treaty of ECOWAS*. op. cit.

within the region' In pursuit of these objectives, member states must cooperate in 'establishing and strengthening appropriate mechanisms for the timely prevention and resolution of intra-state and inter-state conflict'.

This paved the way for the ECOWAS Standing Mediation Committee (SMC) to push forward a peace process in Liberia and established and deployed an ECOWAS Cease Fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). The Revised Treaty gives legitimacy to the process of collective action and the 'pooling of sovereignty was a recognition of their mutual political, economic and security interdependence as the driving force' in furthering this new dispensation.[81] Also, it attempted to respond to the imperatives of regional security, and specifically provided for regional security cooperation. This led ECOMOG to undertake peacekeeping experiment in Liberia (between1990-1997), in Sierra Leone (between1997-2000), in Guinea Bissau in 1998 and in Cote d'Ivoire in 2002. These peacekeeping efforts involved protection of civilians, preventive diplomacy, signing of peace agreements and supporting capacity for conflict transformation. However, these preventive efforts were overshadowed by so many challenges

Furthermore, an estimated 8 million small arms and light weapon were in circulation throughout the 1990s as a result of the spill over of conflict across countries. This allowed for the spread of armed insurgent groups and the upsurge of criminal networks.[82] In this regard, ECOWAS member states signed the *Declaration of A Moratorium on Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Light weapons in West Africa* in October 1998 with the principle objective to facilitate conflict sensitive development through preventive disarmament.[83]

This was followed by a code of conduct for the implementation of the Moratorium on Small Arms and Light Weapons in December 1998 and a commitment for the establishment of national commissions for the control, circulation and proliferation of illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW). Within this period (1998) a Plan of Action for the implementation of the *Programme for Coordination and Assistance*

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[81] Francis (2001), op. cit., p.44.
[82] Musah (2011), op. cit., p. 155.
[83] ECOWAS (2012), *Risk Assessment Study*. op. cit., p.29.

for Security and Development was established `to build peace in support of activities that will promote a secure and stable climate for socio-economic development`. In the midst of all these initiatives and programmes in responding to crises, vulnerabilities and threat to human security, the sub-region continued to falter as the existing mechanisms on peace and security had not provided for a multilateral security framework or collective security and coupled with the fact that most member states were geo-politically divided with mutual suspicions and geostrategic competition.

In realizing the interdependent nature of security in West Africa, the *Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peace Keeping and Security* was adopted on 10th December 1999. It constitutes the most comprehensive normative framework for confronting the threat to peace and security in the sub-region on a more permanent basis. Thereby boosting the conflict prevention capabilities of ECOWAS to pre-empt potential outbreak of violence, resolve conflict when they occur and to engage more effectively in post conflict reconstruction in places where peace has been restored.[84] This Mechanism of conflict prevention is now the corner stone on which normative agendas and policies have emerged in building and solidifying the peace and security architecture of ECOWAS and its various state and non-state partners.

The uniqueness of this Mechanism lies in its principle of Supra-nationality that goes beyond the previous 'emphasis on sovereign equality of states' and non-intervention in the internal affairs of states'.[85] Article 25 of the 1999 Protocol states that the Mechanism should be applied 'in the case of internal conflict that threatens to trigger a humanitarian disaster or that poses a serious threat to peace and security in the sub region'. The Mechanism restructured the ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group 'as a regional standby and multi-dimensional force with civilian and military component'.[86] Similarly, it establishes other relevant institutions and organs that serve as the building blocks for the implementation and coordination of all initiatives to consolidate the peace and security architecture in the sub region.

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[84] Ibid, p.172, Musah (2011), op. cit., p.155, Ismail, (ed.) (2011), op. cit., p.175, Adebajo (ed.) (2004), op. cit., and ECOWAS (2012), *Risk Assessment Study*. op. cit.
[85] Ebo, A. (2007), *Towards a Common ECOWAS Agenda on Security Sector Reform*, DCAF, Geneva, p.6.
[86] Uzoechina, O. (2014), *Security Sector Reform and Governance Processes in West Africa: From Concept to Reality*, DCAF Publication, Geneva p.6.

The ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council (MSC) is the main body of the mechanism. It constitutes nine member states, seven members are elected by the authority of Heads of States and government, the other two being the country currently holding the ECOWAS presidency and the country which held the presidency previously. The MSC is supported by the Defense and Security Commission, which is responsible for technical administrative issues, as well as identifying logistical needs. It is also supported by the Council of the Wise through activities on mediation, conciliation and arbitration as well as ECOMOG standby forces.

In addition, these institutional organs are enhanced by administrative support from the Commission on Political Affairs, peace keeping and security as well as the ECOWAS Early Warning and Response Network (ECOWARN) that is supported by two operational pillars which are the observation and monitoring centres and the situation room managed by analysts, security experts, ECOWAS civil systems manager and four zonal offices in Cotonou, Monrovia, Banjul and Ouagadougou.[87] Also, the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention makes definitively clear that regional security challenges such as control of trans-border crime, control of SALW and anti-money laundering must be tackled through operationally preventive policies amongst member states. It also builds on concrete foundation that supports ECOWAS efforts on humanitarian assistance, election monitoring and observation.[88]

With reference to the above, *the Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance* was adopted on 21st December 2001. This protocol sets out the constitutional governance criteria to be fulfilled by community members based on principles of good governance which include the rule of law, separation of powers, the independence of the judiciary, the promotion of non-partisan and responsible mass media and the democratic control of the armed forces.

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[87] Sahel Club Report (2012), *The Security-Development Nexus, Regional Challenges: Key Lessons From the Colloquium*, Sahel and Wes Africa Club Secretariat, p.8.
[88] Uzoechina, (2014), op. cit., p.6.

The protocol further requires member states to tackle the problem of poverty, and upholds international principles on human rights and fundamental freedoms including those on children, youth, women and minorities. It also calls on member states to take stronger measures that strengthen constitutional legitimacy for better democratic practices and present a stronger case against unconstitutional accession to power, thereby, establishing a new agenda for democratic governance based on the conduct of peaceful and credible elections that are free, fair and transparent. These protocols were followed by the adoption by Heads of states and governments a *Declaration on a Sub Regional Approach to Peace and Security in 2003*, the *Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons*, as well as a draft regional framework for security sector governance. Also, in 2013, ECOWAS heads of states adopted the *Political Declaration and Common Position against Terrorism* and roll out ECOWAS Counter Terrorism Strategy and Implementation plan.

- **The Status of Ratification of Normative Frameworks by ECOWAS Member States for Conflict Prevention**

As introduced in the previous section, norms have been instituted by means of treaties, protocols, conventions, declarations and regulative guidelines that are signed, ratified, agreed upon and enforced by member states. Since the establishment of ECOWAS and until to date, 54 protocols, conventions, treaties, agreements, and supplementary protocols have been drafted, signed and ratified by member states. Between 1980-2013, 38 normative frameworks were signed and entered into force. In addition, between 1999-2013 11 protocols and supplementary protocols entered into force temporarily or provisionally upon signature pending ratification. Whilst as of July 2013, 5 protocols and conventions have not yet entered into force. The evolution, signing and enforcement of these normative instruments have formed a part of the process of institutional transformation of ECOWAS and the realization of the goals of regional integration in West Africa.[89]

However, normative instrument on conflict prevention, peace and security has been instituted by ECOWAS and member states. The supranational character of these

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[89] See details on ECOWAS Commission report (2013), 'Status of Ratification of the ECOWAS Revised Treaty, Protocols and Conventions as at 10th July 2013', Abuja, Nigeria.

instruments has enabled their enforcement and institutionalization across states. Between 1978 and 2009 more than 12 normative instruments relating to peace, security and institutional cooperation for conflict prevention have been signed, ratified and entered into force. However, Cape Verde had neither signed nor acceded to the protocol relating to Mutual Assistance on Defense, the Protocol on conflict prevention and on Democracy and Good Governance. Also, Guinea Bissau has not signed or acceded to the convention on extradition.[90]

The landmark Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and security entered into force provisionally after signatures by Heads of State and government on December 1999. Whilst the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance signed by member states in 2001 entered into force on 20 February 2008. Some of these normative instruments go through amendments with changes in Articles that delay ratification and enforcement. A tabular representation on the status of ratifications by ECOWAS member states is presented below.[91]

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[90] Ibid.
[91] See details on ECOWAS (2013), *Commission report*, op. cit.

Table 3: Ratification of ECOWAS Protocols and Conventions by Member States as 10th July 2013

COUNTRIES AND DATE OF RATIFICATION

PROTOCOLS AND CONVENTIONS	BENIN	BURKINA FASO	CAPE VERDE	COTE D'IVOIRE	GAMBIA	GHANA	GUINEA	GUINEA BISSAU	LIBERIA	MALI
Protocol on Non-Aggression signed in Lagos on 22nd April, 1978.	Ratified 26/02/79	Ratified 04/08/82	Ratified 28/05/84	Ratified 11/08/83	Ratified 30/07/84	Ratified 30/03/79	Ratified 16/03/82	Ratified 13/11/90	Ratified 09/04/92	Ratified
Protocol A/P1/5/79 relating to free movement of persons, residence and establishment signed in Dakar on 29th May, 1979.	Ratified 04/01/81	Ratified 06/04/82	Ratified 11/06/84	Ratified 19/01/81	Ratified 30/10/80	Ratified 08/04/80	Ratified 17/10/79	Ratified 20/08/79	Ratified 01/04/80	Ratified 05/06/80
Protocol A/SP3/5/81 relating to Mutual Assistance on Defence signed in Freetown on 29th May, 1981.	Ratified 08/08/06	Ratified 04/08/82	Had not signed the Protocol	Ratified 11/08/83	Ratified 26/08/97	Ratified 12/05/89	Ratified 16/03/82	Ratified 02/07/91	Ratified 04/03/83	Acceded 03/06/98
Supplementary Protocol A/SP1/7/85 relating to the code of conduct for the implementation of the protocol on Free Movement of Persons the Right of Residence and establishment signed in Lome, 6th July, 1985	Ratified 24/05/91	Ratified 28/06/89	Ratified 13/04/92	Ratified 19/07/91	Ratified 04/06/90	Ratified 12/05/89	Ratified 13/10/89	Ratified 13/11/90	Ratified 09/04/92	Ratified 02/12/88
Supplementary Protocol A/SP1/7/86 on the Second Phase on Free Movement of Persons (Right of Residence) signed in Abuja, 1st July, 1986.		Ratified 28/06/89		Ratified 19/07/91	Ratified 04/06/90	Ratified 12/05/89	Ratified 13/10/89	Ratified 13/11/90	Ratified 09/04/92	Ratified 02/12/88
Convention A/P1/7/92 on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters signed, in Dakar, on 29th July, 1992.		Ratified 12/5/98	Ratified 22/11/04	Ratified 20/07/12	Ratified 20/04/94	Ratified 07/12/92	Ratified 01/07/93			Ratified 27/03/95

Protocol										
Protocol A/P2/8/94 relating to the Community Parliament.	Ratified 14/3/00	Ratified 18/06/97			Ratified 03/09/96	Ratified 29/06/95	Ratified 14/05/97			Ratified 04/04/95
Protocol A/P1/12/99 relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peace-keeping and Security		Ratified 14/12/01	Did not sign the Protocol			Ratified 24/01/05	Ratified 20/06/03	Ratified 12/02/12		Ratified 23/05/00
Protocol A/P1/12/00 Amending Articles 12 and 13 of the Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security								Ratified 13/02/12		
Protocol A/P1/12/01 amending Articles 1, 3, 6 and 21 of the ECOWAS Revised Treaty.	Ratified 24/06/03	Ratified 30/10/03	Ratified 27/12/05	Ratified 07/01/03	Ratified 21/5/08	Ratified 18/10/02				Ratified 8/05/02
Supplementary Protocol A/SP.1/12/01 on Democracy and Good Governance Supplementary to the Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security	Ratified 04/02/05	Ratified 09/09/04			Ratified 21/5/08	Ratified 18/10/02	Ratified 20/12/02	Ratified 12/02/12		Ratified 30/04/03
ECOWAS Convention on small arms and light weapons, their ammunition and other related materials.	Ratified 05/08/09	Ratified 19/10/07	Ratified 20/7/09			Ratified 24/02/12	Ratified 12/02/12	Ratified 12/02/12	Ratified	Ratified 10/12/07

Table Continues

PROTOCOLS AND CONVENTIONS	NIGER	NIGERIA	SENEGAL	SIERRA LEONE	TOGO
Protocol on Non-Aggression signed in Lagos on 22nd April, 1978.	Ratified 19/12/90	Ratified 17/05/79	Ratified 18/05/79	Ratified 13/05/82	Ratified 03/03/80
Protocol A/P1/5/79 relating to free movement of persons, residence and establishment signed in Dakar on 29th May, 1979.	Ratified 11/01/80	Ratified 12/09/7	Ratified 24/05/80	Ratified 15/09/82	Ratified 09/11/79
Protocol A/SP3/5/81 relating to Mutual Assistance on Defence signed in Freetown on 29th May, 1981.	Ratified 23/10/97	Ratified 18/04/88	Ratified 10/04/83	Ratified 30/09/86	Ratified 21/05/82
Supplementary Protocol A/SP1/7/85 relating to the code of conduct for the implementation of the protocol on Free Movement of Persons the Right of Residence and establishment signed in Lome, 6th July, 1985	Ratified 04/05/89	Ratified 18/04/88	Ratified 08/04/91	Ratified 08/11/88	Ratified 17/02/88
Supplementary Protocol A/SP1/7/86 on the Second Phase on Free Movement of Persons (Right of Residence) signed in Abuja, 1st July, 1986.	Ratified 04/05/89	Ratified 18/04/88	Ratified 11/02/87	Ratified 08/11/88	Ratified 17/02/88
Convention A/P1/7/92 on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters signed, in Dakar, on 29th July, 1992.	Ratified 25/10/01	Ratified 01/07/94	Ratified 30/04/99	Ratified 02/11/00	Ratified 28/10/98
Protocol A/P2/8/94 relating to the Community Parliament.	Ratified 27/07/00	Ratified 14/01/00	Ratified 19/05/95	Ratified 23/11/95	Ratified 09/01/03
Protocol A/P1/12/99 relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peace-keeping and Security			Ratified 08/10/04	Ratified 02/11/00	Ratified 23/02/04
Protocol A/P1/12/00 Amending Articles 12 and 13 of the Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security					
Protocol A/P1/12/01 amending Articles 1, 3, 6 and 21 of the ECOWAS Revised Treaty.	Ratified 15/4/03	Ratified 23/08/02	Ratified 03/02/03	Ratified 10/08/04	Ratified 12/11/02
Supplementary Protocol A/SP.1/12/01 on Democracy and Good Governance Supplementary to the Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security	Ratified 08/12/05		Ratified 10/09/04	Ratified 10/08/04	Ratified 20/02/08
ECOWAS Convention on small arms and light weapons, their ammunition and other related materials.	Ratified 9/2/07	Ratified 27/10/08	Ratified	Ratified 22/06/07	Ratified 22/9/08

From the table above one can ascertain that there is a difference in time between date of instituting, signing, ratifying and enforcement of normative instruments. Member states of ECOWAS ratify protocols at different times, which affected their enforcement and also delayed the harmonization and institutionalization of policies and programs within the community. The table shows with certainty that almost all the countries in the sub-region signed into protocols and conventions relating to conflict prevention. The number of norms ratified and enforced increases the potential for institutionalization; and within the context of conflict prevention, collective action and decision making from the sub-regional to state government through ratifications and enforcement determines the process of cooperative institutionalization of norms towards conflict prevention in the subsystem of West Africa.

Ratification of normative instruments for conflict prevention increases the prospect for harmonization, coordination, and cooperation amongst state actors to take action collectively. This collective agreement or acceptance of norms and rules translates into cooperative institutionalization. For example, the prospect for the control of SALW has increased in the sub-region as a result of the fact that more than three/fourth of member states have ratified the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons; and with support from the ECOWAS small arms program (ECOSAP) are enacting laws to curb SALW circulation which by extension increases the prospect for stability and security in the sub-region.

From the table above, the 12 normative instruments highlighted, received 139 ratification spread amongst the 15 member countries of ECOWAS between 1978 and 2008. This finding shows that collective actions across state government have been organized around norms that are instrumental element towards cooperative institutionalization of conflict prevention in West Africa

2.5. Normative frameworks as Response Mechanism for Conflict Prevention in West Africa

West Africa has a strategic advantage in terms of norm setting within the context of conflict prevention. However, part of this study is to understand the usefulness of regional norms for cooperation amongst different organizations in the process of conflict prevention. As stated in the analysis above, there are many norms that have been instituted by ECOWAS and its specialized agencies and even by other regional organizations. These norms are meant to engineer cooperation and collective action in dealing with the challenges of conflict and violence or at best prevent them. Norm setting has been a corner stone of regional responses to conflict. They represent a 'moral burden' by member states and ECOWAS specialized institutions to act accordingly in meeting the demands of collective decisions to prevent conflict. As posited by Chukuemeka Eze who is the Executive Director of WANEP, "if ECOWAS was able to turn around Cote D'Ivoire and Burkina Faso, it was not because it has started meeting to take a decision but because it had protocols to rely on".[92]

The existence of normative framework helps the process of interaction amongst member states and also helps to enforce institutional cooperation. Norm setting is part of the building block for cooperation amongst states in the international system. However, in the context of regional subsystem that developed regionalization and integration projects for economic and political cooperation, it is a method of harmonization of ideas and rules for collective actions. As argued by Eze

> "if something is happening in Burundi today, the Inter-governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) have to meet to decide what will be the outcome, or ask what should be done? If that same thing is happening in Kenya or is happening in Uganda or in Ethiopia, who seats down to take a decision? What do they rely on? That does not exist. The same is for the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC). However, ECOWAS authorities have come together by agreeing to these norms and all they do is

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[92] Interview with Chuku Emeka Eze, Executive Director of WANEP, 28, November, 2015, Accra, Ghana

to reference it. This is a key component of the conflict prevention that takes place here in West Africa".[93]

However, these normative frameworks as analysed in previous section for conflict prevention in West Africa, have pillars and carriers that enforced their institutionalization. They take the form of regional organizations, non-governmental and transnational organizations, government institutions and local community groups and organizations. These carriers also take the form of methods and processes such as early warning, mediation and fact-findings, monitoring and consultation and regional to local capacities for harmonization of norms towards conflict prevention across communities.

Institutions and institutionalization of norms are the bridge that closes the gap between the sub-region's integration frameworks, and implementation of conflict prevention programs in the subsystem. Institutionalization of conflict prevention in West Africa can only be made possible on the basis that different sets of institutions undertake activities within their area of engagement that may help to reduce the risk of conflict at local, national and across states.

Within the last two decades, there is the growing realization that there are many relevant stakeholders that determined the outcome of preventive ventures as a result of the role they play in dealing with conflict situation and the challenges in addressing potential threats to human security. They involved state and non-state institutions, as well as in recent times, a well-organized network of organizations that now operate across borders and helping to build a region-wide pattern of operation in dealing with human security concerns.

2.6. Conclusion

The Africa continent is awash with many regional and sub-regional organizations and governance policies to tackle new challenges in building safer societies. It has many transnational networks of state and non-state actors pursing different political, economic, social and cultural agenda as well as a growing civil society voice. This

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[93] Ibid.

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chapter has been an attempt to present an assessment of the situation in West Africa within the lens of conflict prevention in this study. It analyses evolving security risk in the sub-region and assesses the historical linkage between ECOWAS, regional normative frameworks and the relational interactions for cooperative institutionalization of initiatives towards conflict prevention in the sub-region.

The spill-over and spread of conflict across sub-regions in Africa, led to the growth of a multitude of regional institutions, NGOs, civil societies etc. working on different programs to end civil conflicts. These networks of institutions across regions can foster the process of prevention as well as management of conflict based on cooperation and partnership between multilateral institutions, individual states, civil society organizations as well as community-based structures.[94]

The structure of regional institutions constantly evolves with cross cutting issues that expand the levels, methods or processes of their engagement. However, in as much as regional institutions bear much relevance to the process of conflict prevention within and between regions, they have been compounded by challenges at different levels of their operations, which include financial constraints, logistical capabilities, human resource capabilities, experience and professionalism, political willingness, and issues of sovereignty and national prerogatives and dilemma of engagement and collaboration.

In this regard, as Michael Lund noted, the most promising approach to strengthening and sustaining sub-regional engagements for conflict prevention, 'lies with the development of a preventive regime-or a set of norms and procedures that is explicitly multi-lateral and multi-level' in which various global and regional actors already active in the field, coordinating their activities as much as possible within an optimal division of labour that takes advantage of economies of scale'.[95] These structures will enhance the institutionalization of activities to reduce the risk of conflict within regional subsystems in Africa.

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[94] Lund (1996), op. cit., p.177, also see Adibe, C. (2003), Do Regional Organizations Matter? Comparing the Conflict Management Mechanisms in West Africa and the Great Lakes Region. In Boulden, J., (ed.) *Dealing With Conflict in Africa: The United Nations and Regional Organizations*, Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 79-108.
[95] Lund (1996), op. cit., p.181.

The next chapter will review predominant theoretical approaches in relation to institutions and process of institutionalization within the larger discourse of international cooperation. Especially, it will argue the liberal ideas of institutions and their relevance to cooperation and progress in societies; as well as theorize social constructivism from its ideational outlook to intersubjective relationships that leads to the development of norms that translate to collective action and institutionalization.

Chapter Three: Reviewing IR Theories to Forge Linkage to the Idea and Practice of Institution and Institutionalization: The Making of Cooperative Institutionalization

3.1. Introduction

Chapter Three reviews prevailing theoretical perspectives in the field of International Relations in order to conceptualize the discourse on institution and institutionalization. This chapter covers a rudimentary analysis from liberalism to realism but tried to present a valid argument of key point that connect liberal ideas to institutions and institutionalization. This overview forms the building block for the theorization of cooperative institutionalization in regional subsystem in Chapter Four. The chapter also conceptualizes methods and processes of institutions and institutionalization, its pillars and carriers, its implication to the state, its application as international organizations and its potential in the field of conflict prevention.

Responses to risk factors, such as early warning systems, preventive diplomacy, military deployment and infrastructures for peace, which are featured in latter chapters of this thesis, have the potential to reduce vulnerabilities to conflict. However, existing research on institutionalization have paid little attention to conflict prevention. There is little or no existing analytical framework that conceptualizes institutionalization within the domain of conflict prevention in regional subsystems. This conceptual gap is what this chapter attempts to point out.

The latter half of the chapter conceptualizes conflict prevention from its historical perspective to its various theoretical models. An analytical prescription is done on the nature, scope and moment for prevention, the uncertainties of effectiveness and the role of regional organization in the process of conflict prevention. The objective of this chapter is to establish conceptual synergies between institutions, institutionalization and conflict prevention.

3.2. Institutions and Institutionalization in IR Perspective

The making and transformation of societies across the globe have been designed and founded on institutions. Ideas, shared values, principles, policies, ideologies, interest, beliefs have been constructed, managed, organized and re-organized across the wider spectrum of societies through the design of institutions. Political, economic, and social systems of societies have contentiously evolved within the lens and prism of institutions. However, less research consideration has been given to its validity and applicability to regional sub-systems within developing and underdeveloped societies that faced the full brunt of conflict, violence and human security challenges.

Studies on institutions and institutionalization have evolved in the last half-century in focus, scope and across different related field within the genre of social science research. It has come under scrutiny in the study of economics, organizational theory, environmental issues, security and most notably power politics in International Relations, security studies and cooperation. The argument usually put forward by various scholars of International Relations has been founded on high power politics within the security and political framework of international institutions. Three classical theories have shaped thoughts, principles, beliefs, agency and instrumentality of theories of institutions and institutionalization in IR perspective namely liberalism and neo-liberalism, realism and social constructivism. These theoretical approaches are analytically arranged below.

- **Liberalism and Neo-Liberal Institutionalism**

The ideational conception of liberalism comes from a positive outlook of the human society and espouses an optimistic view towards the development of the global community. The core assumptions of liberal theory centres on human progress, human reason and cooperation, which are fundamental to the development of societies; and that the 'process of modernization enlarges the scope for cooperation across international boundaries'.[96]

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[96] Jackson, R., and Sorensen, G. (2013), Introduction to International Relations: Theories and Approaches, Fifth Edition, Oxford University Press p.101.

Contemporary liberal theory stands on an optimistic view of the modern international society with greater prospect for a more congenial and peaceful relations amongst nations through the development of strong international institutions guided by international laws, principles and norms that set the platform for cooperation, peace and progress within the global community. This progression in liberal theory has been categorized into four strands namely sociological liberalism, interdependence liberalism, institutional liberalism and republican liberalism. This division is made based on the wider body of work that has been done by contemporary liberal scholars and philosophers.[97]

In a nutshell, 'sociological liberals hold the idea that transnational relations between people from different countries help create new forms of human society which exist alongside or even in competition with the nation-state'.[98] It enforces the relevance of transnational relations that involves relations between private individuals, groups and organizations, and envisages a world with a large number of transnational networks that helps to foster peaceful societies, as cooperation is more likely to enhance peace and stability than are relations between state governments.[99]

Interdependent liberalism, argues for a more liberal international order based on mutual dependence and is related to the formation of international institutions and regional organizations, in pursuit of collective political and economic agendas as a catalyst for power and prosperity instead of military force. Robert Keohane and Joseph S. Nye Jr. modelled it as 'complex interdependence' requiring cordial and cooperative interaction amongst and between states.

For institutional liberalism, the basic assumption is that international institutions promote cooperation between states. These institutions on the one hand are recognized as international organizations with global membership such as the UN, or North Atlantic Treaty Organizations (NATO), regional or continental organizations such as Africa Union (AU), European Union (EU), as well as regional and sub-regional organization that includes Asian Pacific Economic Community (APEC),

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[97] Ibid.
[98] Ibid, p. 103.
[99] Ibid, also see details on Burton, J. (1972), *World Society*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Economic Community of West African States etcetera. However, on the other hand, they represent a set of rules described as regimes design and promulgated to deal with context specific international agendas such as trade and environmental issues. One such example is the World Trade Organization (WTO) or Intergovernmental Action Group Against Money Laundering in West Africa (GIABA). The advancement of cooperation by international institutions are assessed by their level of institutionalization including the issue area they covered in scope and depth.

However, Republican Liberalism is based on the assumption that liberal democracies are peaceful and that democratic societies do not go to war with one another as democratic states espouse mutual beneficial ties that promote security and economic cooperation and interdependence.

The central meaning of institution in the liberal argument is international institution, which mainly covers international organizations, regional intergovernmental organizations, as well as normative or regulative institutions that set rules and standards towards the enhancement of cooperation amongst and between states. International institutions deal with the dilemma of absolute and relative gains in interstate cooperation as it serves as a platform to establish common interest, foster common understanding, negotiate differences, promote transparency, ameliorate fear and sustain platform for cooperation. [100] Therefore, liberalism values the role institutions can play in the progression of the global community in all spheres of human endeavours including international politics, economic challenges, social organization of communities, security, stability and in war and peace.

- **Neo-realist Critique of the Liberal Ideas of Institutions and Institutionalization**

The Neo-realist conception of societies stands on a grim reality of struggle, competition, confrontation and eventual anarchy. [101] For neo-realist, international

[100] Keohane, Robert, and O., Martin, Lisa, L. (1995), The Promise of Institutionalist Theory. *International Security*, Vol. 20, No. 1, p. 42.
[101] See details on Morgenthau, H. J. (1960), *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 3rd ed. New York.

society is anarchic with no central authority or common government that exerts authority amongst all states.[102]

As a leading proponent of neorealism, Kenneth Waltz in his work, 'Theory of International Politics' (1979) argues that the conduct of relations in international system is the 'decentralized structure of anarchy between states'.[103] He argues that International Relations are determined by the structure of international anarchy that demands action convenient for the survival of the state.[104] This structure is based on great power relations whose outcome is competition for balance of power leading to international conflict and sometime war. Therefore, neorealist pessimistic view of international cooperation makes international institutions and organizations incapacitated to deal with the challenges of global anarchy. In their view, states only engage to enhance their 'greatest possibility of survival' with the complete inclination of self-help rather than relying on international institutions and organizations for survival.

In reference to this argument, John J. Mearsheimer, a staunch scholar within the Neorealist School, has argued on 'The False Promise of International Institutions'. He asserts that realism envisions a world that is fundamentally competitive but that cooperation does occur between states for relative gains and fear of cheating.

The neo-liberalism maintains that in the pursuit of the national interest of individual states, institutions can coordinate cooperation in the midst of competition and balance of power. It provides stability and meaning to interstate cooperation and constraints states behaviour. Similarly, other scholars relate institutions and its structural precept to actions of collective choice and behaviour. Dlermeir and Krehbiel suggest that 'institutions have the distinguishing feature of characterizing incentive for certain

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[102] See more on Mearsheimer, John, J. (1995), The False Promise of International Institutions. *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 3, The MIT Press; Waltz, Kenneth, N. (1988), The Origin of War in Neorealist Theory. *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 18, No.4, pp. 39-52, Mearsheimer, John, J. (2014), *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. W.W. Norton and Co. Limited, New York, Matsuo, M. (2005) *Peace and Conflict Studies: a Theoretical Introduction*, Keisuisha Publishing Co.Ltd. Hiroshima, p.164; Grieco, Joseph. M. (1988) Anarchy and the Limits of Cooperation: A Realist Critique of the Newest Liberal Institutionalism. *International Organization*, pp. 494-503.
[103] Jackson and Sorensen, op. cit., p.79.
[104] See Waltz, (1988), op. cit., pp. 615-628.

types of behaviour as well as imposing constraints on such behaviour'.[105] Therefore, based on these different shades of opinion, there are divergent arguments on the relevance and irrelevance of institutions beyond international cooperation.

- **Social Constructivism**

From another theoretical angle, social constructivism explains the network of interaction and relationships between ideas, actors, structures, and processes.[106] This means that when ideas and beliefs systems found roots among different groups in societies, it encourage interactions, which evolve into shared interest and identities leading to the formation of norms, policy prescription and institutional arrangement.

In constructivist terms, the conduct of international society develops from thought and ideas metamorphosed into interests with common identical frame of interactions leading to the formation of norms, regulative processes, platform for dialogue and instruments for negotiation that forges cooperation in the conduct of interstate relations. In this sense, the theoretical arguments of social constructivists have been very much relevant to understanding 'the way in which international institutions create and reflect intersubjective understandings' in the interactive outlay of relationship between actors and their interests towards realizing cooperation.[107]

Intersubjectivity emphasizes that shared cognition and consensus is essential in the shaping of our ideas, beliefs, interactions and relations. This means that different groups including organizations, policy makers, social groups and the society as a whole can share such ideas and belief system. Such beliefs, as Nina Tannenwald identified, include ideologies or shared beliefs systems, normative beliefs, cause-effect beliefs and policy prescription.[108] Therefore as argued by Simmon and Martin,

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[105] Diermeier, D., Krehbiel, K. (2003), Institutionalism as a Methodology. *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, Sage Publication, p. 127.
[106] Jackson, R., and Sorensen, G. (2012), op. cit., p. 213, See Wendt, A. (1992), Anarchy is What States Make of It. *International Organizations*, Vol. 41, p. 335-70, Wendt, A. (1994), Collective Identity Formation and the International State. *America Political Science Review*, Vol. 88, p. 384-96; Wendt, A. (1999), Social Theory of International Politics. *Cambridge University Press*, Cambridge.
[107] Simmons, Beth, A., and Martin, Lisa, L. (2001), International Organizations and Institutions. In Carlsnaes, W., Kisse, T., and Simmons, B., (eds.) *Handbook of International Relations,* Sage Publication, p. 198.
[108] Tannenwald, N. (2005), Ideas and Explanation: Advancing the Theoretical Agenda. *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 7 No. 2, p. 15.

'when a rule is embedded in the context of international law, governments have to forgo idiosyncratic claims and make arguments based on rules and norms that satisfy at a minimum the conditions of universality'.[109]

Social constructivism is also premised on the application and transformation of ideas and belief into tangible public goods through institutions. This means that institutions allow ideas, interests, actors and social realities to have a central point of convergence and giving them various frames of interpretation and application towards their progression and transformation into virtual reality. Therefore, the conceptualization of cooperative institutionalization in a regional subsystem that will be analysed in chapter four is grounded on the premised of social constructivism. Both conceptual ideas are argued on the prism of intersubjective interaction of institutions and groups around ideas and common interest that leads to cooperation and institutionalization of cooperation in a regional subsystem.

These three theories have conceptual relevance to the main theme and subject matter of this study. However, in my view their central arguments take different directions. As social theories, their objectives are to establish an opinion on the actions and interactions of communities and how it impacts on the organization and evolution of our human society. Put into perspective, they theorize observable phenomenon in the development of interaction of nation-states in the international community. They theorize social phenomena and shared value systems that translate into organization of communities as well as how our actions and inactions shape our responses to our need for survival, identity, protection, progression and development.

Liberal ideas espouse the values of cooperation to achieve progress and stability across our world community and that institution at different levels of the social space enables communities of nations with differing interest, needs and ways of life to cooperate. In my opinion, neorealist has a rather pessimistic view of human interaction and sees the progression of nation-states in a very competitive way. It focuses on the projection of opportunities for survival and little interest in institutional cooperation; with the state being the key actor for interaction and decision-making.

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[109] Simmon and Martin (2001), op. cit., p. 198.

Whilst social constructivism presents an understanding on the progression of ideas into action by groups and communities as well as the process of consensus building through shared interests and identity and its translation into formation of institutions to enable cooperation.

In my opinion, the nature of international politics in recent times requires high level of cooperation amongst states in order to maintain stability in the global system. Politics aside, the world is compounded by security and conflict risk factors that are transnational in scope such as terrorism and violent extremism, drug trafficking, proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons, transnational armed criminality, climate change etc. Responding to these risks require cooperation amongst state actors and non-state actors and as well as the development of institutions that will translate the collective decision and policy ideas into action. In social constructivist terms the nature and scope of such cooperation stems from the social organization of communities and nation-states. These conceptual arguments are the basis for cooperative institutionalization of conflict prevention mechanism in regional subsystems. A clarification of this argument is presented in the next chapter.

3.3. Understanding Institutions and Institutionalization

- **Defining Institutions**

Institution is a major term in this thesis as the study focuses on the idea and practice of institutional cooperation for conflict prevention in regional subsystem. It is featured in the conceptual discourse, analytical framework and presentation of case studies. Therefore, I will make an attempt to define and conceptualize institutions through the prism of scholars of both liberal and realist school. The term 'institutions' in the simple sense of the word refers to an organization of people who work together with a set of programmes and activities, which are devoted to promote or achieve a particular purpose or set goals. Craig Parsons, a political scientist from the liberal school, suggested, 'in the common social sciences parlance, an institution is any enduring pattern of behaviour among a group of people. Sometimes these patterns

take on formal organizational shape, manifesting themselves in buildings, resources and groups of people who act collectively according to certain rules'.[110]

Institutions in any shape or form are developed through administrative and operational pillars of support based on policies and regulatory norms from which its institutional legitimacy is founded upon. These structures support the institutionalization process through the implementation of programmes and activities, which are devoted to promote or achieve the purpose or set goals of the institution. The designs of institutions are generally structured in this way.[111] The development of institutions takes different forms and is influenced by people, set goals, environments, available resources, situational circumstances etc. surrounding its existence and its level of visibility and operational viability.[112] Individuals, groups, communities and nation-states can form institutions. However, their different approaches of engagement are largely measured by the interest, needs, and level of resource capacity at various levels of their operation in different setting.

However, scholars in the social sciences field have continued to view the ideas and conceptual foundation of institution in different ways. John Mearsheimer a realist scholar defines institution as a set of rule that stipulates the ways in which states should cooperate and compete with each other.[113] Similarly, Simmons and Martin define institutions as 'persistent and connected sets of rules (formal and informal that prescribe behavioural rules, constrain activity and shape expectation'.[114] However, in their view, this definition creates the difficulty of testing the impact of institutions on activities and expectations in different environment. They defined institutions 'as a set of rules' but not drawing a distinction between institution and that of regimes. Diermeir and Krehbiel (2003), in arguing their case for 'institutionalism as a methodology', states that 'the term institution should refer only to rigid well defined constraining immutable, formal or structural features of collective choice' and that the

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[110] Parsons, C. (2007), *How to Map Argument in Political Science*. Oxford University Press, p. 66.
[111] Maquiso, M. (1983), *Institutional Planning and Development*. New Day Publishers, Quezon City, p.62.
[112] Scott, W. Richard (1995), op. cit., pp.33-44.
[113] Mearsheimer (1994), op. cit., p. 8.
[114] Simmon and Martin (2001), op. cit., p. 194.

link between institutions (as contextual constraints) and outcomes (as consequences of collective choice) is behaviour.[115]

In his work on 'institutions and organization', Richard Scott a renowned academic in the studies of institutions states that 'institution comprise regulative, normative and cultural-cognitive elements that, together with associated activities and resources, provide stability and meaning to social life'.[116] These explanations cover a wide range of ideas in understanding the conceptual outlay of institution. What it is and what it involves, the issues it encapsulates, as well as the broad categories of actors, structures and processes it covers. This thesis will apply these definitions analysed above to the analytical framework of cooperative institutionalization of conflict prevention.

- **Pillars and Carriers of Institutions**

Institution represents the translation of ideas and value systems in human discourse at various levels of governance across communities. It constitutes an evocation of interaction leading to actions and patterns of behavior, which overtime gained stability and meaning to society. However, institutions do not develop in a vacuum or across empty space and time. The design and conduct of institutions have evolved with prescriptive rules, standard operating procedures, laws, cultures, routines, cognitive scripts etc. forming part of the pillars and carriers of institutions. They represent structural and operational pillars that guide the conduct and outcome of institution.

The pillars of institutions are regulative, normative and cultural-cognitive systems, which together have been identified by social theorist and scholars as the three elements constituting a multifaceted network of processes that shape actions and behaviors in communities large and small. Richard Scott states, that 'all of these facets are contributing in interdependent and mutually reinforcing ways, to a powerful social framework that encapsulates and exhibits the strength and resilience' of

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[115] Diermeir and Krehbiel (2003), op. cit., p. 125.

[116] Scott, Richard W. (2014), *Institutions and Organizations: Ideas, interests and identities*, Sage Publications Ltd, p. 56.

institutions.[117] These structures are all encompassing and must be integrated into the core of social interaction in order for them to have a reoccurring effect on actions, behavior or collective choice processes.

Table 4: Institutional Pillars and Carriers

Carriers		Pillars	
	Regulative	Normative	Cultural-Cognitive
Symbolic systems (Cultures)	Rules, Laws	Values, Expectations, Standards	Categories, Typifications, Schemas, Frames
Relational system (Social structures)	Governance systems, power systems	Regimes, Authority system	Structural isomorphism, Identities
Activities (Routines)	Monitoring, sanctioning, disrupting	Roles, jobs, routines, Habits, Repertoires of collective action	Predisposition, programs, scripts
Artifacts	Objects complying with mandated specifications	Objects meeting conventions, standards	Objects possessing symbolic value

Source: Scott, Richard W. (2014), "Institutions and Organizations: Ideas, interests and identities", Sage Publications Ltd. Library of Congress Cataloging-in-publication Data, p.96.

The table above presents a structural component of carriers and pillars for institutional development at any given point in time across sectors and communities. As seen from the table above, regulative systems consist of rules, laws, governance systems, protocols as well as tools for monitoring, sanctions etc. The regulative view presumes that actors are primarily responding to incentives and constraints operating in their environments.[118] It also involves 'the capacity to establish rules, inspect others' conformity to them, and as necessary, manipulate sanctions-rewards or punishment-in an attempt to influence future behavior'.[119]

For normative systems, emphasis is placed on prescriptive rules, as well as evaluative and obligatory standards towards institutional development. As posited by Scott, 'normative systems specify how things should be done; they define legitimate means to pursue valued ends. It defines goals or objectives and the appropriate ways to

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[117] Scott (2014), op. cit., p.59.
[118] Scott (1995), op. cit., p.50.
[119] Scott, (2014), op. cit., p.5.

pursue them'.[120] This means that it enforces value expectations that shape standards to which existing structures or behavior can be assessed.

Furthermore, cultural-cognitive elements, emphasizes constitutive rule involving the development of structural categories and typifications within the social construction of ideas, roles, relationship and interaction between actors in various structure of social life. Cognitive frame stresses the importance of social identities constraining actions and behavior, and cultural systems develop at various levels ranging from local situation, to pattern of beliefs, to shared values and ideological constructions defining political and economic systems at national and transnational levels. Therefore, the cultural cognitive element, presents social roles and relationship differently, emphasizing cognitive frame of reality that define patterns of actions by individual or collective group shaping social outcome.[121]

On the other side of the structural element of institution lays its carriers. These carriers are the existential conveyances within which social actions and behaviors are translated. Ronald Jepperson identifies three types of carriers: culture, regimes, and organization.[122] However, Scott came with a revised set of carriers namely, culture, social structures and routines, which he revised again into symbolic systems, relational systems, activities and artifacts.[123] These carriers identified as the vehicle conveying the operational arrangements of the various institutional pillars. They are important in understanding the various contexts within which institutions develop, change and transform. Thus it represents 'a set of fundamental mechanisms that allow us to account for how ideas move through space and time, who or what is transporting them, and how they may be transformed by their journey'.[124]

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[120] See detail on Scott (1995), op. cit., pp. 37-38.
[121] Ibid.
[122] Jepperson, Ronald L. (1991), Institutions, Institutional Effects, and Institutionalization. In Walter W., Powell P., and DiMaggio P.J. (eds.), *The New Institutionalism of Organizational Analysis,* University of Chicago Press, Chicago, pp. 143-163.
[123] Scott (1995), op. cit., p.52.
[124] Scott (2014), op. cit., p. 95.

- **Institutions and the State**

The State as recognized in the international system is a territory considered as an organized political community under one government. It also implies a structured sovereign territorial space with system of authority that ensures governance of the occupying inhabitants. The formation of state system is founded on institutions serving as pillars and carriers that inject life into the state as a government, as people and as a territorial unit in the broader international system.

The primary institutions of the state comprise of the legislature known also as parliament or general assembly that enact laws, judiciary that interpret the laws and the executive structure headed by a president or prime minister implementing laws and runs the administrative and bureaucratic governance of the state. Institutional developments in the state are bounded by constitutional procedures that are the cornerstone to building a viable institutional order across all sectors of governance. The constitution of the state is supreme and represents in principle and practice fundamental laws that prescribes forms of government, functions and limits, as well as rights, responsibilities or obligations of the governed and procedures of institutional formation that provide governance and stability for both people and state.

Though the three branches of government (i.e. legislature, judiciary and executive) make up the holistic institutional structure of government, there are ministries, department, agencies, corporate sectors, private sectors, business sectors as well as informal and non-formal sectors as part of an organize bureaucratic system embedded in the state. Institutions support the functionalization of the political, economic, social and cultural structures of the state; with norms, constitutive rules, regulations and cognitive frame serving as pillars and carriers driving institutional order and stability.

There is a symbiotic relationship between the state and institutions. Institutions are the engines that bring life to the state. It embodies the functional unit of the state and their absence transform the state into a quasi state lacking the institutional strength required for it survival. State formation translates into institutional formation and institutions cannot exist, function or survive without the state, and the state is the primary regulator of institutions within its sovereign territorial space.

However, state formation is different across communities, groups and regions in the international system. It also varies across histories, identity and political system. States have emerged from the abyss of revolutions, world wars, civil wars, colonialism, and at different time in the history of humanity and the formation of international societies. The differences in state formation have been defined and organized by the different patterns of institutional structures shaping the political, economic and social ordering in different states. These differences are seen in the forms of government and political orientations, economic development policies and planning and social integration across communities in different state systems.

Therefore, it is fair to say that there is a connection between institutions and the state. Both cannot go without the other, and their growth and stability represent progress that meets the interests and needs of people and communities across international boundaries.

- **International Organizations**

One of the prominent pillars for progress and cooperation in International Relations is international organizations. In simple terms, an international organization is defined as an institutional arrangement, which covers two or more countries or sovereign territories. This implies it is an institutional order formed and organized for membership and participation across nation-states. It is normally broad in scope and operates across borders, with large issue areas of interaction and programming amongst all the constitutive member states.

International organizations are also known as international governmental organizations (IGOs). These organizations are commonly described as 'international institutions/organizations' and made up of primarily sovereign states (referred to as member states) and constitute the membership of the organization. Examples of such institutions include the United Nations, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, World Trade Organization etc. Also, within this category are Regional Institutional Arrangements (RIAs) or regional cooperation and integration groupings such as European Union, Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), and

African Union etc. as well as sub-regional groupings within continents such as ECOWAS and SADC in sub-regions of Africa.

States form international institutions to further their interest or common ends. Koremonos (2001) et. al. defines international organizations as 'explicit arrangements, negotiated among international actors, that prescribe, proscribe, and/or authorize behaviour'.[125] In their view, this means that international organizations develop as a 'result of rational, purposive interactions among states and other international actors' to deal with problems and find common ground to solve them.[126] Simmons and Martin (2001) argue that international organizations provide 'international collective and redistributive goods' but also 'regulate many of the social, political and economic problems traditionally within nation-state purview'.[127]

The international system has seen the growth and development of international institutions from different lens across societies. The nature and scope of these institutions varied. They are varied in terms of membership, issue area, interest, line of control, programs etc. Some institutions give equal status to member states and others with unequal status. Some are dominated by powerful state such as the G7 whilst others have a mixture of both, and others are platforms for the rise of regional hegemons.[128] Recent scholarly research endeavours have focused on the 'Rational design of international Institutions' (RDII project) in order to expand on the discourse of whether international institutions matter and how they matter.

The conceptual baseline of the RDII theory is to understand the design of international institutions and their variation in terms of membership rules and geographic outlay (global versus regional), scope of issues covered, centralization of tasks, rules for controlling the institutions and flexibility of arrangements.[129] Critics of RDII have argued that it failed to 'investigate how institutional design affect the

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[125] Koremenos, B., Lipson, C., and Snidal, D. (2001), The Rational Design of International Institutions. *International Organizations*, Vol. 55, No. 4, The MIT Press, p.762.
[126] Ibid.
[127] Simmons and Martin (2001), op. cit., p. 193.
[128] See more on Pedersen, T. (2002), Cooperative Hegemony: Power, Ideas and Institutions in Regional Integration. *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 28, Issue 04, pp. 677-696.
[129] Koremonos, et. al. (2001), op. cit., p.763.

effectiveness of international institutions in terms of their ability to realize the goals they set for themselves'.[130]

However, international institutions can be made redundant due to varieties of circumstances ranging from issues of domestic politics of member states, changes to states interest, problem of enforcement of rules and sanctions, distribution and coordination amongst members, uncertainty of global political climate and the overarching issues of cooperation under anarchy.[131]

3.4. Conceptualizing Institutionalization

- **What is Institutionalization?**

The core purpose of this study is to reconceptualise conflict prevention within the lens of institutionalization. The concept itself is not new. It has been applied to various fields in social sciences such as politics, economics, and related issues in international cooperation. It has found value in recent development on harmonization of policy framework in regional integration schemes and operationalization of institutional reforms within states. This concept will form the analytical framework to understand recent development in the practice of conflict prevention in West Africa. It will be used to understand the convergence of institutions, methods and processes in the diffusion of West Africa's conflict prevention framework and its implementation across states and sub-state structures. Therefore, its conceptualization is relevant. The carriers and pillars of institutions are the instrumental variables driving institutionalization to be a process as well as an outcome. Actions become institutionalized when the actors in a current relationship align their interactions within a common set of normative standards, regulative processes, cognitive framework and valued expectations.[132]

Institutionalization as a process is derivative of political action in pursuit of interests. As Scott argues, it is a product of political efforts of actors to accomplish their ends of

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[130] Acharya, A., and Iain Johnston, A. (2007), op. cit., p.13.
[131] Koremonos, et. al. (2001), op. cit.
[132] Scott (2014), op. cit., p.71-72, Berger Peter L. and Luckmann, T. (1967), *The Social Construction of Reality*. New York: Double Day Anchor pp. 92-93.

which the resulting outcome is dependent on the relative power of the actors who compete, cooperate and take collective decision that impact on their collective ends. In this regard, orderly, stable and integrating pattern of behaviour is needed to meet valued expectations within the goals of the actors. Therefore, it is a process that is political in the sense that it reflects the relative power of organized interests and the actors who mobilize around them.[133]

Institutionalization cannot succeed without commitment. For an institutional order to develop and gain legitimacy, actors must be committed to conform to rules and norms, as well as roles and responsibilities. They should adhere to norms and uphold sanctions and commit to a collective decision that translates into collective action. The various conceptual arguments on institutionalization can be rational or empirically analyzed within the context of institutional economics, organizational development, politics and social structures across time and across societies.

- **Methods, Dimensions and Processes of Institutionalization**

Institutionalization comes into fruition through different methods. Philip Selznick asserts that 'institutionalization takes place in many different ways.'[134] In his design of political institutionalization, Samuel Huntington proposed that institutionalization be conceptualized and analyzed within four structural outlays; namely, adaptability, complexity, autonomy and unity. In his view, the more adaptable an organization or procedure is, the more institutionalized it becomes as a result of the functionalization of environmental challenges and age. Also, the complexity of an institutional order through multiplication of ideas and coordination of organizational subunit, hierarchical and functional arrangements lead to institutionalization. He also posited that autonomy allows for 'independence of social groups and method of behaviour' and, the greater the level of coherence and unity, the higher is the level of institutionalization. This means an effective institutional order requires substantial

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[133] Scott (2014), op. cit., p. 115, citing Di Maggio, and Paul J. (1988), Interest and Agency in Institutional Theory. In Zucker Lynne G. (ed.), *Institutional Patterns and Organizations: Culture and Environment*, Cambridge MA: Ballinger, p.13.
[134] Selznick, P. (1992), *The Moral Commonwealth: Social Theory and the Promise of Community*. University of California, Berkeley, p235.

consensus in decision-making, roles and functions in meeting the broader goal of the institution.[135]

A recent study on institutions and organization by Scott (2014) attempts to analyze how and why institutionalization occur, and the mechanisms involved in creating and sustaining institutions. He identifies and conceptualized three versions of institutionalization as a process. This includes: 1) Institutionalization based on increasing returns, 2) Institutionalization based on increasing commitments and 3) Institutionalization as increasing objectification.[136]

In his argument, the central thrust of increase in return for institutionalization is based on role of interests and incentives that influence behaviour and such behavioural responses to structures and processes reproduce an institutional order. Increasing commitment emphasizes adherence to norms, values, structures and procedures by individual and groups of actors, which overtime is translated into an institutional order. While increasing objectification focuses on ideas and beliefs that are embedded in routines, forms, and documents as well as through artefacts, tools and machinery as instrumental variables towards institutionalization. In this view, objectification involves the development of some degree of social consensus among decision makers concerning the value of a structure and its adoption on the basis of consensus.[137]

Maintenance and diffusion of norms, rules, laws and valued systems are important instrumental element in the process of institutionalization. Therefore, a system of maintenance and diffusion should be an instrumental guard sustaining the process of institutionalization. Individual or collective actors must actively monitor norms, rules, laws and cognitive frame within their socially constructed circle with constant evaluation of identity, interests, incentives, and commitments. On the other part diffusion deals with the way in which institutional patterns spread over time and space leading to sustained institutionalization of a social system.[138]

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[135] Huntington, S. (1968), *Political Order in Changing Societies*. New Haven: Yale University Press, pp. 12-23.
[136] Scott (2014), op. cit., pp. 144-151.
[137] Ibid.
[138]Ibid, pp. 151-158.

In International Relations perspective, institutionalization is measured by the 'scope' and 'depth' of an institutional order. The scope deals with 'the number of issue area' in which there are institutions. This may be in crucial economic sector such as trade and investment or other sectors such as security or socio-political areas.[139]

The concept of institutionalization features prominently in regional economic and integration arrangements.[140] In this case, building an institution starts with rule creation forming what Yoram Haftel describes as 'institutional design'. This involves 'scope of activities which captures the range of issue areas in which states adopt and establish rules' as well as centralize structures 'that sustains the integration and cooperation process, their activities and responsibilities'.[141]
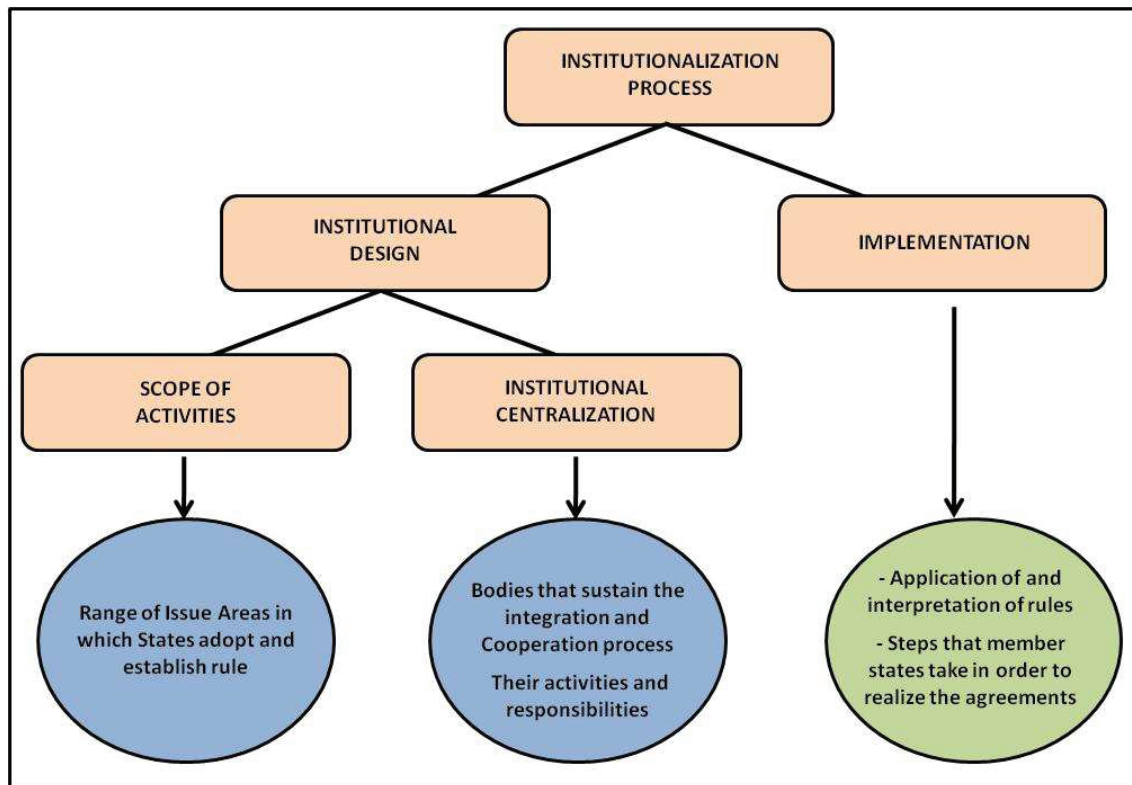
Figure 3; Institutionalization Process

Source: Own creation (from Haftel, 2004, analysis)

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[139] See detail Jackson and Sorensen (2013), op. cit., p.111.

[140] Sandholtz, W., and Stone Sweet, A. (eds.) (1998), *European Integration and Supranational Governance. N*ew York: Oxford University Press, p. 16.

[141] See more detail on Haftel, Yoram, Z. (2004), *The Effect of Regional Institutionalization on Violent Conflict: A Shaky Kantian Leg?*, Department of Political Science and Mershon Centre, Ohio State University, p. 18.

As seen in the figure above, the scope of activities for institutionalization in international or regional subsystem covers issue area within regional integration on the one hand which focuses on free movement of goods, customs union, free movement of capital investment, labour, to fiscal and monetary arrangement etc., and on the other hand, regional cooperation covering sectoral cooperation and harmonization, economic development, diplomacy and regional security.[142] As stated earlier, institutional centralization involves the bodies that sustain the integration and cooperation process as well as the sort of activities and responsibilities they take. These bodies are in various categories covering decision-making structures, regional bureaucracy, dispute settlement mechanism and transnational coordination.[143]

- **Institutions and the Institutionalization of Conflict Prevention**

Institutions have a veritable role to play across varieties of conflict setting. The basic assumption of liberal institutionalism is that institutions such as international institution and regional organizations are designed by governments and intergovernmental structures to foster cooperation across various spheres of engagement. The effect of international institutions on conflict lies at the heart of the debate between realist (see Waltz, 1979, Mearsheimer, 1990, 1994, 1995, Schweller, 2001) and institutionalist (see Martin and Simmon, 1998, Haas, 1994, Nye, 1971, Keohane and Martin, 1995, Abbott and Snidal, 1998). However, Haftel (2004) posits that 'institutions can be instrumental in reducing international conflict'; and explains various mechanism through which it can be undertaken emphasizing that its effectiveness 'depends in important ways on their level of institutionalization'.[144]

Institutions are important for conflict management and prevention. This is because, they frame norms, rules and regulative processes as well as create the platform for cooperation in collective decision-making and constraining actors in ways that regulate, manage or even avert conflict. Alexander Siedschlag states that the theory of institutions as a platform for 'optimal collective decision making' aim to prevent conflict right from their inception. In drawing up a conceptual analysis of political

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[142] Haftel (2004), p.20.
[143] Ibid, p.21.
[144] Ibid, p.6.

institutionalization and conflict management in Europe, he uses a reflective institutionalization framework as his approach to a rationalist design for understanding institutionalization process towards conflict management. In his view, the concept of reflective institutionalization aims at a deep transformation of conflict, ameliorating the underlying culture of conflict through proactive or preventive conflict management.[145]

Furthermore, institutionalization as a process for conflict prevention depends on existing organizational structures, mechanism of problem solving, varieties of institutional actors, including political actors upholding roles and relationship in furtherance of change. Therefore, in the context of conflict management, institutionalization goes beyond the network of relations amongst actors or relative position of actors in conflict setting. It extends to 'ameliorative transformation' of the entire conflict processes. The institutionalization of preventive mechanisms must also consider social reality and their implications in designing policy ideas that will be implemented to fit such existing realities. However, it is important to note that studies on institutionalization processes for conflict prevention are limited. In fact, in my humble opinion, research linking institutions and conflict prevention is new and needs more exploration and understanding.

3.5. Conceptualizing Conflict Prevention

- **Establishing a Definition of Conflict Prevention**

Probably one of the most controversial issues of conflict prevention is to establish a true meaning of the concept. There is always a dilemma between and amongst academics and practitioners as well as politicians and activist on a clear-cut definition of the concept of conflict prevention. Conflict prevention has been put descriptively as "application of Non-constraining measures", "actions taken in vulnerable places", "diplomatic techniques", "constructive actions to avoid likely threats", "actions which prevent armed conflict", "any structural or intersectory means to keep dispute from

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[145] Siedschlag, A. (2001), Political Institutionalization and Conflict Management in the New Europe-Path-Shaping for the Better or Worse? *APSA Paper Presentation*, September 30- August 2, 2001, San Francisco, U.S.A, p.10.

escalating" etc.[146] However, from an introspective point of view, a common definition is action taken to avoid the emergence of violence and armed conflict as well as its escalation, spread or recurrence across different social settings. This means that prevention is wrapped around different set of activities, institutions, programmes, policies or agendas that are pursued by different set of actors in order to achieve the ultimate goal of prevention.

- **Theoretical Models of Conflict Prevention**

Conflict prevention, in theory and practice is organized within distinctly different but interrelated models. These models present different understanding on activities, actors, institutions and coordination of processes towards prevention of conflict. These models for conflict prevention are analysed as follows:[147]

Operational Prevention model also referred to as *Direct or Light* prevention is described, as immediate or short term measures undertaken to prevent conflict or violence. It is pursued in an evolving conflict situation that is within a 'dangerous phase of military escalation, intensification or diffusion'. This model of prevention is time sensitive and focuses on military or diplomatic measures, training in non-violence and seeks to keep divisive expressions of manifest conflict from escalating.[148] Therefore, it targets specific actors and processes that will help to deal with immediate issues and differences, which are at the core of the conflict. It also puts forward, cooperative and coercive efforts aimed at short-term risk reduction in conflict situation where violence is considered imminent. This may include but not limited to third party mediation, sanction, fact-finding missions, preventive deployment, negotiation, confidence building as well as early warning and early response initiatives.

Structural (or deep) Prevention on the other hand is referred to long-term preventive actions that address deep-seated differences within the society, which has the propensity to generate conflict or violent confrontation. Ramsbotham (2011) et al.

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[146]Wallensteen and Moller, op. cit., pp. 3-5.
[147] See detail on: Carnegie Commission (1997), *Preventing Deadly Conflict: Final Report*, New York.
[148] Lund (2008), op. cit., Ramsbotham et. al. (2011) op. cit., Ackermann (2003), op. cit., Wallensteen and Maller (2003), op. cit. and etc.

succinctly writes that it aims to address the root causes of conflict, such as economic grievances, lack of political participation or group discrimination. It involves good policies for equitable economic development, legitimate institutions, and a culture of tolerance can be preventers of violence and civil wars in any given society. Therefore, 'if structural conflict prevention is successful in providing capacity to manage emergent conflicts peacefully at an early stage, it should make societies less conflict prone'.[149]

Furthermore, structural prevention is less resistant towards implementation since it is undertaken through measures that can be incorporated into developmental assistance programmes thereby emphasizing the importance of development initiatives to conflict management and prevention.

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[149]Rambotham et.al. (2011), p.129.

Table 5: Taxonomy of illustrative Conflict Prevention Instruments

	A Priori Measures (Generic Norms and Regimes for classes of Countries)	*Ad Hoc Measures* (Hands on actions targeted to particular places and time)
Structural Measures (address basic societal, institutional and policy factors affecting conflict and peace)	Standard for human rights good governance, environmental regimes World Trade Organization negotiations, OAS and AU's protocol on protecting democracy International organizations membership or affiliations	Economic reforms and assistance Enterprise promotion Natural resources management Decentralization, federalism Long-term observer mission Group assimilation policies Aid for elections, legislatures Human rights and conflict resolution education Aid for police and Judiciary Executive power sharing Security sector reforms
Direct Measures (address more immediate behaviours affecting conflict and peace)	International Criminal court War crimes tribunals Special rapporteurs for Human Rights Arms control Treaties Global regulations of illegal trade (e.g. Kimberly process for conflict diamonds) EU, Lome and Cotonou processes on democracy, governance and human rights	Human rights capacity-building Inter-group dialogue, reconciliation Conditional budget support Fact finding missions Arms embargoes Peace radio Good Offices, facilitation, track-two diplomacy Muscular mediation Preventive deployment Economic sanctions Threat of Force Rapid reaction forces

Source: Lund (2008), The Sage Handbook of Conflict Resolution, p. 292.

The table above was put forward by Michael Lund as an illustrative framework with different sets of instruments which, if and when utilized may fall between structural or operational preventive actions. He recognized that both models of prevention have Ad hoc as well as Priori instruments in the pursuit of preventive action at different levels, with different actors and set of institutions from a global perspective down to local processes.[150]

In addition, the framework recognizes supra national normative regimes and international regulatory instruments within and between preventive models that respond directly or indirectly to potential threats of conflict. This framework recognizes that conflict prevention is 'a distinct pro-active stance that in principle,

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[150] See more Lund (2008), op. cit.

many actors could take to respond to unstable, potentially violent situations before violence becomes the way tensions and dispute are pursued'. [151] The framework recognized that state and non-state actors as well as international organizations such as EU, AU, or ECOWAS have a responsibility to institutionalize and operationalize these preventive instruments. However, contextual consideration should be given to which instrument fits what context, supported by actions that may yield realistic impact for prevention.

Systematic Prevention is a term coined by the then UN Secretary General Kofi Annan in his 2006 Report on the Prevention of Armed Conflict. The report states that it refers to 'measures to address global risk of conflict that transcend particular states. For example, global initiatives to reduce the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, to tackle environmental degradation, to regulate industries that are known to fuel conflict and to advance the global development…which serves to reduce vulnerability to armed conflict'.[152]

The overarching process of systematic prevention requires states across the international community to collectively come up with internationally agreed upon normative standards and principles that can be used to target problems that run across regions and continents. This will enhance a global preventive regime that will deal with instability and conflicts. As stated in the report these include 'international efforts to regulate trade in resources that fuel conflict, such as diamonds, attempts to stem illicit flows of small arms and light weapons and the spread of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons; efforts to combat narcotics cultivation, trafficking and addiction; actions against HIV/AIDS; and steps to reduce environmental degradation, with its associated economic and political fallout'.[153] It was also emphasized that international regulatory frameworks must resonate with conflict prevention efforts in different parts of the world, and state structures should mobilize resources in order to respond effectively.

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[151] Ibid, p.291.
[152] UN (2006), op. cit., p. 5
[153] Ibid, p. 7.

Culture of Prevention basically intends to urge the international community to shift focus and methods of dealing with cross cutting threats to peace and security from reaction to prevention. Thereby building a new international security environment in which the culture of prevention will be embedded across states and in the pursuit of international cooperation. The framework for systemic prevention has an overall goal of building a culture of prevention across the global community. Therefore, issues on promotion and protection of fundamental human rights, support for democratization and good governance, the rule of laws, vibrant civil society, free media, governance of the security sector, equal opportunities for all, progressive development agendas and the protection of civil and political freedom are now given stronger emphasis as part of the processes to achieve a culture of prevention.[154] Generally, it is hoped that if structures, processes and actions across states are collectively undertaken to avoid violence and promote stability across the global community, then, a culture of prevention will be institutionalized.

- **Nature, Scope and Moments for Conflict Prevention**

Arguably, scholars are in common agreement that conflict prevention is a very broad concept and when put into context covers an array of issues, at any given time of a conflict life cycle. However, Lund maintained that 'while some analysts continued to apply prevention to any subsequent level of violent conflict, most now confine it to actions to avoid eruption of social and political disputes into substantial violence, keeping the emphasis squarely on stages before, rather than during violent conflict'.[155]

On the other hand, Carment and Schnabel argue that conflict prevention should be broad, malleable, and multi-sectoral in different phases of the conflict and implemented by a range of actors acting independently or in concert. Thereby, 'making prevention, a medium and long term proactive operational or structural strategy undertaken by a variety of actors, intended to identify and create the enabling conditions for stable predictable international security environment'.[156] However,

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[154] Annan, K. (1999), Towards a Culture of Prevention: Statement by the Secretary-General of the United Nations. New York.

[155] Lund, M. (2008), Conflict Prevention: Theory in Pursuit of Policy and Practice. In Bercovitch et.al. (eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Conflict Resolution*, Sage Publication Limited, pp. 288-321.

[156] Carment, D. and Schnabel, A. (2003) "Conflict Prevention-Taking Stock", In Carment, D. (eds.), *Conflict Prevention: Path to Peace or Grand Illusion?* United Nations University Press, p. 11.

Lund argued that conflict prevention must be 'distinguished from other approaches to conflict mainly by when it comes into play during a conflict, not how it is done… insisting that prevention applies to peaceful situations where substantial physical violence is possible based on indicators of rising hostilities'.[157]

On their part, Rambotham, Woodhouse, and Mail, argued for a more structural conception of prevention by stating that 'preventive conflict resolution, is concerned with resolving conflict before they become violent and creating context, structures and relations between parties that make violence less likely and eventually inconceivable'.[158] In this regard, in order to prevent armed conflict, it is important to understand their origins and seek to make violence a less reasonable option.[159]

The 2006 UN Report on the Prevention of Armed conflict states that in order to deal with intra-state and transnational conflict, effort to address their root causes must shift from reactive, external interventions with limited and ultimately superficial impact to internally driven initiatives for developing local and national capacities for prevention. This approach must be home grown and should foster self-sustaining infrastructure for peace.[160]

In addition, it must be noted that capacity to prevent conflict varies across societies, regions and regional sub-systems. This should be clarified by capacity which exists at international level in the form of international institutions and norms, at the national level in the form of state institutions, parliaments, laws etc. and at sub state levels which includes community and civic associations.[161]

Therefore, Lund, writes that 'the actors that may be involved in prevention have expanded from official emissaries to a host of non-governmental actors in social, economic, cultural and other agencies such as within the UN system; international

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[157] Lund (2008), op. cit., p. 288.
[158] Ramsbotham, O., Woodhouse, T., and Mail, H. (2011), *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*, 3rd Edition, Polity Press, U.K, pp. 125-126.
[159] UN (2006), op. cit., p.5.
[160] Ibid.
[161] Ibid, p.145.

financial institutions; regional organizations; and major governments through bi-lateral development and security assistance'.[162]

The recent trends of conflicts across regions have led to the emergence of new approaches to deal with them. These approaches prescribe the development of systematic prevention processes that require preventive actions to be institutionalized in the political, economic and social fabric of the society.[163]

- **Uncertainties of Effectiveness: Does Conflict Prevention Work?**

The debate on the effectiveness of conflict prevention has been a central element of the discourse on best practices for preventive action. Many researchers continue to argue that for prevention to be effective and achieve a measurable degree of impact, it must be narrowed down to context specific processes within a structured conflict setting. This is why some researchers have suggested that effective preventive action must be country specific or regionally arranged and then institutionalized. This view justifies the assertion that mechanism to prevent conflict should take into consideration different structural, cultural or societal dynamics in building a model that will work in the short, medium or long term and at the same time sustainable.

The structure and phases of conflict differ from country to country as well as from regions and regional sub-systems. For example, the conflict structures and phases in Ivory Coast or Guinea Bissau are different from those in Sudan or Somalia. Similarly, context and structures differ between the West African sub-region as well as those in East or Central Africa. In this regard, Williams writes that 'effective preventive action calls for knowing how, when, and where to design and implement preventive strategies'.[164] And, 'the tool used depends on which causes of conflict are targeted and thus which providers of tool get involved'.[165]

Looking at the analysis from another direction, some practitioners and academics are in agreement that in order to achieve effectiveness in prevention, the process must be

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[162] Lund (2008), op. cit., p. 290.
[163] Ackermann, (2003), op. cit., p. 343-345.
[164] Williams, A. (2012), Conflict Prevention in Practice: From Rhetoric to Reality, Australian Civil Military Centre, Paper No.2, p.3.
[165] Lund (2008), op. cit., p.289.

broadened to cover a wider variety of actions that will impact on a wider range of issues to get successful result.

Table 6: Success and Failure in Conflict Prevention

	Success	Failure
Light Measures	armed conflict averted	armed conflict
Deep Measures	peaceful change	conflict-prone situation

Sources: Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Mail, (2011), p.144

The table above represents a simple evaluation of outcome between deep or structural prevention and light operational prevention. It shows that structural prevention, if well executed can lead to peaceful social change. However, its failure can sustain existing conditions that may give rise to violence. On the other hand, operational prevention builds the necessary platform to avert crisis and when it fails the next outcome is armed conflict. Operational prevention may be undertaken at a short term and conflict may be averted. However, that does not mean that the cycle ends, as a new structure of conflict will come within a similar contextual background, but fuelled by different circumstance(s).

It must be stated that conflict prevention does work and has an important place across societies. However, in achieving effectiveness of conflict prevention, operational and structural processes need to be reconciled in a way that structural prevention must be seen to sustain the foundation made by operational prevention. Success can be gained if these processes are merged into an integrated framework that will be systematically implemented.

3.6. Conclusion

This chapter reviewed the theoretical and conceptual foundation of this study. My purpose for undertaking the analysis in this section is to give roots to the idea of institutions and institutionalization. These concepts are not new and their application continues to shape how societies interact, engage and transform between space and time. There validity is in motion within sectors and structures across communities. The theory of liberal institutionalism, realism and social constructivism views

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institutions in different ways. The realists question their usefulness in the absence of the state. Liberals believe they represent the pillar for cooperation whilst social constructivist maintains its impact on social organization of ideas, groups, and interests that translate into collective action. Therefore, institutions are relevant.

The global community is compounded by many challenges to our human security and institutional cooperation is required to respond to these challenges. Responses to conflict and risk factors must be institutionalized to avert or mitigate risks that are transnational in scope. In regional subsystem such as those in Africa, there is the need for response programs such as early warning systems or methods of preventive diplomacy to be institutionalized across state and sub-state structures in order to prevent conflict. The analysis of institutionalization in this chapter puts into perspective the proposition of an analytical framework of cooperative institutionalization of conflict prevention which is presented in the next chapter to reconceptualise interconnected web of relationship amongst state and non-state institutions from regional to sub-state level in West Africa. The discourse on conflict prevention has gained prominence with different levels of analysis that contextualizes and expands on methods and processes that may help to tackle contemporary conflict and security challenges. Therefore, a system of cooperation amongst key actors at different level of a subsystem can be a catalyst to reduce the impact of risk factors and overtime prevent conflict.

Chapter Four: Theorizing Cooperative Institutionalization of Conflict Prevention in Regional Sub-system

4.1. Introduction

This chapter represents the thesis contribution to knowledge within its academic field of inquiry as it presents a theoretical framework to reconceptualize the practice of conflict prevention. Arguing from the perspective of neo-liberal theories in International Relations, cooperative institutionalization in regional subsystem conceptualizes the network of institutional interactions between state and non-state structures in West Africa.

Institutional cooperation is not new, however, less focus has been given to its conceptualization in regional subsystem such as those in Africa and especially within the domain of conflict prevention. As I mentioned in previous chapters, the risk factors to conflict and insecurities such as terrorism and violent extremism, proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons, drug trafficking, cross border armed criminalities, resource conflicts etc. are transnational in scope and affect communities across countries; and responding to these risk factors requires systematic approach to prevention. In this regard, there is the need for a mixed approach to prevention that brings on board state and non-state actors to work together in implementation of activities such as early warning systems, preventive diplomacy, social advocacy, reconciliation and peace infrastructures to reduce risk factors to conflict across communities.

Previous studies have focused on analyzing context specific processes for conflict prevention. However, I am presenting a framework that gives a comprehensive perspective of responses to risk factors between regional institution, state governments, non-state actors and sub-state groups. The chapter provides a liberal organization of ideas to explain the causal logic, pre-conditions, strength and flaws of cooperative institutionalization, and its application to the practice of conflict prevention. This analytical framework will be used to analyse case studies on the operationalization of conflict prevention mechanisms in West Africa in the following chapters of this thesis.

4.2. Theorizing Cooperative Institutionalization in Regional Sub-system

The observable realities in the formation of institutional order in interstate relation are that cooperation is increasingly taking place at various levels and with multiple actors across international and regional sub-systems. This phenomenon of cooperation is structured in both horizontal and vertical ways with institutions serving as pillars and carriers driving interactions, coordination, conformity and outcomes. This means that interactions between states and non-state actors form part of the broader network of institutional cooperation. These networks of interaction amongst multiple institutions are the building blocks for '*Cooperative Institutionalization in Regional Subsystem*'.

At the initial stages of my theoretical inquiry, transnational cooperation seemed appealing as an analytical approach to conceptualize recent development in West Africa. This is because transnational arrangement involves interaction amongst other non-state institutions and groups to supplement inter-state relations. However, I considered this analytical approach would not adequately conceptualize the structure of the regional subsystem. Also, another idea as a theoretical approach of cooperation is 'interdependent liberalism' analyzed by Jackson and Sorensen (2013). It espouses 'mutual dependence' on transnational interaction amongst state-governments and peoples. However, this concept is more notable in conceptualizing economic interdependence and foreign trade in industrialized countries at the end of the Second World War. [166] Similarly, Keohane and Nye (1977, 2001) worked on 'complex interdependence' as a liberal approach to transnational relation between states and non-state actors with less instrumental use of military force. Considering the current trend of responses to human security challenges in regional sub-system, it is better to pursue an analytical approach covering different sets of institutions and processes which led to the idea of 'cooperative institutionalization in regional subsystem'.

Cooperative institutionalization in regional subsystem describes a network of formal and informal processes of collective action and decision-making amongst multiple institutions towards achieving their collective interest in the subsystem. These institutions vary in type, level of operation, constitutive organs and socially

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[166] Jackson and Sorensen (2013), p.106. See the details on the theories in IR in Chapter Three of this thesis.

constructed setting; but form part of a growing sets of institutions that collectively engage, interact, implement and coordinate in taking action to institutionalized ideas, principles, norms, rules, laws, policy initiatives etc. These institutions in the regional subsystem include intergovernmental bodies, state-governments and their departments and agencies, transnational organizations, non-state actors, multi-lateral agencies, regional civil society structures and sub-unit at national and local level. They all make up the institutional pillars, which persist overtime, and form a geographic zone of cooperation.

As a general term, cooperation is defined as a process of working together to achieve a common end. It involves collaboration, partnership, mutual support, coordination, joint action, combined effort, synergy, compromise etc. Cooperation in this current discourse stems from the liberal ideas of institutional interaction, dialogue, information sharing and decision-making for progress in society. However, it takes a departure from the traditional approach of inter-state engagement and focus on cooperation amongst a collective group of state and non-state actors in a given regional subsystem. Having observed the trend of interactions, partnership and collaboration on cross-cutting issues between different state and non-state institutions in West Africa, an ideal pattern of interaction amongst institutions have emerged with growing signs of cooperation in the sub-region. The figure below describes a framework of interaction for conflict prevention in the subsystem.
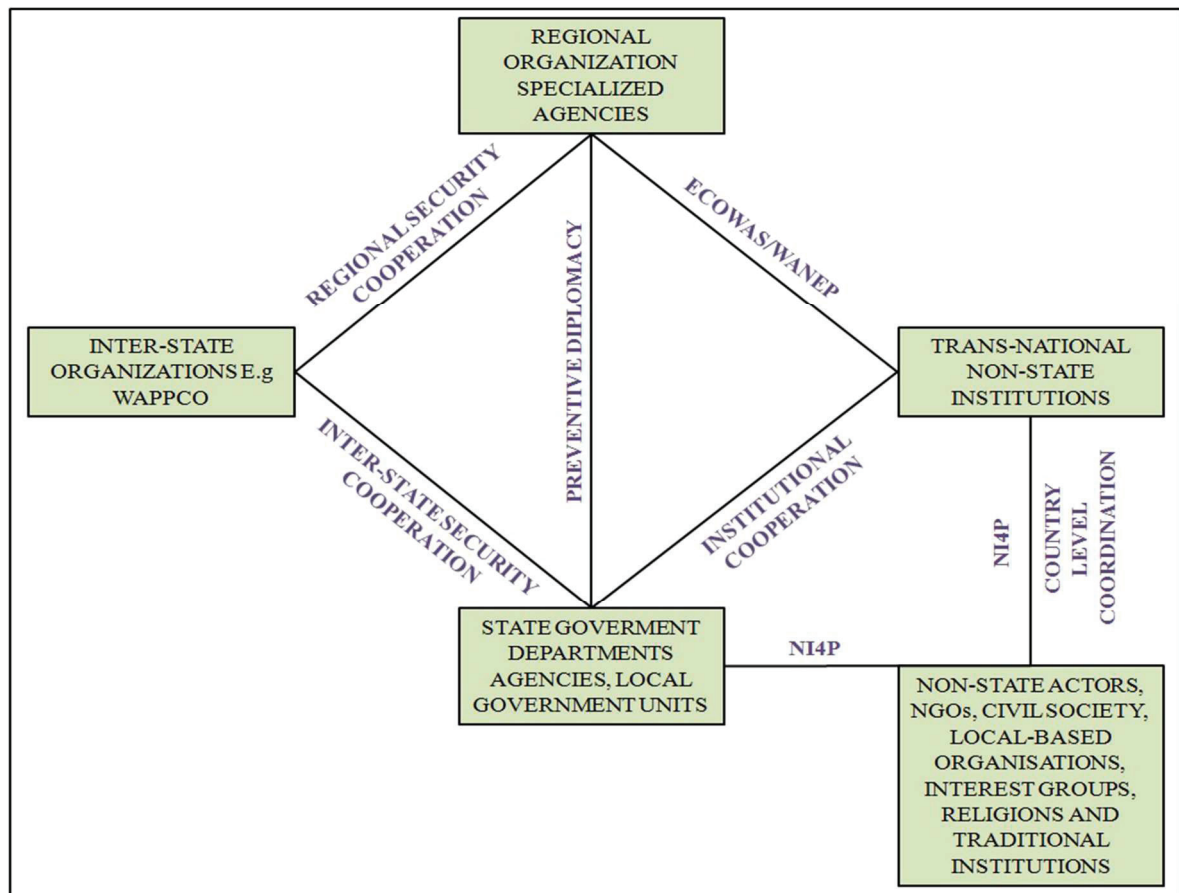
Figure 4: A Network of Institutional Interaction in a Regional Subsystem

As framed in the figure above, the theory covers both horizontal and vertical forms of cooperation. At the top of the framework is the regional organization interacting vertically with the state government; whilst the state system operates horizontally with state agencies and multiple non-state actors. A bit above the state level are transnational level network of interaction that includes both state and non-state structures. This means the framework has a three-tier top, middle and lower level of institutional interactions towards cooperative institutionalization. In the regional subsystem, the regional organizations fall within the top tier; whilst the middle tier covers transnational organizations, regional non-state actors such as transnational civil society structures. At the lower tier is the state that constitutes the state government at the center guiding interactions and cooperation between its agencies and non-state actors such as civil society groups and all other local based organizations.

The framework explains institutional cooperation for conflict prevention in West Africa. As seen in the figure above, the regional organization, in this case ECOWAS, and its specialized agencies undertake direct preventive diplomacy with state governments. This may take the form of implementation of protocols and conventions as well as cooperation in the domestication of regional norms in responding to conflict issues or threats to regional peace and security. It may also cover regional cooperation with ECOWAS on issues of election monitoring, fact-findings, mediation or negotiation efforts and institutional cooperation in the implementation of the ECOWAS conflict prevention framework. Also, the framework shows that there is a line of interaction between the regional organization and other interstate organizational networks such as West Africa Police Chiefs Committee for regional security and conflict prevention. There is also a line of interaction between the regional body and transnational non-state actors. ECOWAS/WANEP partnership is used as an example.

At the bottom of the framework, we see a line of cooperation between interstate structures and the state that is focused on security cooperation, and between transnational non-state actors and the state. Transnational non-state institutions work closely with country level network organization in implementation of activities towards building local capacities for infrastructures for peace; whilst, the state cooperate horizontally with national sub-state structures and local non-state institutions in the organization and coordination of national infrastructures for peace.

West Africa has developed a comprehensive conflict prevention framework and its implementation requires cooperative interactions amongst multiple sets of actors in an institutional manner. Therefore, the theory of cooperative institutionalization puts into conceptual perspective these new practices. It links regional norms to national and local responses. It bridges the gap between norms and practices, conflict issues and methods of responses such as regional early warning system to national and local response mechanisms. Cooperative institutionalization conceptualizes West Africa's new integration agenda that emphasizes on conflict prevention through collective action and local responses that should be organized in 'an institutional manner'.

It is important to note that the State is the core pillar of this framework as it holds the foundation for cooperation across all levels. This framework is a conceptual tool to understand the interconnected web of relationship amongst institutions in the regional sub-system. It also applies to top-down cooperative arrangement between intergovernmental bodies, state governments, national and local units. A categorization of these institutions is made in the table below. Therefore, cooperative institutionalization is meant to analyze cross-level interaction in a variety of institutional setting. In this way the theory can suck in different cooperative arrangements amongst institutions.

The theory conceptualizes the interactions of institutions that build into a convergence of ideas, agreement and action leading to collective decision-making and methods for joint cooperation in the implementation of policies and programs. Furthermore, cooperative institutionalization in regional subsystem is realized when institutions converge to make or take collective decision. This point of convergence serves as a central point to organize institutional processes that enables collective actions, conformity to rules and policies as well as implementation of the institutional order to achieve their common end. Institutionalization of ideas, programs, norms, rules, and laws in a subsystems are realized when institutions converge and translate their ideas into implementable goals.

Table 7: *Types of Institutions in the Regional Subsystem*

Regional Institutions	State Institutions	Non State Institutions
❖ Regional Inter-governmental Organizations ❖ Inter-state Arrangements ❖ Transnational Cooperation ❖ Regional Civil Society groups ❖ Interest-based regional organizations etc.	❖ Federal and State Governments (Executive, Legislature, Judiciary) ❖ Departments ❖ Government Agencies and Corporations, commissions military and Police sector etc.	❖ Civil society groups ❖ Non-governmental Organizations ❖ Interest groups ❖ Academia ❖ Community-based organizations ❖ Religious institutions ❖ Traditional institutions

The theory recognized that within the scope of regional sub-systems institutional interaction could be structurally symmetric or asymmetrical. There are different

patterns of interactions that produced cooperation. This means there are institutions with unequal status, power, influence, depth and scope, whilst there are others with relatively equal standing, authority and operational scope. This heterogeneous nature of interaction is important for the formation of an institutional order that strives on cooperation.

Standing with institutionalist appeal, cooperative institutionalization in regional sub-system finds its root from historical and sociological institutionalism. In hindsight, Historical institutionalism is associated with rules, norms and regulations promulgated by formal and informal institutions as well as 'emphasize the asymmetries of power associated with the operation and development of institutions'. [167] Sociological institutionalism also emphasizes that formal rules, procedures, norms, symbolic systems, cultural-cognitive frames are socially constructed and transmitted by cultural practices for the realization of an institutional order.

The ideational foundation of cooperative institutionalization in regional sub-system views the development of institutions in West Africa in the last three-decade as varied in nature and scope. Culture and history has made interaction possible and common interest led to realization of regional integration programs and transnational networks of the civil society communities. Also, shared history, identity and social systems have formed the asymmetric layers of interaction between governments and peoples. This common history has been forged from colonialism, neo-colonialism, political instability, civil wars, crisis of governance and poverty leading to development of common agendas for change and transformation of the West African community. These historical and social commonalities amongst governments and people form the basis for cooperation as an institutional practice, and in theory as cooperative institutionalization.

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[167] Hall and Taylor (1996), p.7.

- **Causal Logic**

Cooperative institutionalization in regional subsystem falls into the category of a middle range theory. This is also known as substantive theories that prescribe analytical framework to deal with specific area of social concern but wide enough to cover a wide range of phenomena.[168] The theory analyses multiple institutional interactions within the scope of regional sub-system; and is meant to cover wide range of political, economic, and social issues that are brought to bear in forming single or multiple system of institutionalized cooperation.

Social theories are developed out of an observable phenomenon in whole or in part over a given period of time. However, concise analytical prescription is required that explain a logical causation of such phenomenon as a justification for new theoretical postulation. The causal logic for cooperative institutionalization comes from similar history in the formation and interaction of institutions and groups in a regional sub-system.

Similar history of the formation of institutions implies that communities and states within regional sub-system develop institutions out of shared history, identity, geographic location as well as political, economic, social and cultural roots and linkages. Shared history and identity form bonds and unions amongst groups and nations with social commonalities, which help to forge institutional cooperation spreading across a collective group of communities and states. This means that similar history of heterogeneous community creates a platform for organization of their social system based on shared values, norms and practices that are developed as institutions. For example, shared traditional history of kinship and chieftaincy system in Africa is translated into institutionalization of chieftaincy system of local government across many communities in Africa. Also, shared history of colonization leads to the development of sub-regional institutions to strengthen newly independent states in Africa. In Europe, common historical struggle for industrialization and reform of economic and social systems led to the formation of socialist parties across in many

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[168] Grix, J. (2004), *The Foundations of Research, Palgrave Studies Skills*, Palgrave Macmillan Publishing, p. 111.

European countries. Such historical links to the formation of institutions is a causal logic for cooperative institutionalization in the regional subsystem.

In addition, where states institutions, civil societies and local networks developed a line of engagement as a result of their shared history, the emergence of an issue affecting the common interest of all create opportunity for cooperation across institutions and their networks. The absence of such line of communication and interaction that promote common understanding makes cooperation a difficult task. Therefore, cooperative institutionalization thrives on a solid network of interaction across institutions.

Furthermore, it is important to note that cooperative institutionalization can also be engineered by cultural-cognitive construction of a community. This means that norms, belief systems, values, identities, symbols etc. are programed into socially arranged edifices, which are widely shared across communities, organizations and institutions. This enables cooperative arrangement to be compartmentalized, categorized and institutionalized as an acceptable social frame guiding collective interaction.

Another causal logic to the theory is intersubjective interactions. In its simplest understanding, it means agreement between individuals and groups on a given set of meaning and interpretation of a given phenomenon. This can mean agreement that forges social interactions and are cognitively interpreted and agreed upon to be so. Therefore, intersubjective interaction established consensus to socially constructed zones of relational arrangement that creates room for cooperation, which are embedded into, proposed institutional system in the society. In other words, consensus building and shared agreements between groups and institutions is an instrumental element for cooperative institutionalization.

Inclusion and diffusion are part of the layers to cooperative institutionalization. Inclusion in this context, means involvement of multiple institutions ranging from regional, states, non-state, and local networks in forging the inevitable chain that make cooperative interaction possible. On the other hand, diffusion emphasizes the spread of ideas, belief and value system over time and space, as well as their effect to

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the outcome of cooperation in the social system. The inclusion of multiple institutions and the diffusion of ideas to deal with social concerns fosters cooperative institutionalization in regional sub-systems.

- **Pre-conditions for Cooperative Institutionalization in Regional Sub-system**

Theoretical postulations are always matched by pre-conditions to establish a logical understanding between the social phenomena that serves as the point of reference of the research framework and the theoretical prescription being analyzed. Pre-conditions expand on the theoretical assumption and its linkages to the hypothetical and empirical arguments within the scope of the research that is being conducted. In a regional sub-system, a careful observation of interactions unfolding amongst the multiple categories of institutions shows that there are preconditions in the social systems within which the theory is analytically applicable. They are highlighted and explained below.

I. **Commitment Capacity and Domestication of Commitment**

For any cooperative ventures to be pursued and gain effect in a social system, all participants –be they individuals, groups and institutions must exert an unquestionable degree of commitment. In regional sub-systems, cooperative institutionalization is applicable on the condition that there is an unflinching commitment agreed upon by all institutions involved. Without commitment by all participating institutions it is hard for the instrumental pillars, carriers and drivers in the cooperation process to gain meaning and get an outcome that resonates to the common interest of them all.

States-governments are key players in the establishment of commitment and the political capital and willingness rest on them for its realization. When states in a regional subsystem make a commitment to a particular process of cooperation, its institutions and agencies become involve in the process, and non-state actors and other partners are given a voice. This enables collective action that leads to a process of institutionalization.

II.   Mobilization Capacity

Mobilization here means bringing resources to bear in responding to a given issue. It can involve both physical and non-physical as well as political, economic, financial, social and other technical and human resources. It also implies the ability of the regional sub-system itself, having the capacity to reach out and garner support from the multiple sets of state and non-state institutions that are required in the implementation of a cooperative agenda. In regional process of integration, there are states that have hegemonic status and other that are small. In this case the hegemonic state must have the rallying power to bring all others into the ideology of cooperation. Also, non-state actors are recognized as having supplementary role in the institutionalization of the regional cooperative agenda.

III.   Vertical and Horizontal Partnership

Partnership is an instrumental pillar for cooperation. It implies establishment of relationship between two or more entities that is characterized by mutual cooperation and responsibility. There must be partnership between and amongst institutions. In a regional sub-system that involves states and non-state actors that interact vertically and horizontally, it is inevitable that partnership amongst institutions will take the same form.   Vertical and horizontal partnership in this case connotes interaction between regional institutions and government of member states including non-state and local actors. This structure of partnership helps institution to coordinate and complement one another as they deal with social concerns.

IV.   Harmonization of Policies and Programs

Regional sub-system in any given point in their history can develop structures for formal integration of economic and social policies as well as security cooperation. In this case, the system requires states to have common policies to achieve their common ends. This requires harmonization of policies and programs amongst member states, and participating institutions. It also means that programs and policies are designed and implemented across all states and institutions. The foundation of cooperation is built on harmonization of policies. Realizing the harmonization of normative

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frameworks from sub-regional institutions into the national legislation of member states is a crucial aspect towards achieving the objectives of the process of institutionalization. In this regard, crucial to the adoption of norms is the need to adopt them into laws in the national legislative structures of the various states that have signed and ratified them.

V.   Multi-Dimensional Actors

The theory of cooperative institutionalization is based on the assumption that many institutions are involved. The process of cooperation must be very inclusive of a variety of groups and institutions that are involved in taking collective action for a common end. As noted by Leatherman, 'multilateral endeavors provide an opportunity to admit new actors, giving legitimacy to the parties, reframe the issues, establish mutually agreed rules' as well as provide a system of participation of civil society actors.[169] Therefore, the theory espouses the importance of the involvement of multiple institutions.

- **Strength of the theoretical approach**

Advantages of Collective Action: - This means that the process of institutionalized cooperation is carried through and enhanced by variety of institutions. Here, institutions operate as a collective whole and the strength of their cooperation relies on collective action in making or taking decision as well as implementation of such decisions. The actions of institutions, when measured as a collective, are an instrumental capital that fosters cooperation in any given regional sub-system. The higher the level of collective action, the greater is the space for cooperative institutionalization.

Advantages of Shared Responsibility: - This implies that the involvement of many institutions advances opportunities for responsibilities to be shared. The process of collective action described above leads to an institutional order in which responsibilities are shared across a wide range of institutions cooperating in the

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[169] Leatherman, J. (1993), op. cit., p. 405.

regional sub-system. Opportunities for shared responsibilities are an ultimate recipe for cooperation. However, it is important to note that dissimilar structure of power, scope and authority, create dissimilarity to the arrangement of shared responsibility. Asymmetric relations between institutions, leads to differing options for action, decision-making, conformity to rules and conduct of the cooperative relationship.

Advantages of Legitimacy: - This implies that a process of cooperative institutionalization that involves broad range of institutions reaching out to one another and established bonds of interaction, collective action and shared responsibility leads to recognition and acceptance of their collaborative actions. Such wide institutional acceptance in both formal and non-formal setting is a gateway towards legitimacy of an institutional order. Therefore, the theory can be argued out on its potential to foster cooperation amongst institutions in ways that gives legitimacy to their interactions.

4.3. Explaining the Regional Subsystem

Over the course of analyzing the theoretical framework for this study, a key feature of its ideational scope and interest is the regional sub-system. It is a deliberate departure from the traditional argument on institutions and cooperation on the big stage of international power politics and systems of cooperation. The theoretical approach to the study is founded on liberal institutionalism. However, the analytical scope is narrowed down to a path of understanding cooperation in regional sub-system. This is because the scope of the study is on the sub-region of West Africa.

The study of regions and regional sub-system gained currency from the 1960s 'when scholars became increasingly uneasy with explanations of world politics in terms of an exclusively bipolar' system.[170] Regions and regional sub-system were identified across continents to have distinct structure and institutional design that are different from traditional systems of International Relations and there relevance should not be underestimated. This led to new scholarly research on regional subsystem in order to

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[170] Zakhirova, L. (2013), Is There a Central Asia? States Visits and Empirical Delineation of the Regional Boundaries. *The Review of Regional Studies*, Journal of the Southern Regional Science Association, p. 27.

understand their institutional ideals and patterns of cooperation distinct to their geographical scope, and as independent units shaping progress and transformation within its community of nations. Thus forging a pathway for regional studies 'against the abstraction of generalist International Relations explanation' on the outlay of the global system.[171]

Scholars of regional and area studies such as Binder (1958), Zartman (1967), Brecher (1969), Hellman (1969 and Thompson (1973), have defined and described regional sub-systems based on criteria of constitutive socio-political and institutional systems.[172] These various views on regional sub-systems have been labeled with different terms based on scholarly research on international societies. Thompson (1973) identified these various labels in his conceptual explication of regional subsystem.[173]

Table 8: Regional Sub-system Labels

Terms	Analysts
Subordinate International System	Binder
Regional subsystem or subsystem	Modelski, Aron, Kaiser, Hellman, Thompson, Yalem and Young
Subordinate State system	Brecher, Zartman, and Bowman
System of nations	Reinton
Partial international system	Hoffman
International subsystem	Haas, Dominquez and Sheperd
Subordinate system-international region	Cantori and Siegel, Sigler and Miller
State system	Hodgkin

William R. Thompson, (1973), "The Regional Subsystem: A Conceptual Explication and a Propositional Inventory", International Studies Quarterly, Vol.17, Wiley, Oxford University Press, p. 92.

In his conceptual assessment of all these scholarly labels, Thompson argues that 'there is not a great deal of definitional agreement on what exactly constitutes a regional subsystem'.[174] However he highlights 21 attributes that are distinctive to

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[171] Ibid.

[172] See more detail on Binder, L. (1958), The Middle East as a subordinate International System. *World Politics*, Vol. 10, Issue. 3, pp. 408-429; Zartman, I. W. (1967), Africa as a subordinate state System in International Relations. *International Organizations* Vol. 21, Issue. 3 (Summer), pp. 545-564; Brecher, M. (1963), International Relations and Asia Studies: the subordinate state system of Southern Asia. *World Politics* Vol. 15, Issue 2 (March), pp. 213- 235; Hellman, D.C. (1969), The Emergence of the East Asian International Subsystem. *International Studies Quarterly* Vol. 13, No. 4 (December), pp. 421-434.

[173] Thompson, William R. (1973), The Regional Subsystem: A Conceptual Explication and a Propositional Inventory. *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 17, No. 1, pp. 89-117

[174] Thompson (1973), op. cit., p. 92.

regional sub-system using research conducted by various scholars of regional and area studies. In his effort to scale down the large array of attributes being argued out by scholars, Thompson proposes four 'necessary and sufficient conditions' as constitutive pillars of any given regional sub-system. They are: 1) geographical proximity, 2) regularity and intensity of interaction between regional actors, 3) Internal and external recognition as a distinct area, and 4) the subsystem most have a minimum of at least two or more actors.[175]

Therefore, regional subsystem can be described as an organized constitutive component of political, economic, social and even cultural system of interaction within a given community of nations distinctive to or from the larger international system. Interactions in this case are made possible as a result of geographical proximity bounded by mutual structures of cooperation in the economic, political and socio-cultural life of the constituting states and her peoples. Thereby, forming an interconnected web of relationship that endures internal acceptance and recognized within its external environment. However, regional subsystems are liable to change as a result of internal structural dynamics and external pressures; and 'changes in one part of the subsystem can become the catalyst for change in other parts of the region'.[176]

There are differences in opinions, definition and scope of a regional subsystem. Some scholars formed their arguments through the lenses of politics, economy, war and security, whilst others form definition based on proximity and levels of interaction. However, since the end of the Second World War, community of nations have forged bonds of interaction, common identity and interdependence across borders creating distinct regional subsystems in Africa such as sub regions of West Africa, Southern Africa, Eastern Africa etc., Europe, Asia including South-East Asia region and central Asia and the Americas.

In this regard, cooperative institutionalization intends to analyze institutional cooperation within a regional subsystem particularly that of West Africa. The basic assumption of the theory is that as a result of proximity, there is regularity and

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[175] Ibid, p. 101.
[176] Ibid, p. 103, and Zakhirova (2013), op. cit., p.28.

intensity in interactions across various spheres that make cooperation possible; and that interaction between institutions is the catalyst for cooperative institutionalization in the regional subsystem. The theory also recognizes that institutional interaction runs vertically and horizontally as well as hierarchically from the regional subsystem level to state system, sub-state system and local structures. In other words, the institutionalization of cooperation is due to interactions between institutions, state and people in the regional subsystem.

4.4. Africa and its Transformation into Regional Subsystems

Geographically, Africa is described as one of the seven continents of the world and comprises of fifty four countries that are spread across geographical zones divided into North, South, East, West and Central Africa with an approximate population of 1.216 billion spread throughout a landmass of 30.3 million Square Kilometers making it the world's second most populated and second largest continent. The continent comprises of a diverse composition of communities with different cultures, languages, ethnicities, social and political systems that have shaped its evolution, development and transformation in between decades and centuries. The structure of social and political system, history and way of life of different communities of nations have enabled the continent to evolve beyond a single region to form subsystems that evolved into zones of sub-regional integration and cooperation in different spheres of life. Therefore, the continent has witnessed a process of transformation of its geographical zone to geopolitical zones with different network of cooperative agendas shaping the structure of interaction across its community of nations.

In the context of International Relations, cooperation and security, Africa is seen as a region within the global system of governance. It's size, population and resources makes it a geo-strategic zone of cooperation for centuries amongst and between European colonial powers such as Britain, France, Portugal, Germany etc. However, the continent has struggled to find it's footing as a relevant geostrategic region and unable to source out its strength and power as a result of the vast scramble for its territory and resources by colonial powers in the time of colonialism and now by Western powers in the modern state system.

Africa's regional significance has been down played by international society's scholars who seen the region has bearing less significant power due to its constant usurpation and marginalization by Western powers and especially her colonial masters such as Britain and France controlling economic and political resources of various countries in the of neo-colonialism. These struggles for actualization of the continent's regionness, and the desire of her people to protect their independence and unite the continent inspired political movements for the formation of regional sub-systems across Africa.

However, prior to these movements, the continent went through a phase of decolonization and a political struggle for African unity. As countries gained independence, their leadership structures struggle to consolidate their political and economic powers as well as forestall neo-colonial agendas, saw the need to rally around Pan-Africanist leadership movements as support structures that will enable political stability. Political leaders in different countries across the continent joined this political movement of Pan-Africanism for African unity with different interests leading to division, disagreement, disunity and competition on how to achieve the goals of unity. The goal was to bring the government and people of the continent into one union and as a region based on the example of the European community as well as those in the Americas.[177]

There was the Casablanca group considered as 'radical independent states' led by late President Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana who was pushing for a United State of Africa. This group also included Egypt, Algeria, Mali, Morocco, Guinea and Libya. However, the Monrovia group started off with Nigeria, Togo and Liberia and later joined by the Brazzaville group make up of Pan-Africanist Movement of East, Central and Southern Africa (PAFMECSA) which included Cameroon, Madagascar, Benin, Gabon, Central Africa Republic, Chad, Mauritania, Senegal and Burkina Faso and Cote d'Ivoire. Together, they pushed for a more gradual 'regional economic co-

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[177] See details on Franke, Benedikt, F. (2007), Competing Regionalisms in Africa and the Continent's Emerging Security Architecture. *Journal of African Studies Quarterly*, Volume: 9. Issue 3.

operation and functional integration' process to protect sovereignty and political stability of newly independent states.[178]

Nkrumah wanted a United State of Africa with a central institutionalized structure of cooperation of economic, military, cultural and political activities. The Brazzaville group understand that Nkrumah's agenda is desirable but cannot gain footing immediately; and instead pushed for 'political integration of sovereign states with unity of aspiration and of action considered from the point of view of African social solidarity and political identity'.[179] The Brazzaville group that mostly constituted of Francophone countries moved on to establish Organisation Africaine et Malgache de Cooperation Economique (OAMCE), the Union Africaine et Malgache (UAM) and a defense organization, the Union Africaine et Malgache de Defense (UAMD).[180]

In response to these developments, the Ghana-Guinea-Mali Union was created and named Union of African States (UAS). On 1st May 1959 it established a common flag, anthem and citizenship with an open invitation for more African states to join the Union.[181] However, that was never realized until it demised. There were many other attempts to forge inter-state cooperative union and federations amongst African nations These include Ghana and British Togoland in 1957 and Tanganyika and Zanzibar Union in 1964. Attempts by Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda to form a federation in 1963 failed. So was the Greater Maghreb union, Senegambia confederation, federation of former French West African Colonies etc. All these attempts either failed or were short lived. But formed the basis for the formation of regional subsystems and geopolitical zones that ran parallel and supported by regional political groupings. However, in the midst of these disagreements between these various groups, dialogue and consultations amongst political leaders led to the creation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in May 1963.[182]

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[178] Francis (2006), op. cit., p.21.
[179] See details on Hadjor, K.B. (1988), *Nkrumah and Ghana: The Dilemma of Post-colonial Power*, Kegan Paul International, New York, also, Chimelu, C. (1977), Integration and Politics among African States. *Scandinavian Institute of African Studies*, Uppsala, Sweden, p. 164.
[180] Frank (2007). op. cit
[181] Tive, C. (2013), "Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS): Combining Sub-regional and Economic Integration with Conflict Resolution" (PhD. Thesis), University of South Africa, p.128.
[182] Francis (2006), op. cit., p.22.

However, the establishment of the OAU did not bring about the expected unity amongst African nations. In fact it led to political and geostrategic rivalries between countries due to 'ideological, linguistic and cultural' differences.[183] By the late 1960s to early 1970s, political leaders took up new initiatives for regional integration and cooperation leading to the establishment of geographically organized regional subsystems across Africa. Regionalization project sprang up with different ideologies and objectives for regional integration and was pursued by newly formed regional organizations. Southern African countries forged their union to deal with the struggle against apartheid through the creation of the Front Line State (FLS) in 1976 and later supported by an Inter-State Defense and Security Co-operation (ISDSC). These structures were followed by the formation of the Southern Africa Development Co-ordinating Conference (SADCC) in 1980, which was later transformed into Southern Africa Development Community in 1992.[184]

East African countries with the aim of building a regional subsystem for political and regional cooperation established the East African Community (EAC) in 1977. However, it failed to achieve its plans for regional integration due to ideological differences amongst its member states. Faced with environmental concerns from droughts, famine and desertification, political leaders realized their common problems and build a stronger bond of cooperation as a regional subsystem. This led to the establishment of the Inter-governmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD) focusing on environmental priorities. However, ten years later in 1996, at a summit in Nairobi, Kenya, it was transformed into Inter-Governmental Authority on Development with priorities on 'food security and environmental protection, infrastructural development and regional conflict prevention, management and resolution and humanitarian affairs'. [185]

In West Africa, the regional subsystem was formed into a geographical zone of cooperation for a variety of reasons. It has been one of the most complex regional subsystems since the dawn of independence due to its size and population density, socio-cultural heterogeneity and political dynamics. It has some of the largest

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[183] Tive (2013), op. cit., p. 129.
[184] Francis (2006), op. cit., p. 188.
[185] Ibid, p. 222.

countries in the continent rich in mineral and marine resources, with Nigeria having the largest population. However, it struggled to organize itself as a coherent regional subsystem due to its geo-strategic significance to the former colonial master (Britain and France) who at independence still tried to maintain some level of political and economic influence to their ex-colonies. Francophone countries made several attempt to form linguistic zone of political and economic cooperation and were able to establish several political and social platforms due to their similar colonial heritage. The five Anglophone countries worked on similar ventures but were unable to establish a viable political arrangement for regional integration and cooperation. However, on 28 May 1975, heads of states and governments of fifteen countries in the sub-region signed the Treaty of Lagos forming the Economic Community of West Africa States. Its initial focus was economic integration with 'customs union and common market objective'.[186]

North Africa is also structured as a regional subsystem. The subsystem developed as a result of shared culture and religious heritage of the different communities and countries within its geographical zone. After gaining independence, in late 1950s and early 1960s from France, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya established the Permanent Consultative Committee of the Maghreb (CPCM) in October 1964 as a 'consultative and technical organ to promote economic cooperation and coordination at the regional level'.[187] Mauritania joined in later as the fifth member. However, it was not until 1989 that the five countries come to an agreement and signed the Treaty of the Arab Maghreb Union.

The Last major subsystem is in central Africa. As the name implies, it comprised of countries that are geographically located at the central zone of Africa that covers an area of 6.5 million square kilometer and population of 121 million people. These countries are mostly Francophone countries. Their linguistic and cultural commonalities enabled its formation as a regional subsystem. In support of regional integration and political cooperation after attaining independence, Central Africa Republic, Chad, Congo and Gabon formed the Equatorial Customs Union (UDE) in

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[186] Ibid, p. 143.
[187] Soderbaum, F. (1996), *Hand book of Regional Organizations in Africa*, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, Uppsala, Sweden, p. 24.

1959 and later Central Africa Customs and Economic Union (UDEAC) was established in December 1964 in Brazzaville Congo. However, dissatisfaction by some member states coupled with political uncertainties and civil conflicts in the subsystem slowed down inter-state cooperation. During a summit meeting in 1981, heads of states and government agreed to formed the Economic Community of Central Africa States (ECCAS/CEEAC), which was launched in 1983.[188]

These are the major regional subsystems in Africa that have formed zones of cooperation and regional integration. These sub-regions have evolved with political, economic and social systems of interactions that are transmitted by institutions, with processes of institutionalization. As postulated in the theory of social constructivism shared identity and common interest creates interactions and relationship for consensus and agreement that leads to cooperation and institutionalization of cooperation in regional subsystem.

The various subsystems in Africa identify themselves as members of the same geographic boundaries; and, bounded by common interests and challenges, developed institutions to enable cooperation amongst them. This forms the premise for cooperative institutionalization in regional subsystems in Africa. In this regard, ideas and policy prescription on security, economic, politics and development needs are integrated across the subsystem through different levels of cooperation that are undertaken by institutions. Also, the emergence of non-state actors such as transnational civil society networks and sub-states groups in the 1990s have increased the level of institutional engagements for cooperation and partnership as part of the framework for cooperative institutionalization.

4.5. The Regionalization/institutionalization nexus for Conflict Prevention in Regional Subsystem

In simple term, regionalization is a socially constructed process of integrating societies and communities with homogeneous characters and in most cases geographically connected to pursue their collective interest within a single regional unit. In practical terms, regionalization is seen as the range of activities within a

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[188] Ibid, p. 37.

regional policy framework that gives rise to regionalism. This means, 'it can be understood as a continuing process of forming regions as geopolitical units, among a particular group of states, and or regional communities such as pluralistic security communities'.[189] However, the idea of regionalization has evolved in the last three decades as conceptualized in new regionalism theory (NRT).[190]

The new wave of regionalization enables greater homogeneity in a region or sub-region and develops under multiple levels of cultural commonalities, security complexes, economic and development policies and give due recognition and role to non-state actors and transnational networks within the region. The dynamics within these various stages implies the emergence of variety of processes of communication and interaction between multitude of state and non-state actors in implementation of policies and programs enable the formalization of institutional cooperation as theorized in this chapter.[191]

Therefore, for regionalization processes to work they should be institutionalized. They gain strength and viability when they are objectively infused into institutions. The institutionalization of regional processes within the constituent members of the region helps to harmonize national and regional agendas as well as connects states and non-state actors, and by extension, supports the process of policy convergence among actors. This is the theoretical linkage to cooperative institutionalization in regional subsystem.

- **Africa in Perspective**

The OAU laid the foundation to institutionalize conflict management as member states agreed in its founding charter in 1963 the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of others. But some critics argue that the purpose of these early attempts by the organization focused on regime projection of newly independent states across the continent. During this same period, a Commission for Mediation,

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[189] Kacowicz, Arie, M. (1998), Regionalizationalization, Globalization and Nationalism: Covergent, Divergent or Overlapping? *The Hellen Kellog Institute for International Studies, Working paper 262*.
[190] Hettne, B., Inotai, A. (1994), *The New Regionalism: Implication for Global Development and International Security*. UNU World Institute for Development Economics Research, Hettne and Soderbaum, (2008), op. cit., Hettne (2003), op. cit
[191] Hettne, Soderbaum (2000), op. cit., p.18.

Reconciliation and Arbitration (CMCA) was set up to settle political, territorial and other disputes amongst member states. Also, non-permanent ad hoc committees and 'Good Office' committees were developed with different structures and mandates were established to deal with disputes and conflicts across regions in the continent. [192]

These mechanisms were used by OAU to resolve territorial dispute between Mali and Burkina Faso, Somalia and Kenya, Senegal and Guinea, Somalia and Ethiopia, and Algeria and Morocco in the 1960s and 1970s. They were also used to garner support for the Front Line States of Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa in the struggle for independence in 1980 and 1990 respectively. Between 1993 and 1995 OAU member states agreed and adopted a Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (MCPMR). The objectives of the Mechanism were to anticipate and prevent conflict, undertake peace making and peace building support and facilitate the resolution of conflicts across the continent. The two main institutional body of mechanism were the Central Organ composed of the Bureau of Assembly of Heads of States and Government with 'geographical-regional representation and rotation', and the Conflict Management Centre (CMC), that served as the operational arm of the mechanism giving support to the Secretary General in implementation of strategies to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts across member states. It composed of an early warning system, a field operations unit and a peace fund. These structures were used to undertake preventive diplomacy and deal with the issue of unconstitutional change of government in Sierra Leone, Comoros and Cote d'Ivoire and across Africa throughout the 1990s.[193]

In various regional subsystems in Africa, institutionalization of conflict prevention processes took different forms with differing objectives. In Southern Africa, political instability and the struggle for independence of the FLS in the 1970s brought political leaders together to form the Inter-State Defense and Security Committee (ISDSC) as a regional security and defense structure against Apartheid South Africa. With the formation of SADC in 1992, 'serious attempts were made to develop the institutional framework and contents of a regional peace and security system' focusing on a "non-

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192 See details on Biswaro, Joram M. (2013), "The Role of Regional Integration in Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution in Africa: The Case of African Union", Fundacao Alexandre de Gusmao, Brazil.
193 Ibid, pp. 126-127.

militaristic security order" and the 'development of a regional conflict prevention, management and resolution mechanism'.[194] At a summit meeting in 1994, SADC member states agreed to establish institutional structures to deal with politics, International Relations, defense, diplomacy and security. However, the most significant framework towards institutionalization of peace, security and conflict prevention was the establishment of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defense and Security on 28 June 1996. It represents the 'first comprehensive attempt to build a regional collective mechanism for responding to peace and security in the subsystem. This organ covers issues of crime prevention, military security, foreign policy, governance and human rights. However, its institutionalization was delayed and only became fully operational in March 2001. This SADC Organ composed of various Committees covering issues of defense, politics and diplomacy, state security and public security. These institutional structures have been used to undertake intervention in various countries in the subsystem including DR Congo.[195]

In East Africa subsystem, problem of food security and environment protection led to the formation IGADD in 1986. The body brought together Heads of States and Government to take collective action to deal with their common problem of famine, droughts and desertification. With looming conflict across states in the Horn of Africa, IGAD was established to robustly handle issues of peace, security and conflict prevention with the assembly of Heads of States and Government serving as its 'supreme decision making body'. A Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism was set up in 2002 as part of its attempt to institutionalize mechanism for conflict prevention. IGAD has worked closely with the AU Peace and Security Council to undertake intervention in conflict situation by facilitating dialogue, mediation and peace making efforts between Sudan and Somalia, Eritrea and Ethiopia and in the conflict in Sudan.[196]

In West Africa subsystem, which is the focus of this study, ECOWAS have put forward some of the most comprehensive institutional frameworks for conflict

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[194] Francis (2006), op. cit., p. 190, See also Nathan, L. (2002), Organ Failure: A Review of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defense and Security. In Laakso, L. (ed.), *Regional Integration for Conflict Prevention and Peace Building in Africa: Europe, SADC and ECOWAS*, Department of Political Science, University of Helsinki, Helsinki, p. 63.
[195] Francis (2006), op. cit., p. 192.
[196] Ibid, p. 125.

prevention when compared to other regional subsystems in Africa. Consolidation of political power, instability and conflict led to the establishment of ECOWAS in 1975 and the development of normative frameworks and regional institutional processes for conflict prevention. The sub-region bust of experiences in institutionalized processes for peace keeping, conflict management, mediation efforts, peace making efforts and successful transformation of conflict situation in different countries in the sub-region including Sierra Leone, Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso.[197]

In a regionalization framework, institutions are essential for implementation of programs to prevent conflict in communities. Conflict risk factors have led to cooperation between organizations for political and security purposes. Institutionalizing these cooperative arrangements are critical for their successful implementation of response mechanisms to reduce the risk of conflict. Many regional organizations have taken responsibility to find solutions through peacemaking, peacekeeping and other forms of political intervention. Laying a foundation for the prevention of conflict within the regional subsystems. Therefore, cooperative institutionalization conceptualizes these approaches to respond to risk of conflicts in West Africa.

4.6. Cooperative Institutionalization of Conflict Prevention in Regional Subsystem

Cooperative institutionalization in theory serves as an analytical framework to conceptualize the process of conflict prevention in particular the organization of preventive regimes in regional conflict complexes in Africa. Its purpose is to understand the network of interactions among and between institutions as well as methods, programs, policies and activities in the implementation of regional conflict prevention programs. Institutional cooperation is identified as a core variable that gives meaning to the theory. It is the enabler of interaction and the foundation for the convergence of different state and non-state actors in finding solutions to conflict and human security challenges.

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[197] Hettne, B., Soderbaum, F. (2005), A Regional Approach to Conflict Prevention and Management. Paper to the Conference: *Comparing Different Approaches to Conflict Prevention and Management:* Korean Peninsula and the Taiwan Strait. Organized by the Program for Contemporary Silk Road Studies at Uppsala University, Stockholm.
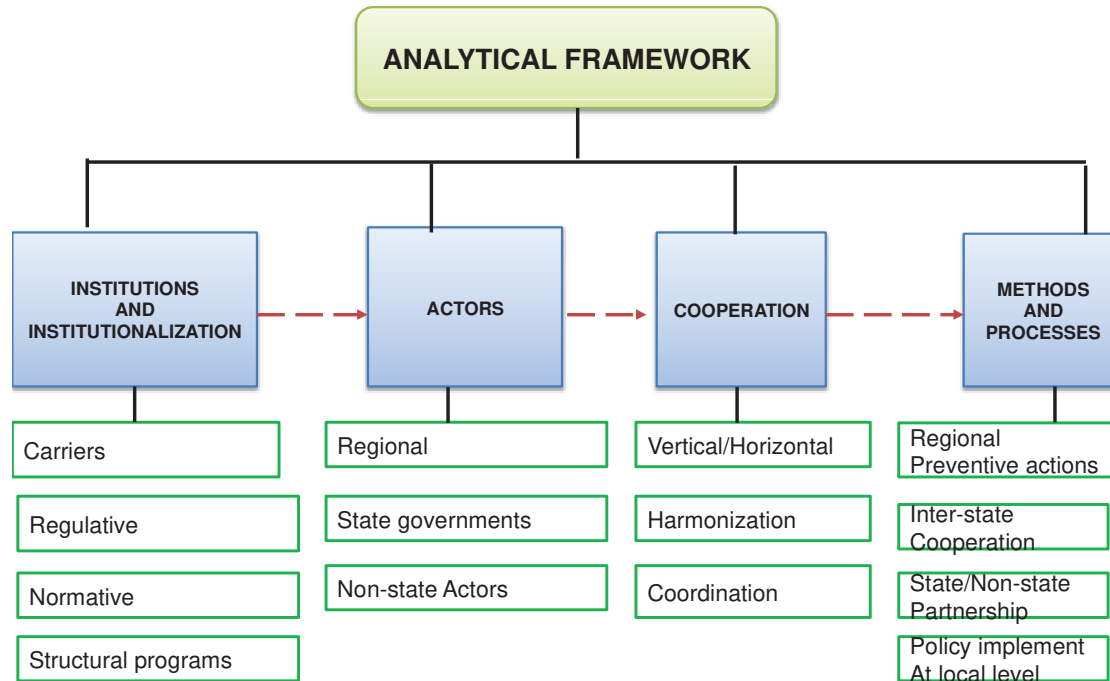
Source: Own creation

Figure 5: Analytical Framework to Institutionalize Conflict Prevention in a Regional Subsystem

These actors include regional organizations, state governments, transnational groups, local governments, specialized agencies, interest groups, and varieties of civil society structures. Together, they form an interconnected network of institutions working on policies, implementing activities, collaborating and coordinating on different issues in the prevention of violence and conflicts within local communities, at the state level, and between states in a regional subsystem. As framed in the figure above, these actors operate vertically and horizontally. Some have equal status, power and authority whilst others do not. There is some level of hierarchy in their interactions from the regional, to state government and local structures. But all of them can be resourceful and actively work on issues that help prevent conflict in their communities, states and sub-regions.

Building a preventive regime in a regional subsystem requires collective action. However, collective action by all actors is only possible when there is a platform for interaction that enables cooperation. The convergence of state and non-state

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institutions on initiatives such as early warning systems, infrastructures for peace, preventive diplomacy, restorative justice systems, social empowerment and development projects enables them to take and make collective decisions, identified methods of implementation and decide on the collectiveness of their endeavors towards conflict prevention.

- **Context of West Africa**

This approach to conflict prevention in West Africa can only be made possible on the basis that different sets of institutions undertake activities within their area of engagement that may impact on the prevention of conflict at local, national and across states. Within the last two decades, there is the growing realization that there are many relevant stakeholders that determined the outcome of preventive ventures as a result of the role they play in dealing with conflict situation and the challenges in addressing potential threats to human security. They involved state and non-state actors, civil society structures, the private sector and in recent times, a well-organized network of organizations that now operate across borders and helping to build a region-wide pattern of operation to deal with human security concerns.

Table 9: Methods/Processes of Institutionalization of preventive action in West Africa

Actors	Method of engagement	Structure of Activities	Current Initiatives
Regional State	ECOWAS Sectoral/department unit	Vertical and Horizontal coordination with state and non state actors Designing and implementing regional policies	Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security on electoral governance and monitoring etc. ECOWAS Parliament on democratic governance Early Warning Directorate on regional early warning systems
	ECOWAS and Regional Non-State Partnership	Design and implementation of Preventive Action Country-based networks and coordination	ECOWAS/WANEP Partnership in Implementation of Early Warning across West Africa
	Intergovernmental Specialized Agencies	Inter-state cooperation for preventive action Design and implementing regional policies	West Africa Police Chiefs Committee on Security Policing and transnational criminal enterprises
Non State Local Actors	Transnational NGOs Regional Civil Society	Training, and research, capacity building efforts, advocacy, awareness raising etc.	WANEP, WACSOF, WASSN, WAANSA etc. undertakes program on Early warning, Training and research, Security governance and Small Arms Control respectively
	Traditional/local institutions	Community building, restorative justice, security cooperation	National Infrastructures for Peace (NI4P), Local policing boards, community healing and reconciliation, etc.

As seen in the table above, cooperative institutionalization of conflict prevention in West Africa requires a multi-actor approach involving different sets of institutions. There are four institutional methods prescribed in the table above. Firstly, ECOWAS and its departmental and specialized units design policies within the framework for conflict prevention and working under the auspices of the commission, undertakes programs with impact across all member states. For example, in the aspect of Security Governance, the conflict prevention framework states that 'ECOWAS shall develop and promote the implementation and monitoring of a set of practical guidelines to govern the activities of all actors implementing or supporting SSR initiatives in the region'. A Code of Conduct was adopted by the ECOWAS Council of Ministers in August 2011 in order to 'promote the integration of democratic norms into the behavior of the armed forces and security services' within member states of ECOWAS.[198]

Another institutional approach highlighted above is partnership between ECOWAS and regional non-state actors. This method is identified based on the current pattern of engagement between ECOWAS and Non-State actors with regional focus. This approach gives due consideration to the fact that many Non-state institutions work on training and research, capacity building programs, policy advocacy with some level of coordination with country-based network and local actors. For example, ECOWAS and West Africa Network for Peace Building, has built a decade long partnership in the development of early warning systems in West Africa.

In addition, intergovernmental arrangements among specialized agencies, has an important role to play in making sure that conventions, treaties, laws and policies coming from regional grouping, are harmonized and implemented in the state. Those institutional organs of government whose programs fall within the scope of regional initiatives must take appropriate action towards the implementation of such policies. The West Africa Police Chiefs Committee operates within an intergovernmental framework in dealing with regional security challenges such as transnational criminal enterprises, security policing etc.

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[198]Uzoechina, O. (2014), Security Sector Reforms and Governance Processes in West Africa: From Concept to Reality. *Policy Paper*, Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), p.9.

Sub-national and local institutions such as traditional authorities and religious groups and civil society groups take on initiatives towards creation of national and local infrastructures for peace as we see in Ghana, local police partnership board as developed in Sierra Leone, community healing and reconciliation programs as developed by religious and civil society groups in northern Nigeria.

All the actors grouped in the table above can play variety of roles and undertake activities for conflict prevention ranging from early warning, preventive diplomacy, mediation, negotiation, fact-finding, outreach, peacemaking, election monitoring, security governance, cross-border security, local peace committees etc.

Conflict prevention frameworks are no longer state centered alone as the new theatre of violence and insecurity comes from within states and regional subsystems with communities imploding on one another and creating a state of instability and conflict that affect entire sub-regions.[199] In the case of West Africa, ending such conflicts requires the involvement of state and non-state actors and regional organizations working together to pre-empt and prevent conflict.[200]

4.7. Theoretical Flaws and Fault lines

Cooperative institutionalization conceptualizes relational arrangement, partnership, collaboration, coordination and interaction between different institutions in a regional sub-system. However, the process of cooperation takes time and its outcome may be hard to evaluate. The impact and outcome of collective action, shared responsibility or intersubjective interactions spanning varieties of institutions are difficult to assess in a regional sub-system. Institutional and state politics, interests of groups and unforeseen circumstances also makes it hard to evaluate their effect in the subsystem.

Furthermore, institutions in different point in their history can change. This means they can change their goals, interest and focus in response to exogenous or endogenous forces. These changes affect institutional performance, conformity to

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[199] See more on Necla Tschirgi (2012), op. cit., Wallensteen, P. (2015), Understanding Conflict Resolution. Sage Publication Ltd, pp. 197-224.
[200] See more Ramsbotham, O., Woodhouse, T., Mail, H. (2011), op. cit.

rules, norms, and value system. It also affects existing interactions and collective actions between institutions as interests change, making it difficult or impossible for cooperation to thrive within an already organized institutional order. Therefore, the theoretical framework can be constrained by structural changes in response to changes in interest and direction of an institution.

Another fault line to consider in the theory is the issue of political commitment. The key institutional actor for cooperative institutionalization in a regional sub-system is the state. The State connects the regional structure to national and local institutions and creates a stable governance system with the necessary institutions. Therefore state-governments need to be politically committed to a process of cooperative institutionalization through agreed upon rules, convention, regulations, laws and policies that must be transmitted into national and local laws and policies. The collective actions of states to cooperate and institutionalize norms and rules across a regional sub-system are important and its lack there of challenges the very foundation of the theoretical assumptions and causal logic of this work.

However, I considered this theory to be valid and useful in conceptualizing conflict prevention in the subsystem of West Africa; and part of this study is to present case studies of current institutional cooperation. Cases studies of institutional interactions on the development of early warning systems will be analyzed, as well as on preventive diplomacy, the operationalization of the ECOWAS Standby Force and development of national infrastructures for peace in response to risk factors to conflict in West Africa.

4.8. Conclusion from Theory

Theorizing in social sciences research is a bit of a complex process of arranging ideas, facts and observable phenomenon in our social environment as the basis of forming a theoretical proposition. As mentioned by Grix, 'theory is an abstraction of reality, in which concepts-with referents in the real world- are related to other concepts, offering us tentative hypothesis or explanation'. [201] This chapter presents a theoretical proposition described as 'cooperative institutionalization in regional subsystem'. The

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[201] Grix (2004), op. cit., p. 113.

argument for a new theoretical approach lies on the fact that there are less research endeavors that conceptualizes institutional cooperation towards prevention of conflict in regional subsystems.

As the global community is becoming more arranged in regional subsystem, especially in developing regions like Africa, there is the need for a conceptual framework that analyzes institutional cooperation beyond the confines of the state. Therefore, the theory seeks to explain the pattern of cooperation amongst institutions towards the prevention of conflict. These institutional interactions take place vertically and horizontally within states and between states and are becoming viable in dealing with human security challenges.

Cooperative institutionalization in a regional subsystem is realized on the basis of collective action and shared responsibility giving legitimacy to decision making and rules that are enforced by all institutional actors for conformity and adherence towards achieving their common collective ends within the subsystem. However, it is important to note that lack of commitment by state-governments, the domestication of decisions and rules as agreed by states and the inability of non-state actors to engage renders the concept less applicable. In this regard, the theoretical ideas in this chapter is an attempt to re-conceptualizing conflict prevention in West Africa through case studies. These case studies will be the focused of the remaining chapters of this dissertation.

Chapter Five: ECOWAS and the Institutionalization of Conflict Prevention

5.1. Introduction

The practice of conflict prevention is gaining increased momentum between RECs, state government, civil society communities and external partners. In Africa, ECOWAS is one of the most advanced RECs in terms of conflict management partly because it has had to respond to more conflicts and state fragility than other RECs. This puts the sub-region at a strategic advantage in the area of regional security cooperation, peacemaking, peacekeeping and humanitarian intervention. The sub-region also has a growing number of transnational civil society network that are taking conflict management roles in mediation, humanitarian actions, early warning and development of local peace infrastructures; and has also adopted a comprehensive conflict prevention framework that required a process of cooperative institutionalization.

Therefore, this chapter discusses the evolution and complexities of conflict prevention in Africa and the evolving African peace and security architecture. The first section examines developments of policy frameworks as well as systems and structures operationalized by the OAU, to meet the challenges to peace and security at the onset of independence and liberation struggle in different countries. The second section explains the process of transformation from OAU to the AU and the development of a Constitutive Act, which embodies a new approach for African solution to Africa's problems. It assesses the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) as a response mechanism to deal with issues of governance and economic developments, which are vital processes for structural prevention. This is followed with analyses on the AU peace and Security Council in relation to conflict prevention and its operational linkages in harmonization of policies and programs by RECs in their subsystems. These assessments attempt to connect the A.U. response structure to West Africa's conflict prevention mechanisms developed by ECOWAS and their operationalization in the subsystem. In this regard, the later sections of this chapter examines ECOWAS conflict management strategies and the new framework for conflict prevention as well as prescribe and analyse various approaches for

institutionalization of the ECPF with case studies to clarify their contextual relevance within the theoretical discourse of cooperation institutionalization of conflict prevention in West Africa.

5.2. Evolution of Conflict Prevention Mechanisms in Africa

Considering the current trend of conflict and insecurity in Africa, one will wonder if preventive actions across the continent have ever really worked or whether existing methods and processes of preventing conflict are not suitable to Africa's context or are inadequate. Rasheed Draman observed that international and domestic actors must time approach Africa's civil conflict in an ad hoc manner and 'engage themselves in the uphill task of managing crises instead of the relatively easier job of anticipating and preventing these crises'.[202]

Reflecting on the scope of Africa's sources and structure of instability, it is hard to really present a template that can be used to effectively manage or prevent crisis in the continent. When the Organization of Africa Unity (OAU) was established in 1963, it was overshadowed with the struggle of uniting Africa, bring an end to liberation struggle and promoting regional and economic cooperation. The structure of preventive mechanisms at that time pursued preventive diplomacy as the appropriate method of managing conflict and confrontations, which transpired between two or more states. This was as a result of ideological differences fuelled by the Cold War patron-client political dispensation, leading to proxy civil wars in different regions across Africa.

With the end of Cold War, Africa imploded into a continent in total crisis and to what Francis described as 'a continent at war against itself'. In an attempt to respond to these new implosion of conflicts, the OAU Declaration on the Political and Socio-economic Situation in Africa in June 1990 as well as the Kampala Leadership Forum and Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Co-operation in Africa (CSSDCA), were adopted as new normative frameworks to establish a much needed linkage between peace, security and socio-economic development at national and

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[202] Draman, R. (2003), Conflict Prevention in Africa: Establishing Conditions and Institutions Conducive to Durable Peace, In Carment, D. (eds.) *Conflict Prevention: Path to Peace or Grand Illusion?* United Nation University Press, pp.233-253; Francis (2006), op. cit., p. 91-133.

regional levels. These fundamental shifts emphasized the importance of finding an African solution to Africa's problems of conflict and insecurities. However, throughout the 1990s, the continent was ravaged by all types of civil wars with different causes and fuelled by different sources and by 2002 there were '18 active wars and armed conflict in Africa at different levels of intensity'.[203]

The Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution was adopted by member states of OAU in Cairo, Egypt, in 1993. This normative framework gave the 'organization the legal competence and legitimacy to intervene in internal conflict, falling within the jurisdiction of member states'. This mechanism was established with a new central organ responsible for decision-making. It comprises of fifteen to seventeen member states that are elected annually from the continents five sub-regions. It was also composed of a Conflict Management Centre (CMC) that includes an early warning system, operational field unit to undertake observation and monitoring mission. A peace fund was also established to provide support for the organization's peace and security programmes. However, the commitment made by leaders under this framework turned out to be mere rhetoric and failed to address protracted conflict that were unfolding across sub-regions in the continent.

Post independence and post Cold War Africa was enmeshed in political uncertainties, contradictions on issues of secession, non-interference and autonomy, which led to lukewarm responses by the OAU to political crisis and conflict situations in various regional subsystems.[204] As argued by Paul D. Williams, 'while the OAU supported liberation movement in Guinea-Bissau, Angola and Mozambique, it condemned similar struggle in Nigeria, South Sudan, Chad, Eritrea, Somalia and Comoros'; while it was willing to promote human rights it was not willing to protect them due to the principle of non-interference even though it had adopted the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights in 1986; and while it emphasizes a 'Try OAU First' principles in dealing with inter-state dispute over territorial rights it was still calling

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[203]Francis (2006), op. cit., p. 60.
[204] Williams, Paul, D. (2007), From Non-intervention to Non-indifference: The Origins and Development of the African Union's Security Culture. *Journal of African Affairs*, Oxford University Press, p. 267.

on the UN, former colonial powers and even private military companies to intervene in crisis situation in the continent.[205]

Africa's inability to handle her own problems was visible throughout the 1990s. Even though the OAU made attempt to put forward ad hoc peace keeping and observation missions, such as the Neutral Military Observer mission in Rwanda, the Observer Mission in Burundi and Comoros between 1991 and 1997, it lacked the required capacity to prevent civil wars. Also, as part of the OAU Mechanism on Conflict Prevention, ad hoc committees and commissions were instituted and led by Heads of States to undertake fact-finding missions, good offices, mediation and negotiation processes as a strategy for responding to specific conflict situations. Such commissions were utilized to undertake political mediation and peace settlements throughout the 1990s in the conflict in Mozambique, Burundi and Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo and in the Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict. However, some commentators have argued that the existing normative framework at the time did not provide for intervention into the internal affairs of member states without the explicit request of the State, as recognition of sovereignty supersedes the principle of intervention.

Also part of the Post-independence and Post Cold War challenges for the OAU was the issue of unconstitutional changes in government. Between 1956 and 2001, forty-eight countries in Africa experienced eighty successful coups and another 108 failed coups and between 1990 and 2001 the continent faced fifty military coups of different proportion with thirteen successfully carried out; and within this same period thirty states in Africa experienced at least one successful coup.[206] In July 2000, 'the OAU Assembly institutionalized its rejection of unconstitutional changes of government on the continent', through a framework declaration for an OAU Response to unconstitutional change of government.[207] This framework was an attempt to push for stability and legitimacy of political authorities and prevent possible conflict as a result of military coups. However, this framework did not end military coups as different

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[205] Ibid.

[206] McGowan, Patrick, J. (2003), African Military Coups d'etats, 1956-2001. *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 41, pp. 339-70.

[207] Williams (2007), op. cit., p. 271, see also Declaration on the Framework for an OAU Response to Unconstitutional Changes in Government AHG/Decl.5 (XXXVI).

countries experienced 10 failed coups and four successful coups between 2002 and 2004.[208] These included coups in Togo and Mauritania in January and July 2005 respectively. These military coups were a direct consequence of overstay in power of political leaders who suppressed and oppressed their people leading to state collapse and instability that metamorphosed into civil conflict and wars in Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Chad, and Cote d'Ivoire.

In addition, throughout the 1990s, the international community put forward programme of support that will boost the conflict prevention capacity on RECs and the OAU. The United States came up with Africa Crisis Response Initiatives (ACRI) amongst others, France developed the Reinforcement of Africa Peacekeeping Capacities Programme, and Britain came up with an International Peace Keeping Assistance Training Team, whilst the European Union developed the Africa Peace Facility. These programmes were in one way or another meant to support preventive efforts in Africa.[209] However, some of the central challenges faced by these RECs are that they were not geared up to manage armed conflict as they lacked institutional capacity across various levels to pursue preventive agendas.[210] A fair assessment of OAU approach to conflict management and prevention has been ad hoc and mostly micro-managed. Conflict prevention in principle was organized within the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. However, its practice and institutionalization never got the require momentum it deserves by member states. Some operational actions were carried out by the OAU, but response systems to structural and systemic issues were completely lacking.

5.3. The African Union and its Constitutive Act

The need for reformation of the OAU was part of the vision in the Africa Economic Community (AEC) framework in order to build a more cohesive institution that is more responsive to political, economic, peace, conflict and security challenges across the continent. OAU was transformed into AU for a variety of reasons. African leaders wanted to institute Africa-led solution to risk of conflict and insecurities in more

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[208] Ibid, p. 273.
[209] Francis (2006), pp. 98-99.
[210] Ibid.

coherent way; institutionalize effective operational structures rather than ad hoc mechanisms, advance more organized system to deal with military intervention and promote stable democratic systems of governments through zero tolerance of unconstitutional change of governments. These issues represent a fundamental shift from OAU and led member states to adopt a new Constitutive Act (CA) forming the AU, in Lome, Togo in 2001.[211] This framework gave a new face to the continental body. The Act 'stipulates the defense of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of member states (Art. 3 (b)) as well as the principle of non-interference by member states in the internal affairs of others'.[212] It strives to strengthen old structures, but also took an unprecedented shift on conflict prevention and management in Africa with regards to humanitarian intervention in the face of grave human rights violations and suffering of the masses. The Constitutive Act states, in article 4(h), the right of the AU to intervene in the domestic affairs of a member state in the face of grave human atrocities such as war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity.[213] A Court of Justice was established as an institutional mechanism for dispute settlement, conflict prevention and resolution of 'sensitive political issues or matters related to state sovereignty'.[214] It also rejects the unconstitutional change of government through military coups, thereby pushing for more democratic establishment across member states.

NEPAD was formed alongside the AU, in July 2001 in order to reconcile the continent conflict management system. It was formed as a supplementary institutional structure to AU in responding to the twin pillar of operational and structural prevention of conflict. It is meant to tackle structural issues such as economic constraints, poverty and underdevelopment, and support economic integration agendas in the various subsystems in Africa; and present risk factors for state failure. Therefore, the core of NEPAD's objectives is to build and enhance the capacity of African institutions for early warning, regional conflict prevention, and management. In addition, the peace and security initiatives of NEPAD has three components which include: (1) promoting long term conditions for development and security, (2)

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[211] Packer, Corinne, A.A., and Rukare, D. (2002), The New African Union and its Constitutive Act. *The American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 96. No. 2, pp. 365-379.
[212] Ibid, p. 372.
[213] African Union (2001), Constitutive Act of the African Union, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, www.au.org.
[214] Packer and Rukare (2002), op. cit., p.373.

building the capacity of African institutions for early warning, as well as enhancing African institutions' capacity to prevent, manage and resolve conflict, (3) institutionalizing commitment to the core values of the New Partnership for Africa's Development through leadership.[215]

5.4. The AU Peace and Security Council and the African Peace and Security Architecture

The AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) was conceived from the desire of the AU to reform the OAU MCPMR and has become the foundation for the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). The PSC was adopted in July 2002, entered into force in December 2003 and started operations in March 2004. It is 'a collective security and early warning arrangement to facilitate timely and efficient response to conflict and crisis situations in Africa'.[216] The PSC focuses on the 'promotion of peace, security and stability in Africa; anticipating and preventing conflicts; promoting and implementing peace building and post-conflict reconstruction activities as well as coordinate and harmonize continental and regional efforts for institutional cooperation in prevention of conflicts. Membership into the council is on the basis of 'equitable regional representation and rotation' across the various regional subsystems in Africa. The decisions of the Council is generally guided by the principle of consensus' and in cases where they are unable to reach a consensus to take a decision, a simple two-third majority vote can take effect.[217]

The core of the AU architecture for peace is the PSC, which was developed with operational pillars serving as essential response structures to deal with conflicts and insecurities. They include the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS), the African Standby Force (ASF), the Panel of the Wise and the Peace Fund. There is a process of cooperative institutionalization of these continental frameworks to regional subsystems through existing Regional Economic Communities (REC) and their Regional Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. For example, CEWS has been institutionalized into East Africa community through

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[215] Ibid.
[216] African Union Commission (2002), Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
[217] William (2011), op. cit., p. 158.

IGAD's Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism; the same has been done in the West African Community with the ECOWAS Early Warning and Response Network and Southern Africa has also institutionalized early warning through SADC's Regional Early Warning Centre based in Gaborone, Botswana. This method of cooperative institutionalization of conflict prevention has been applied in the implementation of the Africa Standby Force to undertake peace support operations and Panel of the Wise to undertake mediation and negotiation processes in different regional subsystems in Africa.

These structures are the institutional frameworks that have been used to respond to conflict and crisis situations in different countries. They have shaped AU response and enabled harmonization and coordination of activities in the Commission's various interventions to crisis situations across various regional subsystem as well as arrangement of cooperation with external partners and non-state actors such as regional and national civil society structures. Since 2015, the AU has developed an operational roadmap of APSA from 2016 to 2020 focusing on the link between development and conflict prevention. Also, in 2015, 'the AU endorsed its Conflict Prevention Framework as a Continental Structural Conflict Prevention Framework (CSCPF) as well as country structural vulnerability assessment (CSVAs).

During the AU summit in January 2017, the AU Master Roadmap on Practical steps for Silencing the Guns by 2020 was adopted. This roadmap maintains that national and regional structures must develop 'practical output in relation to structural prevention, including infrastructures for peace and structural vulnerability assessment (SVAs).[218] The AU designed and operates institutional frameworks at continental level. However, states and regional structures have a greater role to tackle risk and vulnerabilities to conflicts. Structural problems need to be recognized and infrastructures for peace need to form part of regional and country level response to prevent conflict.

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[218] Carvalho, de G. (2017), Conflict Prevention: What's in it for the AU. *Policy Brief,* Institute for Security Studies, p. 5.

5.5. Regional Economic Communities in Africa and Cooperative Institutionalization of Conflict Prevention: The Case of ECOWAS

The organization of conflict in Africa in recent decades have taken regional dimensions as a result of common socio-economic, political and security vulnerabilities leading to regional conflict formation that has implication for all the countries that make up the regional subsystem. In this regard, RECs have taken leadership roles with operational structures to respond to risk factors and threats of conflicts in their different subsystems. These RECs namely SADC, ECOWAS, IGAD and ECCAS as part of their responses to the state of insecurities in their subsystems, developed policy frameworks and institutional structures to deal with conflicts within their communities. In chapter four of this thesis I presented an explanation of the formation of RECs in various regional subsystems in Africa with specific focus on their institutional response systems to conflict vulnerabilities. These response frameworks were analysed within the conceptual prism of cooperative institutionalization of conflict prevention in regional subsystem. However, this section focuses on the regional economic community of West Africa and analyses its prospect for cooperation institutionalization of conflict prevention.

- **ECOWAS Early Attempt towards Political and Security Cooperation for Conflict Prevention**

The sub-region of West Africa is well recognized as a region that has been the hotbed of instability and conflict. At the onset of the establishment of ECOWAS, member states and their political leaders were still grappling with various levels of both states and intra-state conflict as a result of political and security dynamics of the Cold War and related proxy wars. The sub-region was also dealing with the challenges of establishing political stability, and legitimacy in the aftermath of independence as well as emerging issues of neo-colonialism. Some countries' political structures were destabilized by military coups that led to civil war such as Sierra Leone and Liberia whilst others were confronted by secessionist struggles such as Nigeria and Senegal. In November 1970 'Guinea experience an attempted invasion by Portuguese

mercenaries whilst Benin became the target of another failed mercenary attack in 1977'.[219]

Recognizing the seriousness of these threats of external aggressions and internal instability, ECOWAS leaders decided to take a strategic shift from regional economic integration imperatives to movement towards security cooperation and conflict prevention. In 1978, member states adopted a Protocol on Non-Aggression which called on member states to 'refrain from the threats and use of force or aggression' against each other. [220] This Treaty was meant to guarantee peace and good neighborliness and present an enabling environment for effective development of regional economic cooperation and integration.[221]

However, as suggested by Kabia, critics regard this protocol 'as merely idealistic as it failed to provide an institutionalized response mechanism in the case of a breach'.[222] In view of this situation, West Africa leaders established a new protocol on Mutual Assistance on Defence at the ECOWAS summit in Freetown, Sierra Leone in 1981. The objective of the Protocol as stipulated in Article 2 states that 'member states declare and accept that any armed attack or aggression directed against any member state shall constitute a threat or aggression against the entire community'. And, Article 3 states the resolve of member state 'to give mutual aid and assistance for defence against any armed threats or aggression'. It also created response mechanisms that includes a Defence Council, Defence Committee and a sub-regional intervention force: the Allied Armed Forces of the Community (AAFC).[223]

However, as highlighted by Kabia, 'this protocol has been criticized for its lack of effective conflict prevention, management and resolution mechanism'. This is because as he puts it, 'it focused heavily on external threats and did not envisage a role for the regional body in the coups that destabilized the sub-region in the 1970s and 1980s and the internal conflicts that swept through West Africa throughout the

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[219]Kabia, J. M. (2011), Regional Architecture for Peace Building: The ECOWAS Peace and Security Architecture. *BISA-Africa and international Studies ESRC Seminar Series*, Africa Agency in International Politics, University of Birmingham, p.2.
[220] See detail on ECOWAS (1978), Protocol on Non-Aggression, ECOWAS Secretariat. Lagos, Nigeria.
[221]Nduaguibe (1978), op. cit., p.90.
[222]Kabia (2011), op. cit., p. 2.
[223] ECOWAS (1981), Protocol on Mutual Assistance in Defence, ECOWAS Secretariat. Lagos, Nigeria.

1990s'.[224] Other critics regard this protocol as regime protection strategies that are meant to serve the interest of leaders.

In 1991, ECOWAS member states agreed on the Declaration of Political Principles with a 'special focus on three fundamental issues: freedom, people's rights and democratization'. As stated by Ukeje, 'this declaration affirmed full adherence to the principle of democracy 'in order to enhance the prospects of advancing economic cooperation and integration in a political environment in which our people can live in peace, security and stability'.[225] These earlier attempts in the regional integration process of ECOWAS were made to bring into the fore, principles and institutional framework to promote peace and security and by extension conflict prevention. However, I must argue that these earlier attempts put forward regional schemes for security cooperation, instead of realistic framework that will help to prevent conflict between or amongst member states.

- **ECOWAS Conflict Management Structure and Responses to Conflicts in the 1990s**

West Africa's regionalization process shifted in focus at the beginning of the 1990s from economic priorities to establishment of new norms for collective security to deal with many conflicts and civil wars that had engulfed the sub-region. In 1989, Liberia collapse and imploded into a civil war with different insurgent movements led by various warlord, amongst them Charles Taylor. His National Patriotic Front revolutionary movement led a protracted factional conflict that spread across the country. In April 1991, with the help of Taylor's rebel infrastructure, Foday Sankoh led a rebel insurgent into Sierra Leone. Both conflict, imploded into an all-out civil war that brought the sub-region into a complete state of instability with huge cost and consequences.

Overwhelmed by these interlocking conflicts slowly crippling into a looming political tension in Guinea, ECOWAS developed a new normative framework as well as new

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[224]Kabia (2011), p.3.
[225]Ukeje, C. (2005), From Economic Cooperation to Collective Security: ECOWAS and the Changing Imperatives of Sub-regionalism in West africa, In Fawole, Alade, W. and Ukeje, C. (eds.), *The Crisis of the State and Regionalism in West Africa*, CODESRIA Publishing, Senegal p. 158.

institutional mechanism in response to these crises. It established a new revised Treaty in 1993 that called for member states to 'undertake to work to safeguard and consolidate relations conducive to the maintenance of peace, stability and security within the sub-region'. It also called for member states to cooperate in 'establishing and strengthening appropriate mechanisms for the timely prevention and resolution of intra-state and inter-state conflict'.[226] This Treaty led to the formation of the ECOWAS Standing Mediation Committee (SMC) that was used to start the peace process in Liberia and led to the creation and deployment of ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) between 1990 and 1997 as multinational intervention force to undertake the observation of ceasefire and implementation of a peace plan for Liberia. At the height of the Sierra Leone civil war, ECOMOG launched a military intervention against a rogue military regime in 1997 to restore the ousted democratically elected government of then President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah. ECOWAS also undertook massive preventive diplomacy in the form of mediation and negotiation of peace agreements between warring factions throughout the Liberian civil war as well as between the government of Sierra Leone and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) movement that led to the signing of a comprehensive peace agreement in July 1999.[227]

Recognizing that the proliferation of small arms and light weapons is one of the major sources for the regional formation of conflict in West Africa, ECOWAS member states agreed on a Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Light Weapons in October 1998 and later transformed it into a binding Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, their Ammunition and other Related Materials in June 2006. However, this shift towards collective security was laudable but was mostly ad hoc mechanisms, and was fraught with disagreements and lack of political willingness among member states.

In December 1999 a Protocol on the mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peace Keeping and Security was established. It provided for six organs/institutions: the authority of Heads of State and Government; the Mediation and Security Council, a fifteen member Council of the Wise to undertake

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[226] ECOWAS Commission (1993), Revised Treaty of ECOWAS, Abuja, Nigeria.
[227] See more details on Francis (2001), op. cit.

mediation, reconciliation and fact-finding mission, an observation and monitoring system named ECOWARN to communicate risk and vulnerabilities across member states, a standby force to undertake peace keeping intervention; and a Defence and Security Commission that provide technical advice on matters related to peace and security. In addition, ECOWAS established a Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, as well as a Declaration on a Sub-Regional Approach to Peace and Security in 2003.

The uniqueness of the ECOWAS Mechanism lies in its principle of supra-nationality that goes beyond the previous 'emphasis on sovereign equality of states and non - intervention in the internal affairs of states'. [228] However, all these conflict management strategies were developed with a long-term vision of implementation to draw strength in their institutionalization across government and nongovernmental institutions

- **Integration with Emphasis on Collective Prevention: A New Approach to Preventive Action**

From an analytical point of view, the evolving preventive regime in West Africa emphasizes the need for conflict prevention processes to be integrated across countries and sub-regional institutions. The analysis in the previous section gives an understanding of the various normative frameworks for conflict prevention and management that have been utilized by ECOWAS that formed the architecture for peace and security and in responding to crisis situation across countries.

These normative instruments now recognize the inextricable link between economic development and regional integration and the need for security of the people of West Africa through institutionalization of conflict management systems and structures. Though the priority for integration in West Africa was for economic cooperation and harmonization of economic agenda of ECOWAS member states, there is now a new vision of 'integration with emphasis on prevention' in order to achieve the collective action needed amongst member states for conflict prevention. This emphasis sits well

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[228]Ebo, A. (2007), Towards a Common ECOWAS Agenda on Security Sector Reform. DCAF, p.6.

with systematic prevention of conflict based on regional approach to address security threats.

Therefore, the new approach to prevent conflict emphasis that normative instruments should be implemented through harmonization and domestication of response mechanisms across member states. This is the logical argument for cooperative institutionalization of conflict prevention. For example, through the ECOWAS Small Arms Commission Programme (ECOSAP), legal frameworks have now been enacted to prevent the flow of weapons, a regional code of conduct for the Armed forces and Security services and a Regional Framework for Security Sector Reforms and governance have been harmonized and political support being galvanized for these principles to be integrated and institutionalized by states government which will go a long way towards governance and control of armed forces in the sub region. In addition, ECOWAS Counter Terrorism Strategy and Implementation Plan has been rolled out for member states to integrate into their national security strategy. This will enhance greater collaboration in dealing with potential terrorist activities.

This new approach for collective prevention requires a vertical and horizontal method of institutionalizing conflict prevention agendas within ECOWAS and its specialized institutions as well as between ECOWAS Commission, member states, non-state actors and even the private sector. This means that the ECOWAS Commission has a responsibility to harmonize its conflict prevention agenda across departments and agencies within the Commission in order to achieve the gains of collective prevention. For example, the ECOWAS Early Warning Programme (ECOWARN) should be able to give information, early enough for the Department of Political Affairs to coordinate with the Council of the Wise in undertaking fact finding mission or mediation efforts in a member states facing threats of instability. All these networks of interaction amongst different institutions are conceptualized as cooperative institutionalization of conflict prevention.

Therefore, a comprehensive approach to conflict prevention in the sub-region must build synergies, partnership and collaboration between and amongst institutions for collective efforts towards prevention. This vision is encapsulated in the ECOWAS

Conflict Prevention Framework commonly known as the ECPF, which was adopted by the Mediation and Security Council in 2008, and is the next focus of this analysis.

- **The ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework**

As ECOWAS continues to adjust its peace and security needs to deal with threats to regional stability, it developed a new strategic vision for the transformation of the regional grouping from an "ECOWAS of the State" into an "ECOWAS of the people". Part of this vision is the basis for the adoption of the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF) in 2008 as a roadmap for conflict prevention. The application of this framework requires new approaches for cooperation, coordination and implementation of policies and regional initiatives for conflict prevention. It emphasizes the implementation of 'measures and initiatives that go beyond violence management' with 'emphasis now placed on prevention and peace building, including the strengthening of sustainable development, the promotion of region-wide humanitarian crisis prevention and preparedness strategy and the culture of democracy'.[229]

The ECPF draws mandate and legitimacy from variety of conflict prevention policies and instruments in the sub-region as well as other continental frameworks and international norms. As stated by Bolaji, the ECPF 'harmonizes and aggregates disparate provisions of ECOWAS protocols, conventions and other relevant documents and offers fresh strategies, with the aim of systematically facilitating their implementation in such a way that the root causes of conflict can be effectively tackled'.[230]

The ECPF objectives and operational approach 'reveals a comprehensive and multi-pronged approach for conflict prevention in ways that address the current security challenges of the West African sub-region'.[231] The Framework covers 11 sections ranging from its adoption and introduction, scope, context and legitimacy as well as

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[229] ECPF, para 26, p.11.

[230] Bolaji, A. Kehinde. (2011), Adapting Traditional Peacemaking Principles to Contemporary Conflict: The ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework. *African Conflict and Peace-building Review*, Issue 1, Vol.2, pp.183-204, p. 192.

[231] Atuobi, S. (2010), Implementing the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework: Prospect and Challenges. *KAIPTC Policy Brief,* p.2.

enabling mechanisms, plan of action, monitoring and evaluation process and a set of obligation by member states.

The overarching aim of the ECPF as stipulated in the documents is:

> 'to strengthen the human security architecture in West Africa. The intermediate purpose is to create space within the ECOWAS system and member states for cooperative interaction within the region and with external partners to push conflict prevention and peace-building up the political agenda of the member states in a manner that will trigger timely and targeted multi-actor and multi-dimensional action to defuse or eliminate potential and real threats to human security in a predictable and institutional manner'[232]

Furthermore, the objectives of the ECPF include the following:

- Mainstreaming Conflict Prevention into ECOWAS policies and programmes
- Increase understanding of the conceptual basis of conflict prevention
- Build awareness and anticipation, and strengthen capacity within member states and civil society to enhance their role in conflict prevention and peace building
- Increase awareness of preparedness for cooperative ventures between ECOWAS member states, civil society and external partners in pursuit of conflict prevention and peace building
- Strengthening capacity within ECOWAS to pursue concrete and integrated conflict prevention and peace building
- Enhance ECOWAS anticipation and planning capacities in relation to regional tension and
- Generate a more pro-active and operational conflict prevention posture from member states and ECOWAS system[233]

In order to achieve these various objectives, the ECPF, put forward 14 components which when put together and well integrated across states and non-state institutions, will help to tackle threats of violence and insecurities, leading to the prevention of conflict across the sub-region. These 14 components are:

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[232] ECPF (2008), p.11, para. 27.
[233] Ibid, para.28.

1. Early Warning
2. Preventive Diplomacy
3. Democracy and Political Governance
4. Human Rights and the Rule of Law
5. Media
6. Natural Resource Governance
7. Cross-Border Initiatives
8. Security Governance
9. Practical Disarmament
10. Women, Peace and Security
11. Youth Empowerment
12. ECOWAS Standby Force
13. Humanitarian Assistance and
14. Peace Education (The Culture of Peace)[234]

The objectives and the various components show the comprehensiveness of this conflict prevention framework and its uniqueness from other normative frameworks. As Atuobi suggested, it 'adopts a comprehensive approach to social, economic, political and security challenges in West Africa by establishing the linkages between social, economic and political issues as the basis for conflict prevention in the sub region'.[235] Also, it targets a wide range of actors that includes ECOWAS, states, civil society, donors, international organizations, the private sector etc., suggesting that the success of new approaches to conflict prevention will be founded on partnership for preventive actions among different sets of institutions. In addition, this framework explains with specific details the issues it seeks to address. It includes activities, benchmarks for measuring progress and capacity requirements for undertaking the stated activities.

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[234] See detail on the ECPF, op. cit., pp.16-51, para. 44-100.
[235] Atuobi (2010), op. cit., p.2.
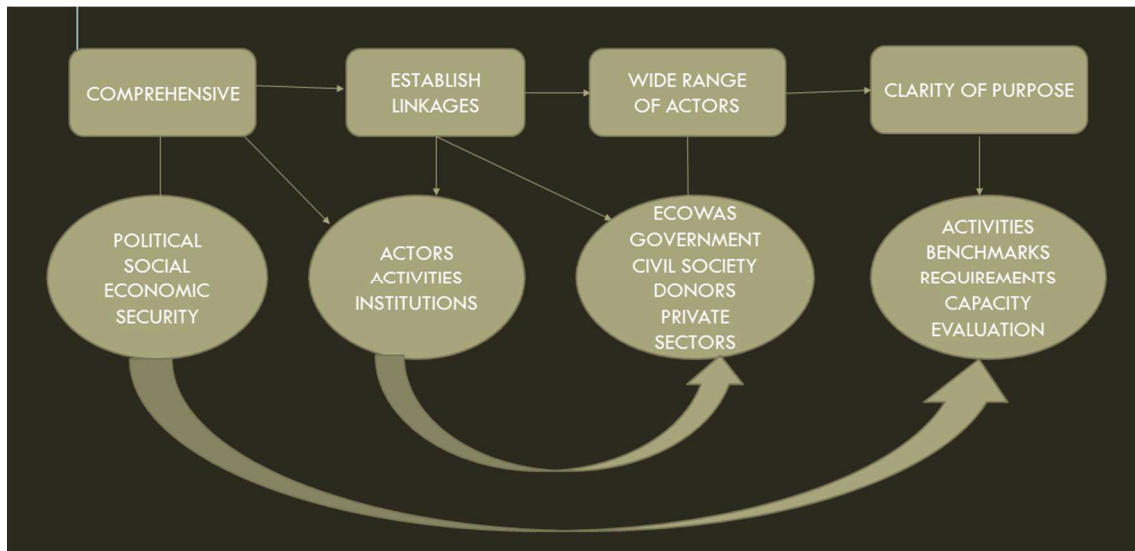
Figure 6: A New Framework for Conflict Prevention

As seen in the figure above, the ECPF is a preventive framework to guide, harmonize, support and coordinate actions for conflict prevention through different sets of activities within the 14 component areas which are required to be integrated using a multi-dimensional set of actors and processes. This means that 'collective action' is needed in pursuit of 'preventive action'. The integration of these policies must be done in 'an institutional manner' across sectors and across countries. Ekiyor suggested that a 'successful implementation of the framework hinges on collaboration between multi-sectors and multi actors' and 'the need for a systematized approach that prioritizes collaboration among these actors for wider impact'.[236]

The implementation of the ECPF is guided by an 'Enabling Mechanism' that is composed of a set of activities, which include advocacy and communication, through a region wide awareness promotion system that will increase understanding, about the conflict prevention framework.[237] It prescribed activities that will enhance the mobilization of resources within ECOWAS through the establishment of a 'dedicated fund' for conflict prevention and peace building. It also covers methods and processes for stronger 'Cooperation' that will 'build synergies for coordinated interventions in conflict prevention and peace building'. This includes intra-ECOWAS cooperation, ECOWAS-Civil Society cooperation; ECOWAS member states cooperation as well as cooperation with the AU, UN and development partners.

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[236]Ekiyor, T. (2008), ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework: A New Approach to an Old Challenge, West Africa Civil Society Forum, Op-Ed, p. 8.
[237] See detail on the ECFP, pp. 52-59, para. 101-121.

The last section of the framework suggested a plan of action be drawn up with a system for monitoring and evaluation. [238] During a workshop conducted on 'Enhancing the Operationalization of the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention framework' by the Kofi Annan Peacekeeping Training Centre in October 2010, bringing together stakeholders across West Africa, a multi-actor mapping process was undertaken with the various roles that stakeholders and their institutions can play. They also identify methods for collaboration among them in support of a regionalized approach to implement the ECPF. The Table below shows the role and collaborative matrix, which was developed in the course of their engagement.[239]

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[238] Ibid.
[239] KAIPTC Workshop Report (2010) '*Enhancing the Operationalization of the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework*', Accra, Ghana.

Table 10: Roles and Collaboration Matrix

	Government	Civil Society	Media	Donors	ECOWAS
Government		Offers Capacity building support	Provide the enabling environment for free speech to thrive	Identify avenues for mutual engagement	Cooperate with ECOWAS in Peace and Security Issues
Civil Society	Influence policy decisions and implementation		Involve media in all conflict prevention activities	Design good conflict prevention proposals that will attract support from TFPs	Undertake research that feeds into ECOWAS conflict prevention agenda
Media	Propagate ECPF efforts by government to the grassroots	Support CSOs to popularize conflict-related activities		Highlight critical areas for technical and financial support	Constant dialogue and dissemination of ECOWAS activities
Technical and Financial Partners	Support government activities with emphasis on conflict prevention	Provide technical support in project management	Give special financial support to specialized media houses in reporting early warning		Help establish M&E systems to evaluate projects
ECOWAS	Encourage government to adopt and implement protocols	Assist CSOs in mobilizing resources	Develop close links with media and perhaps establish its own media organization	Lobby TFPs to show more interest in peace and security issues	

In the table above, different sets of actors were identified which include ECOWAS, civil society, and government of member states, the media, and Technical Financial Partners (TFP) and donor agencies. In addition, the table shows the different roles that all these actors can play as well as the activities, programmes and methods of

collaboration that are needed vertically and horizontally across actors towards the institutionalization of the conflict prevention framework.

Considering the fact that current integration agenda within West Africa hinges more on tackling threats to human security such as poverty reduction, environmental concerns, transnational criminal activities etc., ECPF agenda is designed to tackle these issues. This is because, it proposes different set of activities with the objective of addressing human security challenges which by extension will prevent conflict in West Africa. For example, the component on natural resource governance requires ECOWAS and member states to 'carry out study of environmental hazards and risks associated with the exploitation of natural resources with a view to adopting and implementing risk reduction strategies' (ECPF, 2008, p.30, para 65). Similarly, with regards cross border issues, the ECPF emphasizes 'cross-border cooperation, intelligence sharing as well as joint operations between security forces (border guards, police, customs officials, gendarmeries) along common border'. (ECPF, p.33, para 69)

Overall, the ECPF has been described as one of the most comprehensive conflict prevention framework developed by a sub-regional organization in African continent. It is a framework that serves as a road map to be implemented in an institutional manner with a systematic process of cooperative institutionalization that addresses threats and vulnerabilities to the safety and security of the people of West Africa. The next section prescribes methods for cooperative institutionalization of the ECPF.

5.6. Cooperative Institutionalization of the ECPF

Cooperative institutionalization as conceptualized in the previous chapter describes a network of formal and informal processes of collective action and decision-making amongst multiple institutions towards achieving their collective interest. In the context of conflict prevention, it involves an interconnected web of institutional interaction in formulation and implementation of policies and programs. The ECPF is a comprehensive regional framework that can be conceptualized in this way as it describes the need for different actors and institutions to be involved in conflict prevention in the sub region. Therefore, cooperative institutionalization of the ECPF

means that state, non-state and sub-state actors must harmonize their programs and activities in the spirit of the framework and cooperate to implement activities for conflict prevention. Their intersubjective interactions and partnership in the implementation of programs within the ECPF is what I conceptualize as cooperative institutionalization. In this regard, it is important for state and non-state institutions to reach out to one another in a cooperative manner. This will make preventive effort work better and their implementation effectively institutionalized.

However, ECOWAS is still faced with the challenge of coming up with a 'plan of action' to effectively implement and integrate preventive measures. The proposed 'plan of action' for the implementation of the conflict prevention framework should have been rolled out in 2013 for operationalization across institutions i.e. ECOWAS, state actors and non-state actors etc. However, there are many nuances in the three-year priority implementation plan, which includes resource capacity, benchmarks and operational overhaul among others.[240]

The idea of cooperative institutionalization of conflict prevention in regional subsystem takes on board different institutional method for implementation of preventive measures across communities in the subsystem. The next section analyses some three sets of institutional approaches with case studies towards cooperative institutionalization of preventive measures in the ECPF.

- **ECOWAS Partnership with Regional Non-State Institutions**

This approach gives due consideration to the fact that many non-state institutions work on training and research, capacity building programmes, policy advocacy with some level of coordination with country-based network and local actors. This institutional approach requires ECOWAS to sign a memorandum of understanding to give some degree of operational and institutional legitimacy to the activities of non-state institutions. It is important to note that this institutional approach takes a top-down operational pattern but has the potential to work toward harmonization and integration of the ECPF programme components. Therefore, this proposed model,

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[240]Uzoechina, O. (2014), *Security Sector Reforms and Governance Processes in West Africa: From Concept to Reality*, Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), Policy Paper, p. 14.

calls for the identification of regional non-state institutions, which have a visible presence across the sub-region, and whose programmes are in consonance with the ECPF to work in concert with ECOWAS for cooperative institutionalization of preventive actions in the sub-region.

ECOWAS and regional non-state organizations such a West Africa Network for Peace Building, West Africa Security Sector Network (WASSN), West Africa Civil Society Network (WACSOF), and West Africa Action Network on Small Arms (WAANSA) etc. that have the required capacity and resources across the sub-region, and which undertakes activities related to the ECOWAS Prevention framework can work together in pursuit of preventive actions. Their collective engagement will be founded on a high level of cooperation as conceptualized in the theory of cooperative institutionalization in regional subsystem. In this regard, ECOWAS is required to seek support from regional non-state actors who can use their existing capacities to undertake preventive action within a country specific setting. For example, a regional civil society institution with a presence across ECOWAS member states collaborates with ECOWAS to implement activities in the ECPF. A classic example is ECOWAS/WANEP partnership in the implementation of the ECOWAS early warning system across member states in West Africa.

I. Strength, Potential and Opportunities

This approach gives certainty for cooperative institutionalization of preventive measures across ECOWAS member states. It takes on a pattern that sees a preventive programme being implemented across countries in the sub-region. In this regard, when a regional non-state institution implements programmes with cooperation from ECOWAS, preventive action will be integrated across countries. Furthermore, this approach increases the potential for local ownership. This means that as local structures institute programme it automatically increases public awareness for local response. This will make the framework gain recognition and legitimacy across state institutions at the national level.

Similarly, there are opportunities for this institutional approach to work in a vertical and horizontal way. This means that in implementing a preventive measure, non-state

actors cooperate with ECOWAS on the one hand, and works with their country-based institutions on the other. At the same time, the country-based structures work with other partner organizations such as local NGOs, civil society groups, community-based groups etc. This leads to an improvement in the level of harmonization and coordination among non-state structures at the state level.

Another strength of this approach is that the country based institutions takes into consideration context specific needs of a particular country. Therefore, the institution within the country is better placed to understand context specific issues and apply appropriate methods in pursuit of preventive action. Also, it can make clarifications regarding sensitive political, economic, social or cultural issues that are context-specific to the country.

II. Challenges and Threats

However, the current trend of events shows that non-state institutions are struggling to have legitimacy across West Africa. This is because most of their programmes are not taken seriously by the state. The potential for success is dependent on the political willingness of state leaders to create the enabling environment for the non-state structures to thrive and influence policy decision that may largely impact on the prevention of conflict.

Furthermore, there is the ever-existing problem of mobilization of resources especially financial resources. Building preventive mechanisms may certainly not come cheap and non-state institutions in West Africa are mostly donor-driven institutions that cannot muscle up the necessary financial resources to undertake large-scale preventive work within a regional setting. Also, financial, technical, and logistical resources are needed by both non-state actors and their national entities. In the absence of these resources, cooperation between these institutions will be hard to achieve.

Another concern is the duplication of programmes. Looking into the activities of other institutions that do not belong to the regional structure, there is the possibility for duplication of programmes similar to activities proposed in the ECPF. However, it

concerns can be dealt if the activities of different institutions are harmonized through some common platform of engagement.

- **Intergovernmental Cooperation**

Intergovernmental institutions work towards the designing of normative frameworks, which are meant to address in whole or in part the collective interest and needs of all the countries that constitute the intergovernmental grouping. Different norms can be instituted for different purposes such as political concerns economic policies and development challenges, or programmes to support social and cultural integration that may benefit all its member states.[241]

Looking into the structures of state government, one can argue that state policies can only work when the institutions of the state implement them. But at the same time the ability of states institutions to implement policies is determined by the capacities it has whether human, technical or material resources or otherwise. When a regional grouping adopts and ratifies a normative framework, the government of a member state, in principle, has the legal and moral mandate to take steps to institute policy frameworks, undertake reform or enact laws that will lead to their implementation.

Intergovernmental organizations in West Africa are relevant institutions that can enable cooperative institutionalization of preventive action in the ECPF. The ECOWAS Commission should take the lead to identify these institutions that have a recognizable presence-if not in all, but in most member states of ECOWAS and whose programmes directly relates to the goals of the ECPF. A very good example of such institution is the West Africa Police Chief Committee (WAPCCO) that brings together all police institutions in West Africa to cooperate on trans-border crime and other transnational security threats. WAPCCO will be analysed as a case study of cooperative institutionalization of ECPF.

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[241] See detail on Scott, W. Richard (1995), *Institutions and Organizations*, Foundation for Organizational Sciences, Sage Publication Series, p.93.

I. Strength, Potential and Opportunities

When an intergovernmental institution implements a preventive measure, it increases awareness of the government to be more responsive to risk and vulnerabilities of conflict. Furthermore, when a state sees itself as part of the implementation process, it tends to leverage political capital towards activities related to preventive action especially, when such preventive activity runs along the national interest of the state. This situation increases the possibility for national acceptance and in the long run gain legitimacy across the governance structures of the state.

In addition, this approach creates opportunities for harmonization of preventive framework among member state. When member states work together and engage at state level, they are able to have consensus on a variety of activities to be implemented through different methods. In so doing, they are able to harmonize their programmes and develop structures for cooperation. Another strength of this approach is that it is sustainable. This is so because it is an intergovernmental structure that draws strength and legitimacy from independent state governments. Governments can come and go but its potential for cooperation will still stand.

II. Challenges and threats

If a preventive measure runs contrary to the national interest of the state or leadership concerns of the country's political elites, there will be no serious effort towards taking political action. This situation has been responsible for the breakdown of many intergovernmental initiatives in West Africa. It has also been responsible for the actions of member states and their ability to work closely, in dealing with thorny issues of concern across the sub-region.

As always, another area of concern is the mobilization of resources in the pursuit of preventive action. In undertaking preventive action especially by member state, resources are needed within the inter-governmental structure. Such resources include financial, technical, and logistical resources and even expert personnel. Considering the fact that the West Africa sub-region is host to very poor countries, the ability of member states to provide the required resources needed is quite a challenge.

Therefore, most of the programmes developed by these institutions are mostly donor driven which questions the sustainability of certain preventive ventures.

- **Case Study: West Africa Police Chiefs Committee and its Implementation of Cross-border Initiatives**

The West Africa Police Chiefs Committee (WAPCCO) is a specialized ECOWAS institution and consultative body for regional police cooperation. It was set up in December 2003 with the aim of strengthening cooperation among West African Police forces in order to effectively deal with problems of transnational crimes, cross border trafficking and other forms of transnational criminal enterprises. WAPCCO is an example of an Inter-State institution as well as an ECOWAS specialized institution. It is a body that has representative from police institutions in all member state of ECOWAS working together to tackle the collective security needs of the entire West African community.

As stated above, the work of WAPCCO is centered on transnational criminal activities and issues related to border crimes. It operates on the basis of engaging and building systems of network among police institutions in West Africa through cooperation on security matters, coordination, facilitation and exchange of information, share and operate joint intelligence in dealing with the security challenges across member states. This means that the inter-state structure serves as a platform, through which all police institutions in West Africa harmonized, coordinate, implement and operationalize security policies which fall within its purview, and which is adopted by ECOWAS. This institutional approach strengthens the integration of security policies or frameworks across member states.

Furthermore, WAPCCO works closely with other international security agencies especially with the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) in dealing with matters relating to security policing in the sub-region. With INTERPOL's sub-regional bureau based in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, WAPCCO has developed and implemented a series of practical counterterrorism related programmes. INTERPOL sub-regional bureau and WAPCCO 'have assisted countries in carrying out joint police operations on small arms and light weapons and on stolen

vehicles, which were also aimed at assisting countries to combat and prevent terrorism and terrorism financing in the sub-region'. [242] In addition, these two institutions have been 'working together with other relevant partners to implement the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan on illicit drug trafficking and organized crime and cooperate in the establishment of transnational crime units in West African countries'.[243] WAPCCO is identified as a very good institutional structure with the required capacity to facilitate the implementation of 'Cross Border Initiatives', which is a component of the ECPF.

- **ECOWAS internal operational Mechanisms**

When ECOWAS was established in 1975, it was developed with an institutional face to support economic integration and cooperation amongst its member states. Achieving this objective, Chapter 2, Article 4 of the Treaty of ECOWAS states the 'Institutions of the Community'. These institutions include the Authority of Heads of State and Government, the Council of Ministers, the Executive Secretariat and the Tribunal of the Community. The establishment of Technical and Specialized Commissions for trade, Customs and Immigration, Industry, Agriculture and Natural Resources, Transport, Telecommunications and Energy, and Social and Cultural Affairs also formed part of the community's structure. These institutions are the basic pillars, which guards the operations of ECOWAS in its early days[244].

However, in the 1993 Revised Treaty of ECOWAS, some new institutions were developed to deal with the challenges to economic integration as well as the changing tide of the international environment and threats to peace, security and stability. Therefore, in addition to the already established institutions, Chapter 3, Article 6 of the Revised Treaty, established a Community Court of Justice and the Fund for Co-operation, Compensation and Development and a space for 'any other institutions that

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[242]Ipe, J., Cockayne, J., Millar, A. (2010), Implementing the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in West Africa, Centre on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation, New York, p.13.
[243] Ibid.
[244] See detail ECOWAS (1975), Treaty of ECOWAS Head of States and Government, ECOWAS Secretariat, Lagos, Nigeria.

may be established by the Authority'.[245] This Treaty also established a specialized technical commission for Political, Judicial, Regional, Security and Immigration.

The Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security was adopted as a normative framework, to deal with the issues of conflict and instability amongst member states. Chapter 3 of the Mechanism created 'supporting organs and institutions' as explained in previous sections.[246]

These institutions and specialized agencies formed a complex network of the internal institutions of ECOWAS that undertake programmes and activities towards the implementation of preventive measures in the ECPF.

I. Strength, Potential, Opportunities

This approach deepens engagement between specialized institutions of ECOWAS and national structures on related issues of conflict prevention. It also draws strength from the possibility of broadening ECOWAS traditional method of engagement beyond the states-government to include non-state actors too.

Similarly, it enhances better organization of programmes within the ECOWAS Commission. This is because it creates division of programmes within specialized agencies based on operational strength and resource capabilities. For example, preventive action through cross border initiative can best be pursued by WAPCCO, whilst, programmes on arms proliferation can be undertaken by the ECOWAS Small Arms Programme (ECOSAP) etc.

II Challenges and Threats

This approach can be clouded by ECOWAS internal institutional dynamics and turf wars as different institutions will be competing for programmes relating to conflict

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[245] ECOWAS Commission (1993), *The Revised Treaty of ECOWAS*, ECOWAS Secretariat, Lagos, Nigeria.
[246] Ibid.

prevention within the Commission including administrative bureaucracies and diplomatic protocols. Unfortunately, such issues hinder effective implementation.

Most times, specialized institutions of ECOWAS tend to engage more with government entities in the implementation of activities. This creates a more elitist or top-down approach in which ECOWAS is seen to cater for the needs of governments rather than the needs of the people of West Africa.

In addition, the workability of this approach is dependent on the interests and needs of the state government. This is because, if the state government shows indifference to the programmes put forward by a specialized agency, its level of engagement and support will not be forthcoming. Another serious concern is the issue of resource mobilization. This does not only mean financial resources but, technical, logistical and human capital. In most cases, specialized institutions are faced with the challenge of mobilizing resources to meet their own commitment and in implementing programmes across member states of ECOWAS.

- **Case Study: The ECOWAS Parliament and implementation of the ECPF**

The establishment of the ECOWAS Parliament (known as the Community Parliament) is stated in Article 6 as well as Article 13 of the Revised Treaty of ECOWAS as being an institutional entity within the regional body.[247] In this regard, 'Protocol A/P.2/8/94 relating to the Community Parliament was signed on 6 August 1994. However, it only entered into force on 14 March 2002.[248] This protocol states that the Parliament serves the role of a representative assembly of the people of the Community 'serving as a forum for dialogue, consultation and consensus'. It draws its membership from the Parliamentary assembly of member states. The Community Parliament is composed of 115 members representing all the member states of ECOWAS. Each member states has a minimum of (5) seats with the remaining seats allocated to member states on the basis of their population.[249] The Community

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[247] See detail on ECOWAS (1993), *The Revised Treaty of ECOWAS*, ECOWAS Secretariat, Lagos, Nigeria.
[248] See detail on ECOWAS (2011), Strategic Plan of ECOWAS Parliament, (third Legislature 2011-2015), ECOWAS Secretariat, Abuja, Nigeria, p.6.
[249] Ibid.

Parliament is a non-legislative assembly with an advisory role to the Authority of Head of States and Government and the Council of Ministers.

Since its inauguration in 2000, the Community Parliament has been involved in various activities in dealing with conflicts and insecurity in the sub-region.[250] The Parliament engages in facilitating and negotiating with rebel factions especially the LURD rebel group during the crisis in Liberia, undertook fact-finding mission leading to the resolution of the crisis in Cote d'Ivoire, embarked on Parliamentary Diplomacy during the political and constitutional crisis in Niger in 2009 and 2010, and the Coup d'état in Guinea in December 2008.[251]

In 2011, the ECOWAS Parliament and the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) jointly developed a comprehensive guide for 'Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector' for West African Parliament. This guide was developed in order to empower not only member of ECOWAS Parliament but also member of national legislature in all member states on how to 'forge a national security policy and legislations in the governance of the various security sector structures, dealing with small arms and light weapons, trans-border crimes as well as the necessary mechanisms that must be put in place for effective parliamentary oversight.[252]

The ECOWAS Parliament has developed a Regional Medium Term Action Framework to deal with issues of good governance and justice as well as on conflict prevention, management and resolution.[253] This medium term plan serves as the road map that outlines the areas for intervention as well as programmes that must be undertaken by the institution with the overarching goal of conflict prevention in West Africa. It includes establishment and support for conflict prevention, resource mobilization to tackle the proliferation of SALW, facilitate reforms of electoral

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[250]UNDP (2010), Regional Crisis Prevention and Recovery Mechanisms in West Africa: Regional and National Parliaments Employing Crisis Prevention and Conflict Management Techniques, (A Report), p.14.
[251]See Strategic Plan of ECOWAS Parliament (Third Legislature) 2011-2015, p.9.
[252] DCAF/ECOWAS (2011), *ECOWAS Parliamentary-DCAF Guide for West African Parliamentarians*, Geneva.
[253] See detail on ECOWAS Parliament Regional Medium Term Action Area Plan, p.1 at www.ecowas.int.

processes, facilitate ratification and domestication of protocols on democracy and good governance, facilitate sensitization on common law and access to justice, and liaise with Heads of States and community leaders.[254]

The Community Parliament can use its membership to facilitate domestic legislations to implement the ECPF. It can also use its parliamentary networks to raise awareness on the necessary measures that must be taken in response to risk factors that leads to conflict. This will increase local ownership of peace enablers.[255] However, the ECOWAS Parliament is not recognized as an institution in the Protocol Relating to Conflict Prevention, which creates a disconnection between the ECPF and the ECOWAS Parliament. Also, the Parliament is hampered by issues of independence and capacity to perform parliamentary function, budget constraints, and crisis management amongst West African states.[256]

5.7. Concluding Analysis

This chapter puts into perspective the theory of cooperative institutionalization of conflict prevention in West Africa. As conceptualized in the previous chapter, cooperative institutionalization maintains that culture, shared history, common interest has enabled intersubjective interaction within subsystems leading to the establishment of regional integration programs and transnational networks of cooperation amongst different institutions. In the context of conflict prevention, cooperative institutionalization applies to the formation of norms and policies and their implementation by different institutions within the subsystem. In Africa, there are Regional Economic Communities that foster cooperation amongst countries in dealing with matters of interest to them.

Such matters may include transnational criminal activities, the control and proliferation of illicit flow of small arms and light weapons, transnational terrorism, drug trafficking, environmental concerns etc. As stated in the UN Secretary General Progress Report on the Prevention of Armed Conflict, these human security risks that

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[254] Ibid, p. 1.
[255] Sperling, S. (2011), ECOWAS in Crisis Mode: Strengths and Limits of Regional Security Policy in West Africa, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, p.3.
[256] UNDP (2010), op. cit., p.19.

affects multiple countries across continents and regional subsystems can only be reduced through a process of 'systematic prevention'. In West Africa, the ECOWAS Conflict prevention framework alludes to this approach, as it requires a systematic process of implementation of conflict prevention programs through cooperation amongst different organizations and groups. In this regard, the ECPF is analysed within the prism of the study's analytical framework and its potential for institutionalization was assessed through the prism of cooperative institutionalization for collective action.

The case studies analysed are a characterization of the how cooperative institutionalization can be realized. WAPCCO and the ECOWAS Parliament are two institutions with regional and inter-governmental outreach and also have the potential to respond to risk factors. WAPCCO can take actionable programs in response to cross border crimes and armed criminality, whilst the ECOWAS Parliament can push for legislations on control of small arms and light weapons, security governance, political participation etc. It can also use its platform to pioneer harmonization of legislations that will impact on operational and structural policies in reducing risk and prevent conflict across member states. Such policy harmonization can focus on issues of human rights, legislations on infrastructures for peace as carried out in Ghana, and democratic accountability etc. Based on the analytical framework, these two cases show how a single institution with a regional outreach operating at the centre, connect to the state and whose responses to risk also connects with sub-states institutions which in the long run reduce risk of conflict and bring about transformation.

However, the effectiveness of these processes are dependent on the level of cooperative arrangement among state and non-state institutions in West Africa. It is also important to note that in the pursuit of preventive actions, consideration must be given to local context and based on the needs and aspiration of the people for whom the prevention is taken.

Chapter Six: Cooperative Institutionalization of Conflict Prevention in Regional Subsystems: Case studies of Convergence of Institutions, Structures, Methods and Processes in West Africa

6.1. Introduction

The chapter analyses different approaches of cooperative institutionalization of conflict prevention mechanisms using case studies of recent practices in West Africa, with special attention to the interaction between the regional institutions and civil society organizations on conflict prevention. The first case study focuses on the interaction between ECOWAS, state government and civil society institution in the implementation of early warning system as a mechanism to reduce risk factors or in responding to potential situation of conflict. This is a unique case of cooperation between multiple actors in the implementation of a prevention mechanism at regional scale. The other case study covers the ECOWAS Standby Force and its operationalization by member states.

These cases studies are analysed within the analytical framework prescribed in chapter four and characterizes the study's contribution to knowledge. This is because these developments of institutional cooperation in the subsystem have not been given sufficient inquiry. In this regard, the chapter attempts to validate the conceptual idea that cooperative institutionalization is an analytical approach to understand the organization of conflict prevention systems and structures in the sub-region.

There are different institutions involved in the arrangement and operations of conflict prevention mechanisms in the sub-region. These networks of institutions have converged on common ideas and policies that enable them to make collective decisions and take actions towards institutionalization of conflict prevention mechanisms. These interactions broaden the prospect for cooperation, and this form of cooperation may be vertical and horizontal involving many institutions. These case studies are presented below.

6.2. Cooperative Institutionalization of Early Warning by Regional and Non-state Institution in West Africa: Case study on the ECOWAS/ WANEP Partnership

- **What is Early Warning?**

Early Warning is the systematic collection and analysis of information coming from areas of crises for the purposes of anticipating the escalation of violent conflict, development of strategic responses to these crises and the presentation of options to critical actors for decision-making. Early warning systems link information sources, which often monitor specific indicators, with analysis that attaches meaning to the indicators. In developing pro-active structures for conflict prevention in any society, early warning and early response mechanisms is an essential framework that can be used. The earlier a dispute or disagreement is identified and addressed successfully, the less likely it is that the situation will deteriorate into violence. Therefore, 'early response is the process of using information gathered from early warning systems to design actions aimed at preventing violent conflict. The action could be the development of a policy or programme as well as strategies to prevent conflict at different levels using specific entry points.'[257]

- **The Convergence of ECOWAS and WANEP in Institutionalization of ECOWARN in West Africa: Why and How?**

In 2003, as a consequence of its review of the internal conflicts in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Cote d' Ivoire, member states of ECOWAS came up with a Declaration on a Sub-Regional Approach to Peace and Security. This declaration envisaged human security as the basic coherent doctrine underlying its work on conflict prevention and peace building. Within this same period, ECOWAS commissioned West African Network for Peace Building (WANEP), a well-established West African civil society organization, with national structures in all member states of ECOWAS to conduct an assessment of ECOWAS conflict prevention mechanism including its capacity and training needs. This was done with a view to develop and establish an early warning system as a sustainable mechanism to identify risk factors to conflict across

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[257] See detail on the "Training Manual on Developing Capacity For Conflict Analysis and Early Response."

communities and undertake early response through regional and national initiatives that will mitigate or prevent the risk of conflict.[258]

This was the basis for formalizing the partnership between WANEP and ECOWAS through the signing on 10th February 2004 of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the two organizations in recognition of the complementary role each plays on conflict prevention across the sub-region. Key issues in the memorandum of understanding include, mutual collaboration in operationalization of the ECOWARN system (data base of indicators for peace, conflict and human security in West Africa)[259]; Joint trainings in data collection, collation and analysis; WANEP to establish and maintain a functional liaison office at ECOWAS Headquarters; collaboration in production of strategic reports; mutual exchange of technical support review studies, joint mediation, research and other forms of intervention related to early warning and response.[260]

Over the years, there has been a high level of mutual collaboration in operationalization and institutionalization of the early warning system in West Africa. This partnership has enabled the development of different perspectives on the operations of the system. WANEP has been able to assess issues from civil society perspective, whilst ECOWAS has been able to link issues of peace and security from diplomatic and inter-governmental perspective. This helps to manage a balanced assessment of peace and security issues which reflect on the level and type of response needed to situation of early warning in sub-region.[261]

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[258] WANEP (2012), Annual Report, WANEP Secretariat, Accra, Ghana, p.2.
[259] WANEP (2009), Presentation at the ECOWAS Early Warning Review. Workshop, Feb 2009 Cotonou, Benin.
[260] Ibid.
[261] Lewis, R. Shinoda, H. (2012), Operationalizing Early Warning for Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding in West Africa: A case study of ECOWAS Early Warning System. *Hiroshima Peace Science*, Institute of Peace Science, Hiroshima University, p. 25.

Institutionalization of Early Warning System
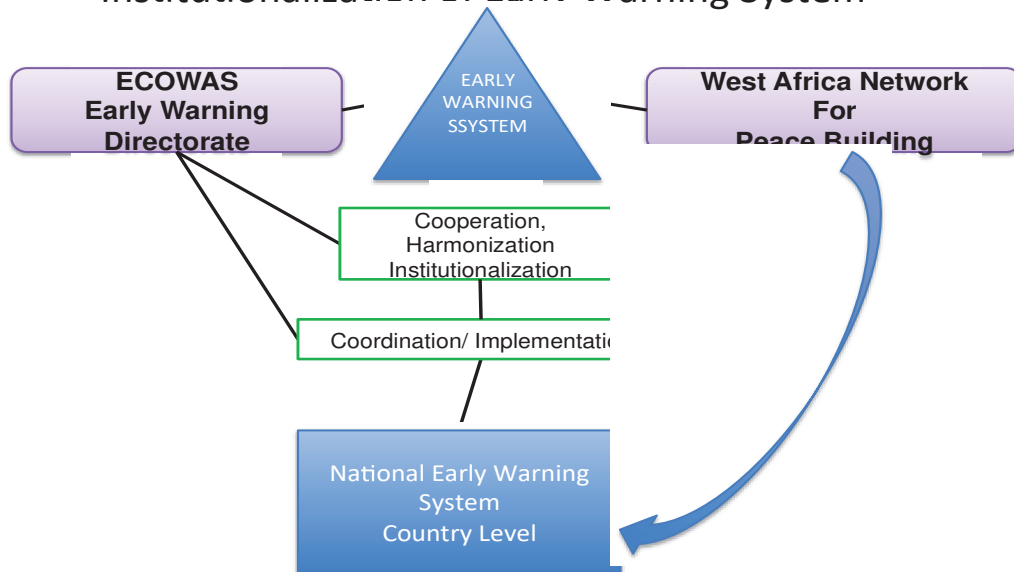
Source: Own Creation

Figure 7: Framework on Institutionalization of Early Warning in West Africa

In addition, joint trainings in data collection, collation and analyses are conducted by the Early Warning Department of the ECOWAS Commission in the form of review workshops on a quarterly basis for all partners working on the ECOWARN System. These trainings normally include Focal Points from each government within the ECOWAS Community, WANEP national focal points, Zonal Heads, and the ECOWAS early warning team from its Headquarters in Abuja, Nigeria. Also, international consultants and experts including University Professors form part of the team of trainers to develop the capacity of partners in the field.[262]

The partnership has led to the establishment and maintenance of a permanent WANEP liaison office at the ECOWAS Commission's Headquarters to coordinate the operational relationship between ECOWAS and WANEP in the Early Warning Programme. The Liaison Office is responsible to coordinate the planning of early warning meeting and review workshops, as well as all early warning reports from the various field monitors and WANEP Zonal head to the Early Warning Department.[263]

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[262] Ibid.
[263] Ibid.

Similarly, there is collaboration in production of strategic reports on Early Warning as well as response mechanism. These strategic reports vary in focus and in addressing sub-regional security issues. They include internet based Incidents and Situation reports and other reports such as Strategic Policy Brief, Quarterly Peace and Security Reports, and Strategic Peace and Security Assessment Reports. All these reports help the Commission to understand risk factors to conflict and to put in place stronger response measures. [264] The ECOWAS Early Warning Department as well as WANEP's Peace Monitoring Centre have given technical support to each other when the need arises on related issues of early warning, and worked together in developing responses to emerging issues of peace and security in the sub-region. [265] In an interview with Chukwuemeka Eze, the Executive Director of WANEP, he explained that

> ' in terms of progress in the early warning system which is a key conflict prevention pillar for ECOWAS, you will see that over time, both the process, procedures and operationalization process has taken awhile but has metamorphosed into what today you can refer to as 66 indicators, well experienced conflict prevention monitors who virtually learnt from nobody but from the mistakes they have made in the past and that is why today the early warning system is context specific, it does not respond to any other thing but conflict dynamics in West Africa'[266]

In the area of operationalization of the ECOWARN system, WANEP has proved to be an invaluable partner. Through its National Networks, it has been able to station focal points and field monitors in each ECOWAS state to strengthen the inputs of CSO's in the process. Moreover, WANEP has zonal coordinators in each of the four geo-political zones within the structure of the ECOWARN system and a Peace Monitoring Centre (PMC), at the WANEP Regional Secretariat in Accra, Ghana; that is charged with the responsibility of coordinating and managing the activities and output of its

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[264] Ibid p.26.
[265] Ibid, p.27.
[266] Eze, C. (2015) Interview at WANEP Secretariat, Accra, Ghana, 28 November.

national networks and their focal point in the overall operations of the Early warning system, and also coordinates between the ECOWAS commission and focal points.[267]

The partnership between ECOWAS and WANEP is a pro-active arrangement for cooperation and an opportunity for learning and mutual understanding between CSOs and inter-governmental organization. In WANEP's annual report for 2015, it was noted, "WANEP has successfully completed the operationalization of its National Early Warning Systems (NEWS) in all 15 ECOWAS member states". WANEP has recruited, and installed 'NEWS managers, analysts, and monitors in all the 15 member states through regional and national level trainings'.[268]
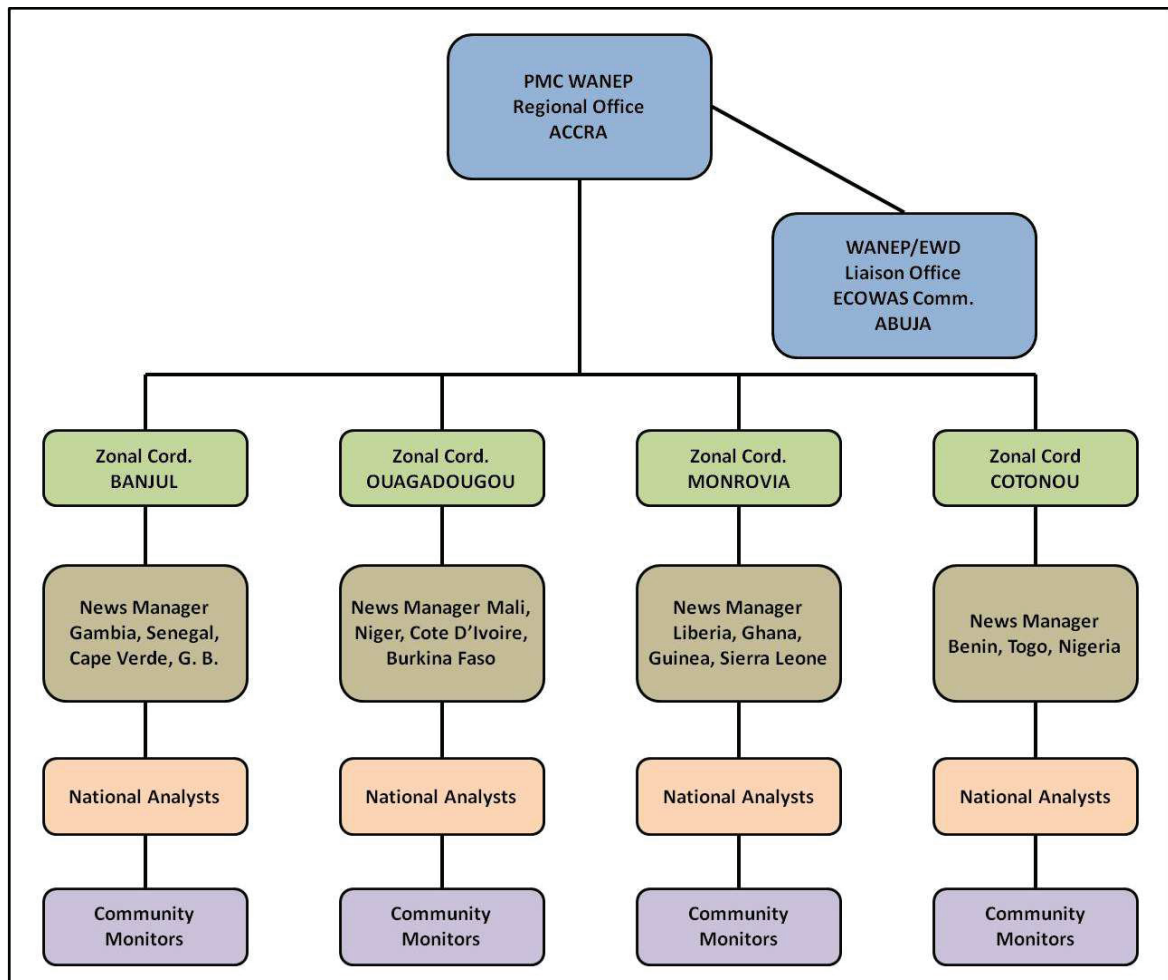
Figure 8: WANEP's WARN National Early Warning Structure

Source: Adapted from WANEP's WARN Framework

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[267] Ibid.
[268] WANEP (2015), Annual Report, WANEP Secretariat, Accra, Ghana.

The figure above is an illustrative framework of WANEP's operational structure in the institutionalization of early warning in West Africa. It is an example of cooperative institutionalization in a regional sub-system spearheaded by two different regional institutions. One being intergovernmental and the other is a transnational civil society institution, and together they have institutionalized a method for conflict prevention. The operationalization process of the ECOWARN system has taken different phases running vertically and horizontally within and between the internal institutional mechanisms of both ECOWAS and WANEP. As presented in the figure above, it operates with both top-down and bottom-up structure. There are community early warning monitors at local and national level in all ECOWAS member states with coordination by the NEWS managers, the Zonal coordinators and the PMC at the regional office in Ghana.

- **How WANEP/ECOWAS Overcome the Problematic Process of Cooperative Institutionalization of Early Response**

The early warning system in West Africa needs to meet one major challenge, which is response. Early warning is only successful if it is translated into early response. This is a gap in the process of conflict prevention or crisis mitigation in West Africa. As argued by Eze,

> 'When warnings are reported and recommendations made, it is only for the consumption of the President of the ECOWAS Commission and no other person. At the time the president of the commission takes a decision on how to respond it is not the business of early warning on how to give further directives. The key aspect of the response is still state centric and I feel there is a need to invest in the capacity of ECOWAS to be able to handle some of these issues'[269]

However, in order to deal with these challenges, WANEP is now working with governments and civil society partners to set up 'Steering Committee'. This committee is made up of individuals from important institutions of the state such as senior representative from the ministry of internal affairs, chieftaincy group, national

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[269] Eze, 2015, Interview.

electoral commission etc. These committees do not necessarily provide response but provide a space for leveraging those with the power to respond. Therefore, when early warning reports are sent to the steering committee, it is expected that its members will respond by taking immediate action within their institutions, government sector or local constituent. In an interview with Levina Ade Mensah, the Programmes Director of WANEP, she stated that:

> 'it is a very carefully and strategically designed group and it is something that is likely to be adopted across all member states from a civil society perspective. What happens is that when we are getting report that there is a potential for violence or say electoral related violence, there are recommendations for response and they come with this committee. Some of the members of these committees have the power and responsibility to be able to respond, where as others may not, but have access to those who can respond. If it is the chief or religious leaders for example, they have access to their followers and can use their platforms to mitigate violence in the first instance and later create space for dialogue.'[270]

This is the system of response WANEP is currently trying to institutionalize across West Africa. With support from USAID, five countries that include Burkina Faso, Niger, Sierra Leone, Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire are now benefiting from a pilot project design to mitigate election related violence in these countries. The aim is to provide early warning and response system to reduce the risk of election violence in the sub-region. It is hoped that current activities within this project will create the right output for access to information required by key stakeholders that are part of the Steering Committees in responding to risk factors in time of political election.[271]

Through the efforts of its Early Warning Directorate, ECOWAS has developed a guideline to push for the establishment of national early warning mechanism in each of its member states to enable better response to potential conflict situations. This is because the onus of response lies with the state as ECOWAS can only warn. It is

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[270] Mensah Ade. L. (2015), Interview at WANEP Secretariat, Accra, Ghana, 3rd December 2015
[271] Ibid.

hoped that the state level system bridges the gap between warning and response to reduce risk of conflict.

- **Practical Responses by WANEP to Prevent Conflicts in Different countries in West Africa**

The institutionalization of the early warning system by WANEP and ECOWAS has helped to prevent electoral conflict, inter-communal conflicts and recent development of violent extremism in the Sahel region of West Africa. In a discussion with the Executive Director of WANEP, he maintained that 'in the communiqué that was issued by ECOWAS at the end of the Nigerian election, paragraph 2 of it acknowledge that it was WANEP that actually gave them leverage to cover the North-Eastern part of the country were insurgency could not allow them to deploy monitors. The same efforts were made by WANEP in the elections in Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire and now Burkina Faso'.[272]

In order to reduce the risk of violent extremism slowly creeping into the minds of young people in Burkina Faso, WANEP established 'Peace Weekend' a program to engage the youths who are most vulnerable to be recruited to violent extremism in the Sahel region. This program provided platforms for young people to get engage in social activities like sport competition, vocational training, seminars on self-empowerment and actions for non-violence activities so that they can become productive citizens in their communities. Through that process of constant interaction with them across the country it prevented them from being recruited by extremist groups. WANEP has also attempted to negotiate peace in the Manga community in Togo that was overshadowed by inter-communal violence.[273]

In addition, a notable part of WANEP's intervention has been on the inter-communal conflict in Jos, Plateau state, Nigeria and in the Bawku conflict in Ghana. In Nigeria, it worked with the Inter-community Peace Committee on dialogue and mediation efforts in 2010 at the height of the conflict between the predominantly muslim Hausa-Fulani settlers and the Afizere, Anaguta and Berom indigenes who are

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[272] Eze (2015), Interview.
[273] Discussions with WANEP Programmes Director.

predominantly Christians. This process of dialogue and mediation is still ongoing. In Ghana, it continues to facilitate dialogue and mediation for peaceful co-existence in Bawku in collaboration with the Bawku Inter-Ethnic Peace Committee and the Regional Peace Advisory Committee.[274]

With reference to managing risk of violence in elections, WANEP is undertaking hotspot mapping in countries that are facing general elections to identify areas with the potential to implode into violence or create political tensions. In Sierra Leone where elections are just around the corner WANEP has just concluded a hotspot mapping process to detect areas of political tensions or risk of violence in the forthcoming election. Similar hotspot mapping will be undertaken in all countries facing elections.

It has been more than a decade of partnership between these two institutions and WANEP has been a strategic partner in the implementation and operationalization of the ECOWAS early warning initiatives. However, within this period there are different elements of the programme, which had required reviews and evaluation for the effective operations of the early warning mechanisms. These include, the operational structure of the early warning system, in the context of the ECOWAS and WANEP partnership, issues of capacity building and standard operations procedures in the process of linking early warning for early response, building a gender sensitive framework in order to engender the early warning system, and also the process of networking and management of data.[275]

In overcoming these challenges, ECOWAS, WANEP and other interested partners have conducted review workshop, trainings, conferences and meetings within the sub-region as a way to assess the programme and find concrete options for response. Indeed, the early warning project in West Africa is a longer-term preventive measure that will enhance existing capacities toward conflict prevention. However, emerging gaps such as the different mandates, working styles, resources to bridge the gap

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[274] See more details on Eze, C., and Tawo, Q. (2017) Mediating Complex Community Conflicts: Lessons from Jos Plateau, Nigeria and Bawku, Upper West of Ghana, From the field series, Issue No. 01, WANEP, Accra, Ghana.
[275] ECOWAS/INVENT (2009), Workshop training on the ECOWAS Early Warning Mechanism. (Discussions), Accra Ghana.

between early warning and early response, the development of wide area networking and communications system for effective functioning of the system, affect the operational viability of this preventive measure.

6.3. Cooperative Institutionalization of Preventive Diplomacy in West Africa

- **What is Preventive Diplomacy?**

Preventive diplomacy is synonymous to conflict prevention and its tools and operational methods vary across institutional sectors. It has proven very useful in prevention and transformation of various conflicts across states, in regional subsystems and international arena. Lund defines the process of preventive diplomacy as 'action taken in vulnerable places and times to avoid the threat or use of armed forces and related forms of coercion by states or groups to settle…disputes that can arise from the destabilizing effects of economic, social, political and international exchange'.[276]

The operational process of preventive diplomacy can be carried out by different actors and groups and notable amongst them are state governments, regional and sub-regional organizations, international organizations such as the UN, sub-regional powers and major global super-powers etc. However, there is an increasing role played by non-state actors in resolving conflicts before they breakdown into an uncontrollable violent crisis. This happened in Sierra Leone with religious and women's groups in the 1996 and 1997 peace processes, in Ghana with religious and civil society groups taking the forefront to prevent Ghana from descending into an all-out political crisis after the elections in 2010, in Kenya after the elections in 2008 etc.

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[276] Lund (1996), op. cit., p.37.

- **The Convergence of Institutions for Preventive Diplomacy in West Africa: Why and How?**

In West Africa, preventive diplomacy is not new and has come to form a veritable tool for conflict prevention in the sub-region. The institutional norms for preventive diplomacy are founded in the provisions of Article 58 of the ECOWAS Revised Treaty, Article 3, 8, 20, 31-32 of the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention Management, Resolution, Peace Keeping and Security and Article 36 of the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance. These normative frameworks are the basis for institutionalization of preventive diplomacy and suggest actions that include good offices, facilitated dialogue, mediation and negotiation processes as well as arbitration systems, fact-findings, electoral observation mission etc.

The institutionalization of preventive diplomacy has been organized and operationalized across institutions, sectors, department and agencies of the ECOWAS Commission with the involvement of states governments as well as non-state actors. In the ECOWAS system, the Early Warning Directorate, the department for political affairs, peace keeping and security and the mediation and Security Council are engaged in an interconnected web of interactions and cooperation towards the realization of a preventive action. The early warning directorate work close with country-based monitors and zonal bureau heads in communicating threats of conflict and insecurity, which are presented to the President of the Commission. The office of the President in cooperation with the chairperson of ECOWAS, coordinate with the Mediation and Security Council and the Council of the Wise in appointing eminent personalities to undertake high level mediation, negotiations, and facilitated dialogue between parties of an emerging conflict between and amongst member states.

This process of interaction is an essential element in the institutionalization of cooperation in West Africa. The ECOWAS response structure for peace and security is made up of different institutions that respond to risk conflict issues through specific processes of dialogue, mediation and negotiation that help prevent conflict across communities in the subsystem. As argued in the conceptual framework of this study, ECOWAS architecture for peace and security represents an intersubjective interaction

between various institutions that converged to take actions to prevent or resolve conflict across communities.

For example, the Mediation and Security Council can authorize the preventive deployment of the ECOWAS Stand by Force (ESP) to a member state in order to avert a conflict situation from degenerating into all out violence. It can also authorize the establishment of buffer zones to stabilize tension between various warring factions or groups and establish platforms to organized mediation and peace support operations as stated in Article 27 of the ECOWAS Mechanism. In addition, the president of the commission can also deploy special mediators and special envoys or members of the Council of the Wise to undertake fact-finding mission in a looming conflict situation in a member state in order to get first hand assessment of the situation and communicate options for response by ECOWAS towards prevention and resolution of the conflict.

The recent intervention in the political crisis in the Gambia is a very good example of convergence of different institutions and processes of preventive diplomacy to avert a civil war. ECOWAS used the method of mediation and negotiation to get the then incumbent President Yahya Jammeh to relinquish power after he lost the December 2016 Elections. After it became apparent that he does not want to leave office, the Commission decided on a military intervention through its Standby Force that included contributions from Nigeria, Senegal, Ghana and other West Africa countries to restore to power Adama Barrow who was the winner of the presidential elections. In analysing this case within the topic under review, mediation, negotiation, good offices and peacekeeping intervention were used as methods and processes. The Mediation and Security Council, ECOWAS Standby Force, Council of the Wise, the ECOWAS chairperson and troop contributing countries are institutional structures. Therefore, in the midst of a potential civil war in the country, ECOWAS applied various methods, processes and institutional structure at its disposal to prevent it. This is what I described in my analytical framework as convergence of institutions,

methods and processes for cooperative institutionalization of conflict prevention in West Africa.[277]
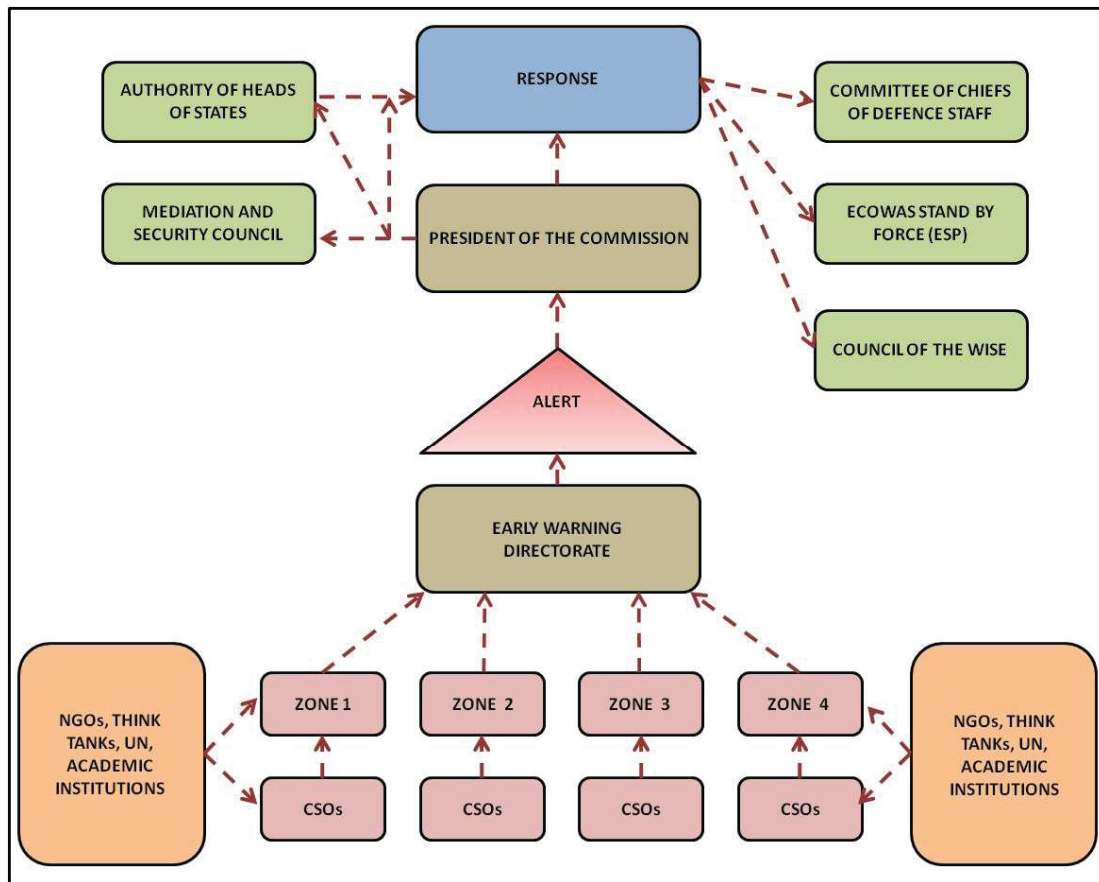
Figure 9: *ECOWAS Alert and Response Framework for Conflict Prevention*

Source: Adapted from WANEP Early Warning Program Framework of ECOWAS Early Warning Directorate

The structure of the framework above shows the operational arrangement for preventive actions within the ECOWAS system. It describes a network of cooperation between institutions, departments and agencies within the ECOWAS Commission as well as amongst state government. It also illustrates the vertical and horizontal approach to coordination between sectors and actors as well as the top-down arrangements of cooperation from monitoring at national level to response effort at regional level. The framework also shows the important role of non-state actors including civil society structures, NGOs, think tanks and even academic institutions.

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[277] See details on Williams, Paul, D. (2017), A New African Model of Coercion? Assessing the ECOWAS Mission in The Gambia. Centre For Security Studies.

In responding to conflicts in West Africa, the President of ECOWAS Commission and Chairperson of the grouping have employed preventive diplomacy to deal with various political crises. In the aftermath of the 2005 political crisis in Togo in which Faure Gnassingbe, son of the late president Gnassingbe Eyadema tried to take over power after the death of his father, ECOWAS employed the service of former President of Nigeria Olusegun Obasanjo with support from sub-regional leaders in negotiating a peaceful end to the crisis with Faure Gnassingbe stepping down and allowed a democratic election process to be conducted. Also, the Mediation and Security Council played a pre-emptive role in 2009 during the political crisis in Niger. Then President Tandja began re-writing the constitution of the country in order to allow him stay in power for a third term. The council rallied regional leaders and transnational civil society networks to expose the dangerous political implication of his action to the stability of Niger and the sub-region as a whole.

In addition, ECOWAS has further continued preventive diplomacy by using past and seating presidents to engage on mediation process during political crisis in its member countries. Recent examples of the employment of special envoys to mediate in crisis situation include Cote D'Ivoire, Guinea, Niger and Burkina Faso. Similarly, the ECOWAS President, through its special representatives has facilitated ECOWAS active engagement in political process across member states facing conflict and political crisis such as Cote D'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau, Guinea, and Togo and most recently in the Gambia after the December 2016 presidential elections.

With the adoption of the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention framework in 2008, a renewed commitment was made towards institutionalization of preventive diplomacy. Recognizing the scale of engagement of regional, national and local actor in mediation effort to prevent conflict, ECOWAS identified capacity gaps and needs assessment for effective mediation and crisis management by national and local actors involved in such processes. In this regard, in 2011, ECOWAS, in partnership with the Kofi Annan International Peace Keeping Training Centre and the Finland based Crisis Management Initiative (CMI) designed a project on 'improving West Africa Capacities in Mediation and Peace Processes'. The project aim to conduct training needs assessment regarding the skill requirements for current and potential West African Mediators by way of interviewing key stakeholders involved in mediation and

peace processes to know whether they feel there is a need for training to enhance understanding and sharing of West African experiences and lessons learned in preventative diplomacy and mediation, in order to enrich the present skills set and cultural awareness of international peace mediators.[278] Between June and September 2011, field visits were undertaken to selected institutions and countries to administer questionnaires and engage in discussions with stakeholders. A report was submitted in 2012.

From the needs assessment conducted by the Kofi Annan Centre, a course on conflict analysis and mediation has been designed 'with the aim of strengthening participant's critical, analytical and practical conflict analysis, mediation and negotiation skills, including the development of multi-level, locally relevant and tailor-made approaches to conflict resolution'.[279] The first batch of training has been conducted in February 2017. This training is to start the process of giving capacity to West African actors operating in different institutions to undertake well-organized mediation and preventive actions at local level. This training will shift preventive diplomacy from regional to national level bringing on board different sets of institutions and groups with the relevant capacity and in the long run sustain the institutionalization of preventive diplomacy in West Africa.

- **The Failed Proposal for Two-Term Limit for Presidents in ECOWAS Member States**

The development of democratic systems of governance in post-independence Africa has long been stifled by overstay in power of many political leaders. Such overstay in power has been sustained by political patronage system, suppression and oppression of opposition groups, killing and exiling of political opponents, discrimination against different groups and creation of a police state. These actions generate grievances and frustrations that inevitably metamorphosed into political instability, military coups, localized conflict and at worst a full-blown civil war.

Over stay in power of political leaders has been one reason for regional instability in

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[278] KAIPTC (2011), Concept paper of KAIPTC/CRMI project on 'Improving West Africa Capacities in Mediation and Peace Processes Peace Processes', Accra Ghana.
[279] See more details on www.kaiptc.org.

West Africa. One party system of government was the catalyst for a civil war in Sierra Leone, overstay in power of the Late Lansana Conte of Guinea created political instability in the country further fuelling conflict in the Mano River Basin throughout the 1990s. More recently attempts were made by long term President of Burkina Faso Bliase Campaore to run for a third term in 2014, but he was unsuccessful. Similar attempt were made in 2009 by President Mamadou Tanja of Niger to change the constitution and run for third term. He was later ousted. Nigeria has attempted to remove presidential term limit but failed. Togo and the Gambia with leaders who have overstayed in power have constitutional challenges on term limits. However, the constitutional framework of most West African countries stipulate two-term limit for all presidents.

Recognizing the serious risk that third-term bid has for regional stability, a proposal was put forward by ECOWAS during its 47th summit of Heads of States and government on May 2015 in Accra, Ghana. The proposal's objective was to harmonize and institutionalize a presidential two-term limit in the constitution of all member states as a mechanism to prevent over stay in power and enforce stability in the democratic processes of all countries across the sub-region. However, this proposal was not agreed upon in the summit as Togo and the Gambia whose constitutions do not have term limits and whose presidents have more leadership ambitions did not back the proposal. Thirteen countries approved and two declined. As collective decisions of heads of states and government are made on consensus agreed on by all, the failure of the two countries to accept the proposal means that it cannot be approved. This is one of the limitations for action in responding to the various challenges faced by the community.[280]

From an analytical point of view, the failed proposal was an historic attempt by ECOWAS to institutionalize term-limit across the sub-region. This diplomatic push for democratic stability, had it gone through and agreed upon, would have been realized through the conceptual prism of cooperative institutionalization in the regional subsystem. Its actualization would have been done through collective action and shared responsibility to enable harmonization of this policy into the constitutions

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[280] Discussions with researchers at KAIPTC, Accra Ghana, 2-8 December, 2015.

of member states. Though the proposal failed to pass, shared challenges of political instability and common desire for peace and security in the sub-region has been the causal logic for intergovernmental cooperation amongst all the ministers of foreign affairs who drafted the proposal at the eve of the summit.

6.4. Cooperative Institutionalization of ECOWAS Stand by Force in West Africa

- **What is Peacekeeping?**

Peacekeeping is the deployment of military forces in an interpositionary way between hostile groups to prevent, mitigate and resolve conflict. In other words, the process involves the deployment of national armed force or multinational forces for the purpose of intervening in potentially violent conflict situation that threatens international peace and security. Peacekeeping operations have been the bedrock of UN engagement in promoting global peace and through its Security Council can authorize military deployment in response to crisis situation. However, regional organization can conduct peace mission with authorization from the UN Security Council. The principles of peacekeeping maintains that such activity can only be carried out with the consent of the parties in conflict, the mission must maintain political neutrality, impartial and committed to its mandate, non-use of force except in self-defence and must be sanctioned by the UN Security Council based on the advice of the Secretary General.[281]

The UN has been at the centre of peacekeeping since its inception in 1945. However, the institution has been strategically overstretched with military interventions in different conflict setting across continents. This overstretch led to more commitment by regional organizations to undertake peacekeeping operations to respond to crisis affecting the peace and stability of their region or regional subsystems. The legitimacy for action by regional organization is stipulated in Chapter VIII, Article 52-54 of the UN Charter. Article 52 requires regional organizations to facilitate the settlement of disputes in their regions. This has been the basis for the establishment of regional peacekeeping forces to undertake military intervention in crisis areas.[282]

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[281] Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, Miall, op. cit., p. 149
[282] United Nations (1945), Charter of the United Nations. San Francisco, U.S.A.

Peacekeeping is an instrumental element for conflict resolution. It can be used to create buffer zones, undertake humanitarian action and enforce ceasefire and peace agreements all of which can lead to conflict management prevention and resolution.

- **Why and How Peacekeeping Has Evolved in West Africa**

ECOWAS developed and institutionalized a robust peacekeeping force known as the ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in consonant with Chapter VIII of the UN Charter. It was established during its 13th Summit of Head of States and government in Banjul, the Gambia in August 1990 with an initial mandate to facilitate a ceasefire agreement amongst the warring faction to the Liberia civil war. A 3000 strong force was deployed to monitor a ceasefire amongst the warring factions that included the incumbent government of President Samuel Doe, Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia and other factions. ECOMOG carried out similar peacekeeping missions in Sierra Leone (1997-2000), in Guinea Bissau (1998-1999), in Cote D'Ivoire (2002-2006) and in Liberia again in 2003. These missions gave a comparative advantage to ECOWAS in the area of peace keeping and peace enforcement and have become a model for the continent.

The ECOWAS Standby force (ESF) replaced ECOMOG and its institutionalization amongst member states of ECOWAS is a priority for management and prevention of conflict in the sub-region. The aim of the ESF is to facilitate the implementation of the relevant provisions of Article 58 of the Revised Treaty, the provision of the Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security with specific reference to those stipulated in Article 21 and Chapter V-IX as well as provisions stipulated under Section IV of the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance. As highlighted in Article 28 of the Protocol on the Mechanism, member states of ECOWAS agreed in principle to provide or make available military, police and civilian resources to ECOWAS in order to undertake wide scale multifunctional peace support or enforcement mission in one or more of its member states. These missions as stated in the Protocol to the Mechanism can be applied in the following circumstances:

- In case of aggression or conflict in any member states or threat thereof
- In case of conflict between two or several member states

- In case of internal conflict that threatens to trigger a humanitarian disaster or that poses a serious threat to peace and security in the sub-region

- In the event of serious and massive violation of human rights and rule of law

- In the event of an overthrow or attempted overthrow of a democratically elected government

- Any other situation as may be decided by the Mediation and Security Council (MSC)[283]

The ESF was established to guarantee peace and security in the sub-region 'through effective observation and monitoring, preventive deployment and humanitarian intervention'.[284] Also, it serves as 'multi-purpose composite standby units made up of military and civilian components in member states' ready for deployment as part of the African Standby Force Arrangement in the AU Peace and Security Architecture.[285] The ESF falls under the organ of the Mediation and Security Council (MSC) as set out by the Protocol relating to the Mechanism of ECOWAS and as such the MSC determines its operational design, structure and mandates.

- **Operational Structure of the ECOWAS Standby Force**

The ESF operational structure consists of military, police and civilian component and falls within the directorate of peace keeping and regional security. The ESF 'comprised of pre-determined regional standby units highly trained, equipped and prepared to deploy as directed in response to a crisis or threat to peace and security'.[286] In its operational structure, the ESF is made up of a Task Force and a Main Force. The Task Force consists of 2773 troops, while the Main Force would be consisted of 3727 troops. Therefore, the total personnel count of the ESF is supposed to be numbered at 6,500 troops that are voluntarily pledged by member states of ECOWAS. The Task Force headquarters is located in Abuja, Nigeria. It is considered that the operational element of the Task Force should be timely mobilized and

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[283] ECOWAS (1999), Protocol Relating to the Mechanism, Op. Cit.
[284] ECPF, p. 45
[285] Africa Union (2003), AU Policy Framework for the Establishment of the African Standby Force. Document adopted by the third meeting of the African Defense Staff, Addis Abba.
[286] ECOWAS internal briefing, 2010.

arranged for immediate deployment through the Mission Planning and Management Cell (MPMC) established in February 2005 within the department of Peace keeping. As explained in a study report 'the Task Force can be expanded and enhanced into a fully functional, more robust, Main brigade when required; and the structure of its operation is rolled out in four phases and covers a period of six months. Mobilization and Deployment should be done within 30 days and be fully self sustaining for 90 days.

All missions are to be headed by the Special Representative of the President of the Commission (SRPC). The last phase involves withdrawal after six months in which the UN takes over to establish multi-dimensional peacekeeping and peace building programs. On training needs, ECOWAS is collaborating with Kofi Annan International Peace Keeping Training Centre, in Ghana, the National Defense College (NDC) in Nigeria, and the Ecole de Maintien de la Paix (EMP) in Mali to undertake personnel training and strategic planning for deployment of peace keeping mission. And Sierra Leone will host the military logistic base of the ESF.[287]

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[287] Elowson, C., Macdermott, J. (2010), ECOWAS Capabilities in Peace and Security: A Scoping study of progress and Challenges. Swedish Defense Research Institute (FOI) Stockholm, Sweden, adapted from Internal Briefing of ECOWAS Standby Force, pp. 50-53.
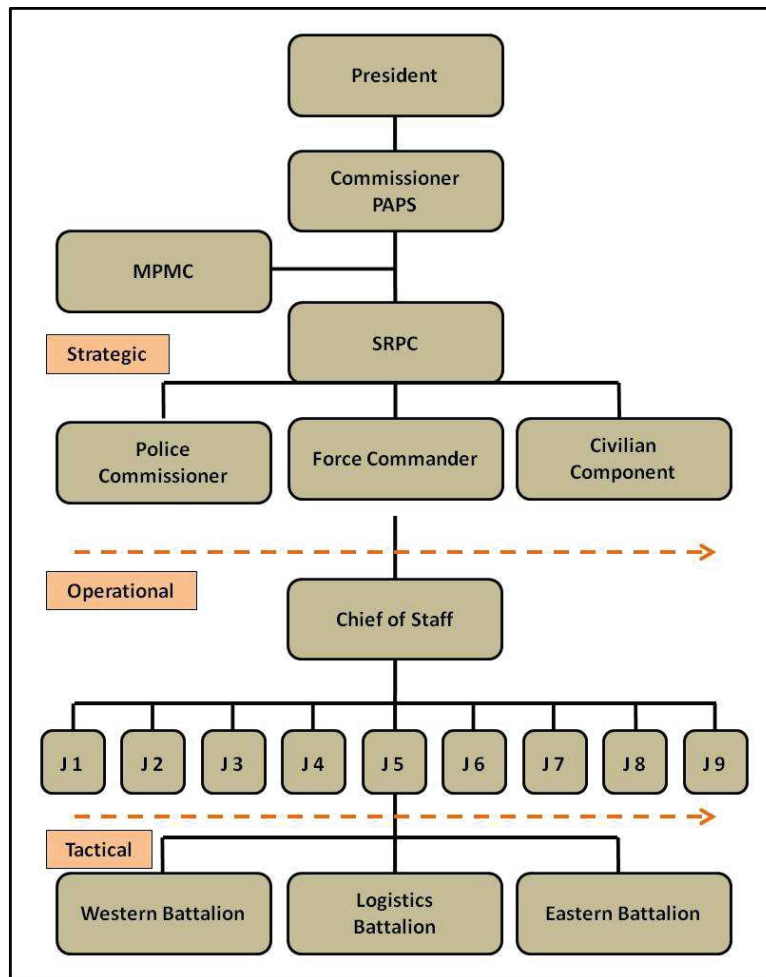
Figure 10: Composition of the ESF Task Force and its Links to the Operational and Strategic levels.

Source: Elowson, C., Macdermott, J., (2010), "ECOWAS Capabilities in Peace and Security: A Scoping study of progress and Challenges", Swedish Defense Research Institute (FOI) Stockholm, Sweden, adapted from Internal Briefing of ECOWAS Standby Force, p. 53.

PAPs- Political Affairs, Peace and Security

MPMC-Mission Planning Management Cell

SRPC-Special Representative of the President of the Commission

J1-9-Joint functions of the military component

As seen in the figure above, the ESF composed of military, police and civilian components. The military structure is made up of a Task Force with three battalions that include western battalion under the leadership of Senegal, eastern battalion under the leadership of Nigeria and a logistics battalion. This Force is later expanded into a Main Force or full brigade with two additional battalions under the leadership of Benin and Niger respectively.

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The Police component of the ESF is still under construction with pledges made for personnel support by member states. It is reported that a 10 formed police units (FPUs) consisting of 1400 police officers, and 1575 individual police officers (IPOs) have been pledged. The development of the police component has been slow as a result of institutional constraints with personnel and operational expertise to draw up a roadmap to roll out its operations and coordination.[288] However, between 2012 and 2013, the German Technical Agency (GIZ), supported training and management of skills of personnel of ECOWAS commission working on the development of the police component of the ECOWAS Standby Force. Two police experts were provided under the 'Support Program for the ECOWAS Commission' to help the Department for Political Affairs Peace and Security. These experts work with the department in the field of training, evaluation and logistical support.[289] Kofi Annan International Peace Keeping Training Centre also conducts training of police personnel from ECOWAS member states in readiness for peacekeeping mission in West Africa or within the AU peace missions.

The civilian component is another sector within the ESF and its development is still in progress. This component is structured based on the AU policy framework for the Civilian Dimension of the AU Force.[290] This component is 'to ensure that the future development of the ESF provides effective linkages with the complex political, humanitarian, social and security requirements of modern PSO in West Africa'.[291] In this regard, the AU operationalized a Regional Brigade Civilian Planning Element (PLANELM) to coordinate and plan civilian personnel roles and involvement in AU peacekeeping mission and within their regional sub-systems. The PLANELM structure includes head of civilian component, a training and rostering officer, a planning and coordination office as well as a logistics officer.[292] Within the ESF, training of civilian personnel is being conducted by KAIPTC giving capacity building

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[288] Elowson, C., and Macdermott, J. (2010), p.57.

[289] See more details on www.giz.de.

[290] See details on Africa Union (2010), "The Civilian Dimension of the African Standby Force" Peace Support Operations Division of the African Union Commission, Addis Ababa.

[291] Addy, David Nii, and Atuobi, S. (2009), Towards the Operationalisation of the Civilian Component of the ECOWAS Standby Force. *Policy Brief 2*, Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre, Accra Ghana, p.1.

[292] See more details on Atta-Asamoah, Andrews and Birikorang, Emma (2009), Developing the Civilian Component of the ECOWAS Standby Force: Progress, Challenges and Way Forward. Draft Workshop Report, Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre: Accra, p. 28-29.

and logistical support for civilian personnel to be deployed in AU missions as well as in any potential peacekeeping or peace support operation within West Africa. As stated in the online web portal of the ESF, the following activities and programs are being undertaken towards the operationalization of the civilian component of the standby force.

1. Recruitment of 4 staff for the civilian component unit
2. Development of a policy framework for the ESF civilian component
3. Development of a Human resource policy framework
4. Develop ESF civil Standby Roster
5. Conduct of training workshop for the capacity building of civilian planning component
6. Convening meeting at regional and AU level on coordination towards the development of the ESF civilian component[293]

The current structure of the civilian component of the ESF is a work in progress. Training is currently being conducted by KAIPTC for civilian personnel of ESF taking part in AU peace support operations. These personnel are selected from ECOWAS member states and with their training and capacity are readily available when required to take part in AU missions.

- **The Convergence of ECOWAS Member States for Operationalization of the ESF in West Africa: Why and How?**

The institutionalization of the ESF is still a work in progress. The transformation of ECOMOG to ESF is measured by the formation of a readily available, well-trained and prepared peacekeeping troop for deployment in situations of emergencies ranging from conflict, insecurities and humanitarian disasters. It is a process that requires the involvement of all member states of ECOWAS in contributing military, police and civilian personnel who will be trained and given logistical support to serve in the ESF once a situation requiring intervention ensues. ECOWAS stands as the institutional foundation for the ESF through its department of political affairs, peacekeeping and security. This department works on planning, coordinating and organizing from policy to operations and deployment of the ESF.

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[293] See more details on ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework Portal on the ESF.

However, ECOWAS departments for peacekeeping and security cannot operationalize the ESF in a vacuum. It requires involvement of all member states. This is because the ESF is not a standing force that is located in one place somewhere in the sub-region waiting to be deployed when the need arises. It is formed from 'contingents of national armies that can be called upon by the MSC to intervene in crisis situation'.[294] This means that member states pledges troops to the ESF. These troops undergo training and then prepared for deployment when needed by the ESF but stay in their country of origin serving their military institutions. This approach means that the ESF operates based on standby personnel. Therefore, the ESF structure, planning, coordination and operation are institutionalized across the military and security structure of member states of ECOWAS. All ECOWAS member countries have pledged troops and in doing so work towards institutionalization of the ESF. The Table below shows pledges made by each member countries on military personnel, their operational placement as well as pledges on logistical support to the ESF.

Table 11: ECOWAS Standby Force Troop Pledges by Country

Country	Task Force	Main Force
Benin	1 x Infantry company (128 troops under Eastern Battalion) 1 x Gendarmerie Platoon	One Battalion comprising: 1 x Support Company (1 x 122 troops) 2 x Infantry Companies (2 x 128 troops) 1 x Armoured Reconnaissance Company (100 troops)
Burkina Faso	1 x Infantry company (128 troops under Western Battalion) 1 x Maintenance Company (135 troops in the Logistics Battalion	
Cote D'Ivoire		Main Brigade 1 x Infantry Company 1 x Artillery Company 1 x Gendarmerie Company 1 x Mechanised Company
The Gambia	1 x Infantry company (128 troops under Western Battalion) 1 x MP Platoon	
Ghana	1 x Engineering Company (108 troops)	1 x Level II Hospital (50 troops)
Guinea	1 x Infantry company (128 troops under Western Battalion)	2 x Infantry Companies 1 x Support Company

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[294] Elowson C., Macdermott, J. (2010), p. 67.

Guinea Bissau	1 x Infantry company (128 troops under Western Battalion)	
Mali	1 x Engineering Company (108 troops) 1 x Armoured Reconnaissance Company (100 troops under Western Battalion) 1 x Transportation Company (110 troops under Logistics Battalion)	1 x Infantry Company 1 x Gendarmerie Company
Niger	1 x Infantry Company (128 troops under Eastern Battalion)	One Battalion comprising: 1 x Support Company (1 x 122 troops) 2 x Infantry Companies (2 x 128 troops) 1 x Armoured Reconnaissance Company (100 troops)
Nigeria	1 x Signal Squadron (96 troops) 1 x Infantry Company (1 x 128 troops under Eastern Battalion) 1 x Armoured Reconnaissance Company (100 troops under Eastern Battalion) 1 x Division Supply and Combat Service Support Company (123 troops under Logistics Battalion) Two Helicopter Companies (45 troops) comprising of: 1 x Medical Helicopter 1 x Lt Helicopter	1 x Engineering Company (108 troops) 1 x Level II Hospital (50 troops) One Battalion comprising of: 2 x Infantry Companies (2 x 128 troops) 1 x Support Company (1 x 122 troops) 1 x Artillery Battery 1 x Landing Ship Tank Naval 1 x Patrol Boat 1 x C 130 Hercules Transport Aircraft
Senegal	1 x Infantry Company (128 troops under Western Battalion) 1 x Level II Hospital (50 troops under Logistics Battalion) 1 x Gendarmerie Company	1 x Engineering Company (108 troops) One Battalion comprising of: 1 x Infantry Company (1 x 128 troops) 1 x Support Company (1 x 122 troops) 1 x Armoured Reconnaissance Company 1 x Artillery Company
Sierra Leone	1 x Infantry Company (1 x 128 troops under Eastern Brigade)	
Togo	1 x Infantry Company (1 x 128 troops under Eastern Brigade)	1 x Infantry Company 1 x Gendarmerie Company

Source: Elowson, C., Macdermoth, J., (2010), "ECOWAS Capabilities in Peace and Security: A Scoping study of Progress and Challenges", Defense Analysis Report, Swedish Defense Research Agency, Anne 1, pp.74-77.

Cooperative institutionalization of the ESF across member states also involves certification for entry-level capability for countries pledging military personnel. This includes training, equipping and provision of logistical support, which must be provided by member countries. However, the approved personnel will go through additional training with extra logistical support and skills provided for entry into higher-level readiness phase. Such training and capacity needs conducted by the ESF, takes into consideration language different (French and English), national structures

and their capability in meeting the needs of the intervention at hand. The provision of resources is always a challenge; therefore, sustaining and equipping the ESF operations will be shared by member states, ECOWAS and interested international donors.

- **Analysis on Convergence of Institutions, Methods and Processes in the Operationalization of the ESF**

The ESF is currently a work in progress, but it already has an institutional foundation within the architecture for peace and security in West Africa. It is presented as a case study within the framework of cooperative institutionalization of conflict prevention mechanism in the sub-region. Its operationalization creates a zone of cooperation between ECOWAS, state governments and security apparatus in different countries within the regional subsystem.

In the analytical framework, I argued that similar history of conflict that expands into regional conflict complexes and regional conflict formation leads to zone of cooperation between governments and their security institutions in the subsystem. This means the fear of spillover effect of a conflict into other countries leads to intersubjective interactions between ECOWAS and government institutions in forging consensus and take collective decisions that translate into pledging troops and agreed on methods of operations and planning for cooperative institutionalization of the ESF.

Various countries take up different roles with different command centers and made pledges of troop contributions and having a portion of their security apparatus being trained for potential peacekeeping mission. Some of these pledges have not being fulfilled by all member states but in principle made commitments. However, the coming together of state governments, within the ECOWAS architecture for peace and security enforces collective action and shared responsibility amongst them. This experience of collaboration is what I theorized as cooperative institutionalization of conflict prevention mechanism in regional subsystem.

6.5. Challenges

ECOWAS's long experience in peacekeeping and humanitarian intervention in the sub-region gives it an edge over other regional economic communities in the operationalization of a regional Standby force. ECOWAS's effort in peacekeeping in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Cote D'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau and Mali has given it a strategic advantage in the formation of the ESF. It has a strategic advantage over the other RECs in Africa on the area of peace making, peacekeeping and peace enforcement and therefore has the ability to leverage that experience in the institutionalization of its peacekeeping force into the ESF within the framework of the AU Standby force.

However, it is struggling with the development of the police and civilian component of the standby force. Commentators and observers in the security community in the sub-region have argued that since police are needed within the state to handle domestic affairs, it is difficult for them to be released. They are in operation in the streets of capitals and cities of member states everyday and not waiting in the barracks to be used. Therefore, it has been quite a challenge on all member countries to singularly or collective avail police personnel into the ESF; and, also the difficulties with different patterns of organizational and operating procedures and traditions of policing across member states.[295]

Another challenging issue is financial constraints. Most of ECOWAS member states are poor countries and therefore, making their financial contribution to the peace fund is quite a challenge. This fund is meant to support ECOWAS in operationalization cost of the ESF. This creates budgetary constraints on the part of ECOWAS in meeting the needs of the force and had to depend on external partners or donors for support, which in the long run affects the capability of the force to undertake full-scale intervention within a short period of time. In this same light, member states involved in a planned ESF intervention have to self-finance its personnel for the first 90 days of the mission with the hope that they will be reimbursed later by ECOWAS. This sort of arrangement creates uncertainties to an ESF mission and can affect its planning coordination and outcome.

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[295] Elowson, C., Macdermott, J. (2010), pp.55-56.

Also, there is a challenge dealing with political dynamics amongst member states. Nigeria is seen as a dominant political force at the centre of ECOWAS partly because it provides the highest level of political and financial support and being the strongest economy with the largest population in the sub-region. Therefore, it is said to be wielding a lot of political clout leading to a widely held view that some states have more power and influence in the arrangement, structure and operations of the ESF. However, such concerns have been dealt with as all the countries are given opportunity to contribute to the force according to their capabilities. However, with Nigeria being huge contributor to any ESF mission, internal conflicts such as issues of terrorism and violent insurgency now taking place in Northern Nigeria, will affect the country's willingness to commit troops to ESF for peacekeeping missions as it has its own internal conflicts to deal with. This will also affect its ability to give logistical and financial support at a much-needed time.

Another issue relates to gender dimensions in the ESF. The level of involvement of women is low at various stages of planning and operationalization of the ESF. The number of women sent to take part in peacekeeping training for possible involvement in an ESF mission is low thereby creating a huge disparity in the role women can play in peace enforcement operations not only in the sub-region but within the African standby force. However, in September 2010 member states of ECOWAS adopted the Dakar Declaration. This declaration was adopted with a plan of action for implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women Peace and Security. [296] This action by member states was a good step towards recognizing the role of women in ways that will be reflected in the ESF.

West Africa is a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and multi-cultural environment with sixteen countries using different approach to deal with political, social, cultural and economic issues. Therefore, planning and operationalization of peacekeeping mission can be quite a challenge as different countries have different approach to mission planning and political commitments. There are also language barriers that affect flow of communication, which delays plan, and how activities are conducted and coordinated. However, in as much as all these constraints are there, the ESF is far

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[296] See more details on Dakar Declaration and ECOWAS Plan of Action for the implementation of the UN SCRS 1325 and 1820.

ahead of all the other regional economic communities in the establishment and institutionalization of a standby force that is operable within the framework of the Africa Standby force.

These challenges have implication for cooperative institutionalization of the ESF within the context of my analytical framework. The driving force for cooperation to prevent conflict in the subsystem is the State. If the state lacks the wherewithal to commit to building institutional structures and undertake coordination and harmonization of policies, institutionalization of the ESF will not happen. This renders the logical idea of the theory inapplicable.

6.6. Conclusion

One of the core purposes of this study is to present a conceptual analysis on the institutionalization of conflict prevention in West Africa by exploring operational, structural and organizational linkages between and amongst various sets of institutions from the regional to governments and non-state actors. This chapter has been an attempt to build up a conceptual analysis on the subject of cooperative institutionalization of conflict prevention in West Africa with ECOWAS as the core institutional focus with linkages on processes and activities for cooperation and partnership identified and analysed.

The chapter attempts to establish the convergence of institutions, methods, and processes that have evolved in the last three decades to reduce risk and vulnerabilities to conflict in the subsystem. It links the conceptual framework of cooperative institutionalization of conflict prevention to the operational practice of prevention by different actors identified in the framework.

Cooperative institutionalization of early warning, preventive diplomacy and the ECOWAS Standby force falls within the broader agenda of systematic prevention of conflict as proposed in the 2006 UN Report on the Prevention of Armed conflicts. Systematic method of prevention emphasizes global, regional and sub-regional agenda as an appropriate way to deal with potential crisis situation such as terrorism, violent extremism, human trafficking arms proliferation and other risk of conflict that

goes beyond a single border. With the adoption of the ECOWAS conflict prevention framework in 2008, the government and people of West Africa have been left with a very hard task of building a preventive regime in the sub-region. However, such programs cannot be realized on their own. Institutions and organizations have to take responsibility to implement them and governments have to engage with non-state actors to roll out mechanism to prevent conflict in local communities.

The presentation and analysis of these case studies is to re-conceptualize the practice of conflict prevention in the sub-region as well as to analyse different methods of cooperation amongst institutions towards preventing conflict in the sub-region.

Chapter Seven: The State and National Approaches for Institutionalization of Conflict Prevention in West Africa

7.1. Introduction

The ideational foundation of this study is simply to conceptualize conflict prevention in West Africa through the prism of institutional actors and structures (i.e. regional, national and local), as well as methods, processes and activities that are made applicable for management and prevention of conflict. The chapter seeks to address the question of why and how the state as the main actor for conflict prevention, collaborates with other actors in the sub-region. It analyses the evolving state led effort for cooperative institutionalization of conflict prevention at national and subnational levels.

In West Africa, there are risk factors within states such as poverty and unemployment, fragile democratic systems, economic stagnation, land and chieftaincy conflicts as well as religious and tribal disputes that are potential recipe for state failure and internal armed conflicts. These risk factors affect the state's ability to provide public goods to its citizens. In this regard, state-governments in West Africa have more motivation to cooperate with ECOWAS and the civil society community in putting up institutional structures and harmonizing policy frameworks to tackle the risk for national and localized conflicts. Therefore, this chapter analyses country-level response to risk factors within the framework of cooperative institutionalization. The state as a reference point of analysis means the government and its constitutive organs and national platforms are arguably the most important actor in the regional subsystem with a broad range of responsibility that starts with political commitment in drawing up policies, enacting laws, building institutions, undertaking reforms with programs and activities serving as the pillars and carriers towards institutionalizing preventive actions in the state.

The governance structure of the state has a veritable role to play in forging cooperation. It has the responsibility to bring communities and groups together as well as engage and cooperate with non-state institutions. It creates the enabling environment for groups working outside the government, in their own local and

national constituencies to operate on their agendas in support of conflict prevention. It also cooperates with ECOWAS and other state-governments in the subsystem through harmonization and domestication of regional policies in response to threat of conflict. Therefore, the state has a huge role in the institutionalization of conflict prevention first by institutionalizing cooperation within its national structure, then forging cooperation between other states and third in linking sub-regional programs to national and local processes. Therefore, the state-government matters a lot. It stands as the most important pillar that drives institutional process for conflict prevention within the state in the regional subsystem.

In societies coming out of conflict, peace building and post conflict reconstruction programs are undertaken by the state to address the root causes of conflict, and pursue transformative activities that will prevent future conflict. This may be realized through human rights commissions, electoral code of conduct, judicial accountability, peace and truth commissions, open society governance programs, national civil society forums, insider mediation, local peace committees, etc., all forming structures for achieving stability and peace in the state. However, a new approach gaining momentum is the formation of National Infrastructure for Peace (NI4P). In West Africa, Ghana has developed and operationalized its own infrastructure through the establishment of National Peace Council with a legislative act (National Peace Council Act of 2011) recognizing its legitimacy as an institutional mechanism to deal with emerging peace and security issues from national to local context.[297] Similarly at the height of the civil war in Sierra Leone, a National Committee for Peace was established and was instrumental in reaching national and local groups to rally support for the country's peace process.[298]

A common denominator of these two cases is that they connect national to the local and deal with context specific issues that threaten stability of the state. These linkages support the convergence of policy ideas and create an interconnected web of engagement from the regional subsystem to national and local levels. This chapter will bring out the importance of NI4P as the emerging national approach being

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[297] National Peace Council Act 2011, (Act 818.) Republic of Ghana.
[298] Jusu-Sheriff, Y. (2004), Civil Society In Adebajo, A. and Rashid, I., (eds.) *West Africa's Security Challenges: Building Peace in A Trouble Region.* International Peace Academy, Lynne Rienner Publishing, pp. 265-290.

developed and operationalized by West African states' structures to manage conflict prevention in local communities. This chapter will argue that the uniqueness of this process despite its rudimentary and partial development is a creative method of responding to conflict situation within the state as responses are localized using indigenous systems and structures.

In addition, the chapter covers the following sections. The next section covers government response to conflicts within the area of transnational terrorism, the third section analyses existing national approaches to conflict prevention, the fourth section conceptualizes national infrastructure for peace within the context of cooperative institutionalization of conflict prevention and presents case studies on emerging I4P programs in Ghana, Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire and Nigeria and its potential as a tool to institutionalize of conflict prevention in West Africa.

7.2. Government's Responses to Current Conflict Related to Terrorism

Conflict in West African countries varies in types with different sources and causes; and government's responses vary. There are tribal conflicts in the hinterland of Ghana notably the Dagbon and Bawku conflict, there is pastoral and agricultural conflict led by the Tuareg rebel movement in both Niger and Mali, there is secessionist conflict in the Senegalese region of Cassamance, Islamic terrorist conflict in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria led by Boko Haram terrorist group which has spilled over to the Neighboring countries of Chad and Benin. [299] There is localized conflict in the extractive industries in the Kono district of Sierra Leone between mining companies and local communities, and in Niger with the 'recent expansion of uranium mining in the Air-Talek-Tamesna region of the country'.[300] There is conflict complex in cross-border armed criminality between Ghana and Cote D'Ivoire and border dispute between Guinea and Sierra Leone over Yenga; and between Nigeria and Cameroon over the Bakassi Peninsula. Not forgetting the spread of terrorist activities across the West Africa sahel countries of Chad, Niger, Mali and Nigeria. Overshadowing all

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[299] See more details on Musa, Mahmoud N., Adeyemi, A. E. (2015), *Terrorism and Political Violence in West Africa: A Global Perspective.* Xlibris Publishing, p. 97.
[300] Maconachie, R., Srinivasan, R., Menzies, N. (2015), Responding to the Challenges of Fragility and Security in West Africa: Natural Resources, Extractive Industry Investment and Social Conflict. *Fragility, Conflict and Violence Group*, World Bank, p. 9.

these issues is the common conflict to all countries, which is political conflict during elections. Elections are now an expected source of conflict in every country in West Africa. The nature of political engagement is divisive, ethnocentric and group-based with incumbent government and opposition groups sometime locked in political conflicts, engulfing the national socio-political fabric of the country.

The responses by governments to these different types of conflict situations vary and are determined by structural, institutional and operational capacities which are missing or inadequate in many countries; however, in situations where they do exist, are lacking a well-organized platform to get things done. In responding to conflicts, state government defines their actions through political commitments. However political commitments are vague and conflicts that have political benefits to the government are allowed to go on. Beyond the intervention or use of state security apparatus, governments establish institutions that deal with human rights and justice such as human rights commission. It also enacts laws, forge local policies and work closely with Non-governmental organizations and ECOWAS peace and security architecture to deal with conflict situations.

In countering terrorism, the federal government of Nigeria enacted into law the Terrorism Prevention Act in 2011 and amended it in 2013 instituting actions that criminalize terrorist actions and in carrying out military operations against terrorist insurgent groups. The government of Mali and Niger are working closely with Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership and GIABA to tackle terrorism within and across their borders. In Burkina Faso, the national assembly enacted two major Acts in 2009 namely Act No. 60-2009/AN of 17 December 2009 punishing acts of terrorism in Burkina Faso and Act No. 61-2009/AN of December 2009 on combating terrorism financing.[301] Sierra Leone, Ghana and Burkina Faso have institutionalized legislations on control and proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons with the prospect of the remaining West African countries following the same step. There are structures for local police partnership in dealing with armed criminality instituted by West African governments, and Ghana and Cote D'Ivoire governments have a joint partnership with their security sectors on cross border control.

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[301] Musa, Mahmoud N., Adeyemi, A. E. (2015), p. 272.

As politics and elections are major triggers of conflict, state governments have developed code of conduct for elections and political engagements amongst various groups. This code of conduct when institutionalized by parties averts chaos and conflict in political processes. Sierra Leone instituted a code of conduct, which has served as an infrastructure for peaceful elections in 2007, and 2012 elections. Ghana has a similar code of conduct but also developed National Peace Council, which effectively quelled down a potentially dangerous political crisis in the country's general election in 2012.

The struggle to control and manage resources still ranges on. The sub-region is rich with mineral resources. However, these resources breed conflict amongst different groups ranging from the government, to local communities and the extractive industries. The loss of farmland for mining affects rural poor people, as there is destruction to their homes and way of life. This has led to localized conflict in Sierra Leone's Kono and Koinadugu district that are still unresolved. Mali and Niger have had to deal with rebellions as a result of socio-economic grievances over land and resources by Tuareg groups. Nigeria has for long struggled with resource conflict in the Niger Delta oil rich region without little or no constructive change so far. All these countries claim to be compliant of the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI), which is an international normative framework that ensures appropriate redistribution of mining resources to communities as well as use of land. However, most governments continue to fall short in their ability to fairly redistribute resources from land and mining due to corruption.[302]

7.3. Existing National/State Level Approaches to Conflict management and Prevention

There have been many conflicts across communities in West Africa. Some are localized conflict while others evolve into full-scale civil wars. This has created the impression that West African countries lack the requisite structure both operational and institutional to manage and prevent localized or internal conflict; and that, state-governments are so politically disorganized and institutionally weak that their ability to respond to internal crisis is lacking or even non-existent. This assertion is not

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[302] Maconachie, R., Srinivasan, R., Menzies, N. (2015), p. 9.

entirely true. Generally, there is the problem of lack of an organized system of response as well as political willingness to act. However, there are some structures. These structures have a potential to impact on conflict situations and become the basis for transformative action to resolve them.

After conducting a risk assessment study of ECOWAS member states, the Directorate of the commission's early warning program and a team of consultant and peace building practitioners met in February 2012 in Lagos, Nigeria and undertook a validation exercise on the risk assessment report. An interesting part of the team's engagement is to identify existing conflict management structures and institutional capacities within ECOWAS member states. They identified several structures, institutions and processes that are in existence and are available within the state.[303] These are discussed as follows.

Traditional institutions: West African states like all other sub-Saharan countries across Africa have centuries old traditional approaches to solve local conflict as well as political and social problems. There are traditional systems of organization of people and communities across states. Traditional processes are rooted in cultural norms and customs of the society. And for centuries these traditional norms and local systems have shaped communities and group interaction in all spheres of life.[304] Every individual in the sub-region is born into a tribal group with value systems that becomes part of their cognitive frame, influencing different facets of their lives. Traditional systems have social norms and laws that are highly respected by those that follow and believe in them. Therefore, traditional authorities can strategically be involved in bringing local communities and groups together to prevent local conflict ranging from land disputes, group tensions and even political problems. In his analysis on adapting traditional peacemaking principles to contemporary conflict within the ECPF, Bolaji (2011) presents empirical examples on the cultural structures of Kpaa Mende in Sierra Leone, and the Ijoko Ojogbon traditions of the Yorubas in

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[303] ECOWAS Early Warning Directorate (2012), *Outcome of the Validation meeting on the Report of Country Risk Assessment.* February 13-14, 2012, Lagos, Nigeria.
[304] See more on Omeje, K. (2008), Understanding Conflict Resolution in Africa. In Francis (ed.) P*eace and Conflict in Africa,* Zed Books Ltd. London, p. 88.

southwestern Nigeria to explicate the application and relevance of traditional practices to peace making and conflict prevention in different countries.[305]

Court System: This implies the judicial system of the state. Every sovereign country in West Africa has an institutionalized judicial structure that forms part of the organs of government. The State relies on the judicial system to interpret the laws of the land in ways that builds peace and prosperity to the state and her people. The court system administers and upholds the laws of the state. In times of conflict and crisis between groups, communities and institutions, the court serves as a platform to find solutions, end uncertainties and maintain rule of law. When there are conflicts, disagreement, and disruption of the status quo, the court system through trials, convictions and judgments enforces justice, fairness, rule of law and transformation of the status quo in ways that avert conflict. For instance, the Special Court for Sierra Leone though structured as an international tribunal formed part of the national structure for conflict transformation and peace building in the country in the aftermath of a brutal civil war.

Faith Based Organizations and Groups: Religion is an important part of the social life of the people in West Africa. There are many denominations of religious sects spread across communities all over the sub-region with Christianity, Muslims and African Traditional religions being the dominant. Religion is an influential part of the daily life of people and majority of communities and groups belongs to a religion, has a religious life and practice through different methods and platforms. Religion and religious life shaped society's understanding about their existence and how to grow in spiritual life. People respect religious leaders and are seen as custodian of the community. As all religions preach peace, religious leaders are usually called on to solve conflicts and disputes between communities and groups. Religious leaders preach peace to power and use religious laws and values to guard their congregation on the part of peace and non-violence. At the height of the civil war in Sierra Leone, the Inter-religious Council (IRC-SL) and Council of Churches in Sierra Leone (CCSL) went to the bush and started the process of mediating between the Revolutionary United Front Rebel (RUF) and the government of Sierra Leone. It proved successful and led to formal negotiations resulting into a peace agreement. In

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[305] See details Bolaji (2011), op. cit.

Ghana, the inter-religious council is playing a key role in the National Peace Council and helping to mediate on political conflicts and other social tensions across Ghana.

Government Ministry and Civil Service at National and sub-national Levels: The executive arm of the state-government is made up of ministries, departments and agencies that run the affairs of the state. They implement all government policies and programs and respond to the governance needs of the state. These ministries have personnel that form part of the government civil service and are responsible for the day-to-day affairs of the state. It can be ministry of internal affairs, or defense or political affairs or health and environment etc. These ministries take care of all the human security needs of the people and strive to address all forms of political, social and economic needs of the citizenry. They represent institutional resources readily available to the government in responding to any form of conflict and insecurity that threatens peace and stability of the state. If a conflict situation arises the responsible line ministry, department or agencies has the responsibility to respond, manage and try to avert it. On security risk and threat of conflict, the ministry of interior or internal affairs takes on the responsibility to respond. They operate at national and sub-national level throughout the country.

Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs): As the name implies, these are organizations that are not affiliated with the government in anyway. They may be profit or non-profit organization or institution working towards achieving a particular goal. NGOs work on a wide range of issues across communities and find solutions to social problems. Such NGOs are local, national or international and have different constituent beneficiaries to their programs and activities. In West Africa, there are local and national NGOs as well as transnational ones. These NGOs organize activities around state building programs and in times of conflict work on peace building programs to manage conflict issues. For example, International Rescue Committee supports efforts to prevent conflict in several West Africa countries. WANEP as a civil society NGOs has a presence in all fifteen ECOWAS member states and undertakes activities towards conflict prevention and peace building. There are local NGOs spread across communities in West Africa undertaking activities of advocacy, community engagement, networking and capacity development to build peace in the state.

Community Based Organizations (CBOs): These organizations are spread across communities in West Africa. They are known as community based because they are highly localized within small communities and groups. CBOs are formed to act on issues affecting the local community. Mostly, it has an agenda to deal with communities, and focus on programs that benefit the inhabitants of the community. It can take the form of women's group, traders' union, social clubs, etc. CBOs promote and support local interests and courses. They are readily available local structures that bring communities together to deal with local problems. There are CBOs in every community or local setting in West Africa and are useful structures that can be instrumental in preventing and managing local conflicts.

Independent Statutory Bodies: These are bodies set up by law and are authorized to enforce legislation on behalf of the state. They can take the form of regulatory agencies with legal rights to act on behalf of the government on particular issues in support of rules, laws and standards that uphold the governance process of the State. Some statutory bodies undertake audits or carry out investigation on breach of the law or regulatory procedures and even have the authority to establish appropriate fines or request correctional measures. These institutions also undertake supervisory and oversight roles and prevent political interference in the governance system. Independent statutory structures are part of the governance system of all countries in West Africa. They are available in the appropriate situational context to solve state matters that may lead to political or governance crisis.

Inter-group Dialogue Groups: This is a good conflict management platform that has proven useful across communities. It is a process in which people, from similar social, political, economic cultural or institutional grouping come together and forge a formal or informal platform to have an interactive dialogue about an issue(s) of common interest to all of them. It can take the form of inter-faith group such as the inter-religious council in Sierra Leone, inter-party dialogue group, like All-Political Party Association or All Political Party Women's Association etc., Inter-ethnic dialogue, inter-community dialogue etc. The idea of inter-group dialogue fits well into existing traditional and communal dialogue platforms were communities and groups come together, socialize and establish bonds of friendship and use it to find solution to local

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problems such as land-disputes or chieftaincy conflict. Therefore, existing inter-group dialogue can be used as a local platform to solve local problems in the community.

Alternative Dispute Resolution Mechanism: The ADR mechanism as it is usual known is used to resolve disputes or disagreement between two or more parties outside the formal court system. It can take the form of mediation, arbitration, neutral evaluation, negotiation and conciliation. It is a pragmatic process of bringing disputants together to find common grounds and resolve their differences in a cost effective manner. ADR processes can effectively yield peaceful resolution when applied in different conflict setting. Individual, groups and institutions in dispute can find common ground and reach an agreement through an ADR process. It is available within the state and can be professionally conducted in ways that manage and prevent conflict.

These existing structures form part of the national, sub-national and local capacities and approaches for management and prevention of conflict within the state. Some of these structures are formal while others are non-formal, some are operated and institutionalized by the state-government while others are handled by non-state actors, some are traditionally oriented using cultural methods while others are modern/ western structures, some operate locally while others operate nationally etc. However, they all form part of national processes to deal with threats of conflict and insecurities.

Together, they form a collective set of institutional structures, programs and processes that can be pillars and carriers of norms, rules, frameworks, policies, laws and ideas towards institutionalizing conflict prevention within the state. It also enforces the conceptual relevance of cooperative institutionalization of activities to prevent conflict in the state. This is because the prevention of conflict in the state requires both national and local capacities to engineer preventive action. However, many countries in the sub-region are struggling with organizing governance systems that gives life to these existing platforms in ways that make them responsive to emerging crisis situation; and to foster cooperative institutionalization of preventive measures.

7.4. The Case of National Infrastructures for Peace (NI4P)

The internal social, economic and political dynamics of many countries in West Africa paint a grim reality of inherent risks of conflicts. This has encouraged many countries especially those in conflict or coming out of conflict to use existing capacities and develop national and local structures for peace. These structures form part of pathway to developing infrastructure for peace in the state. There are different local and national processes across countries in West Africa that are descriptive of an emerging infrastructure for peace. Ghana through its National Peace Council has led the way in establishing the first National Infrastructure for Peace in West Africa. Other local structures include Local Peace Committee (LPC), Peace building infrastructure, Insider Mediation etc.

The formation of local and national infrastructure for peace through networks of institutions working together and implementing policies and programs forms the building block for cooperative institutionalization of conflict prevention in the state. National and local institutions engaging vertically and horizontally amongst themselves as well as their constituencies and working on a national agenda for peace enables the process to be sustained and institutionalized over a period of time. The following sections analyses the concept of infrastructure for peace including its structures, key characteristics, role in conflict management and in cooperative institutionalization of preventive action followed by the presentation of case studies of I4P processes in Ghana, Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire and Nigeria as part of the study's purpose of reconceptualising new practices of conflict prevention within states in West Africa.

- **What is an Infrastructure for Peace?**

Infrastructure for peace is a fairly new concept in the domain of peace research and in the practice of peace building. It is an evolving concept slowly gaining wider currency. John Paul Lederach, first introduced the concept in the 1990s, in his pioneering work titled "Building Peace: Sustainable reconciliation in divided societies'. He posits that an organized conflict transformation process must consist of a functional network of different sets of local and national actors who forge

collaborative interaction geared towards tackling the threat of conflicts and use their platform to constructively build peace in the society.[306]

There is no universally accepted definition of infrastructure for peace. Different conceptual explanations have been put forward by scholars, researchers and experts in the field of peace building to ascertain its application, functions and relevance in preventing conflict and transforming societies in distress. I4Ps from a general point of view is an organized system of interaction amongst and between institutions, or groups forging ties of cooperation and take on activities and programs that are responsive to crisis situation at its latent stage, during its escalation point and its transformation to peaceful social relations. I4Ps do not only come about through institutional interaction but can be developed by means of policies and institutional norms, rules and regulations that shape the actions and inactions of people, groups and communities in ways that foster peaceful social relations in the society. The enactment of the National Peace Council Act in 2011 by the Ghanaian government stands as a good example.

According to Chetan Kumar[307] he proposed that I4P is 'a network of interdependent systems, resources, values and skills co-owned by government, civil society and community institutions that promote dialogue and consultation, prevent conflict and enable peaceful mediation when violence occurs in a society'.[308] Kumar argues that for governments and communities to deal with conflict and violence internally, there is the need to earnest indigenous skills and other forms of local resources in addressing problems within local context in intervention by external actors. In Tongeren's [309] conceptualization on the 'Increasing interest in infrastructure for peace', he argues that I4P is a 'dynamic network of interdependent structures,

[306] Lederach, John P. (1997), 'Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies', United States Institute of Peace, Washington, U.S.A., pp. 112-127, See also, Lederach, J. (2012), The origins and evolution of infrastructures for peace: A personal reflection. *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development*, Vol 7, No. 3, pp. 8-14.
[307] Chetan Kumar is Senior Conflict Prevention Advisor at UNDP, New York, See details on Kumar, Chetan 2012. Building National Infrastructures for Peace. UN Assistance for Internally Negotiated Solutions to Violent Conflict, in: Susan Allen Nan, Zachariah C. Mampilly & Andrea Bartoli (eds.) Peacemaking: From Practice to Theory. New York: Praeger, pp. 384-399.
[308] Giessman, Han. J. (2016), Embedded Peace, Infrastructure for Peace: Approaches and Lessons Learned. Berghof Foundation and United Nations, Development Program, New York, p. 9.
[309] Paul Van Tongeren is former Secretary General of the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC).

mechanisms, resources, values and skills which, through dialogue and consultation, contribute to conflict prevention and peace building in a society'.[310] He also argues that I4P is a 'cooperative problem solving approaches to conflict' within societies, based on dialogue and non-violence and call for the development of institutional mechanisms appropriate to each country's culture'.[311]

However, for Ulrike Hopp-Nishanka she describes I4P as a process of giving peace an address through institutions and processes that help groups in conflict to reach common ground, cooperate to build constructive social relationships.[312] Odendaal describes I4P as 'systems for coordinating and supporting peace processes, consciously linking the local and national spheres and the formal and informal sectors of society; and entails structures and procedures to enable the task of building peace'.[313] Richmond sees peace infrastructure as a localized approach to achieve legitimacy of liberal peace building agenda in post conflict societies. But he emphasizes the process to be a sort of 'peace formation' in society and 'represents a level of resistance to external intervention and the preservation of local institutions, norms or identity'.[314]

I4P have been developed in many countries such as Ghana, Kenya, South Africa, Nepal, Nicaragua, Philippines etc. Its structures have different characteristics depending on context and setting. It can take the form of Local Peace Committee, National Dialogue Process, National Peace forums, programs for mediation and reconciliation etc. LPCs have been developed in Columbia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, Burundi, Uganda, Afghanistan etc.[315] I4Ps are developed through institutional mechanisms. However, some practitioners criticize this approach of giving too much leverage to formal processes in offices with project, when the real issues require local engagements across communities. Therefore, even though I4P

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[310] Tongeren, Paul Van (2011), Increasing interest in infrastructure for Peace. *Journal of Conflictology*, Vol. 2, pp. 45-55.
[311] Ibid, cited in Giessman, Han. J. (2016), p. 9.
[312] See details on Hopp-Nishanka, U. (2013), Giving Peace an Address? Reflections on the Potential and Challenges of Creating Peace Infrastructures. Berghof Handbook Dialogue Series, No. 10.
[313] Andries Odendaal response to questions and answer on his new book- 'A Crucial Link: Local Peace Committees and National Peace building', United State Institute of Peace, September 2013.
[314] See more on Richmond. Oliver, P., (2012), 'Missing Links: Peace Infrastructure and Peace Formation', Berghof Handbook Dialogue Series No. 10.
[315] See details on Tongeren, Paul, V. (2013), Potential Cornerstone of Infrastructures for Peace? How Local Peace Committees can make a difference. J*ournal of Peace building*, Vol. 1, No.1, pp. 1-31

must be supported by institutional structures, harnessing informal local norms and value systems can leverage a fine balance between institutions and local ideas to enable successful implementation of I4P programs.

- **Designing National Infrastructure for Peace**

When an I4P evolves into a national structure, it becomes a National Infrastructure for Peace (NI4P). In this case it is described as an interconnected web of institutional networks that operate interdependently across national to local levels through a consistent frame of intersubjective dialogue that harmonizes ideas and processes that are responsive to crisis and conflict early warning signals. NI4P legitimizes the pursuit of conflict prevention, peacemaking and peace building across local communities and validates local-based processes and institutions in tackling violence and insecurities. Establishing NI4P requires a central body that takes full leadership role and connects national and local actors through coordination and harmonization of peace initiatives that respond to risk factors.

Country-level NI4P can take the form of a national commission, national council or committee, government ministry for peace or department of peace etc. It is important for NI4P to operate independent from government so that it is not politicize and must have a constitutional mandate that enforces its legitimacy across the state. It also needs to have a wide-ranging network of actors across national, sub-national, provincial, regional and district lines forging zones of cooperation and interaction to mitigate risk of conflicts. Collectively, they can act through consultations, dialogue, and undertake constructive problem solving processes to avert impending crisis. The formation of a National Committee for Peace in 1995 to undertake a campaign of election before peace in Sierra Leone during the military regime is a classic example. In this regard, Tongeren posits that 'establishing NI4P should include 1) adopting a cooperative problem solving approach to conflict based on dialogue and non-violence that involves different stakeholders and 2) have institutional structures that fit country context in terms of culture and value systems and well coordinated at different levels.[316]

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[316] Ibid, p. 16.

Recognizing the relevance of I4P to state building and post-conflict transformation, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), has collaborated with other UN departments and agencies to work with national and local partners to assist countries to build resilience by supporting I4P programs. In this regards, UNDP has 'supported the development of I4P in more than 30 countries and work with their internal structures to build collaborative capacities to manage fragility, division and transition, and to overcome the effect of armed conflict'.[317]

- **Key Characteristics of I4P/NI4P**

There are sets of characteristics distinctive to I4P/NI4P processes. Kotia and Aubyn (2013) describe some characteristics that operate at national level. They argue that there are wide varieties of activities at national and subnational levels that fall into I4P and maintained that whilst some I4Ps have formal recognition through national peace process and legislations, others operate informally. In addition, they argued that whilst some I4Ps are localized others exist at district, regional and national levels and have different mandates, principles, structures and composition.[318] This means that structure and mandate of I4P in Kenya is different from that in South Africa or Nepal or even in Sierra Leone. These differences come about as a result of risk factors that may be different as well as institutional and operational resources available at the time of its formation

Furthermore, Hopp Nishanka put forward five characteristics that help to describe and categorize I4P. She argues on 'domestic foundation', which means that I4P is distinctly organized as an internal structure within the state and not outside or connected to any international peace-building framework. This means that the process is framed around the internal structures within the state. Also, she maintains that it is develop at 'any stage of peace and dialogue processes, from the height of a violent conflict to the implementation and monitoring of peace agreement'; and that I4P process is 'found at all levels and peace building tracks and shows various forms of

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[317] Ryan, J. (2012), 'Infrastructure for Peace as a Path to Resilient Societies: An Institutional Perspective', Journal of Peace building and Development, Vol. 7 No. 3, p. 17.
[318] Kotia W. E., Aubyn Festus K. (2013), "Building National Infrastructure for Peace in Africa: Understanding the Role of the National Peace Council in Ghana", Kennesaw State University, U.S.A., p. 7.

integration'. In addition, the process must be very inclusive drawing on the involvement and participation of different institutions, sectors and groups and serves various objectives and functions, which include capacity building, implementation, coordination etc.[319]Therefore, it is important to note that I4P is multi-level, multi-structural, and multi-dimensional in characterizing its roles, functions and operations in any given society.

- **Roles and Functions of National I4P on Conflict Management and Peace Building**

NI4P operates as an institutional structure that brings together national and local actors under one institutional whole in finding common grounds for stability and peace in the society. This means that it is a standing capacity for conflict management, which institutionalizes the process of responding to conflict to produce results that lead to conflict transformation, reconciliation and peaceful social change. Such standing capacity can take the form of representative commission, a national dialogue platform, insider mediation, council of elders, code of conduct in electoral systems, and political parties mediation commission among others.

NI4P validate local approaches to peace building including traditional and indigenous processes. This is because the interconnected web of partnership and cooperation applies indigenous value systems; customs and norms that are used to build peaceful social relationships in local communities. It also bridges the gap between warning, response and reaction to potential conflict situation. Early warning systems can be an infrastructure for peace. It operates by understanding potential signs, signals and triggers of conflict, build scenarios for possible interventions to manage or prevent it, and giving support to the appropriate institutional mechanism in finding resolution.

Also, NI4P strengthens information sharing, intersubjective interaction and local engagements for cooperation between different groups and institutions in responding to risk and vulnerabilities to conflict in the community. Information and communication across stakeholders is relevant in shaping opinions and enable

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[319] Hopp-Nishanka (2013), op. cit., p. 5.

everyone to be aware of the issues that form the bedrock of any transformative process. This network of interaction facilitates communication and cooperation.

Similarly, NI4P facilitates the implementation of activities for the prevention or resolution of conflict or in the promoting of peace, in the form of institutional supports amongst a wide range of actors at local and community levels and promoting indigenous social values for reconciliation and social change. These assertions will be clarified in the case studies of emerging structures in West Africa analysed in the following sub-sections. Also, I4P can make recommendation to government for peaceful response to potential conflict situation and in tackling local security challenges.

- **The Nexus between NI4P and Cooperative Institutionalization in the State for Conflict Prevention**

Cooperative institutionalization within a state considers the arrangement of relationships between states institutions, sub-state institutions, the civil society community and local actors. These different categories and levels of interactions amongst all these institutions enable networking and partnership relevant for the development of NI4Ps in a state. It conceptualizes the network of institutional interactions relevant to the formation of NI4P as it is an organized process that composed of other activities such as early warning systems, community mediations and dialogue, peace negotiations, security protection, local police partnership etc. It also involves institutions composed of government ministries, departments and agencies in the form of human right commission, office of the Ombudsman, state security forces etc. and non-state structures that include civil society organizations, religious institutions, traditional groups and community base organizations; all of which form the network of institutions for cooperative institutionalization of conflict prevention in the state.

NI4P is analysed in this study to relate state-level conflict prevention programs to idea of cooperative institutionalization of conflict prevention. As explained earlier in its causal logic, similar history of institutional development such as chieftaincy system, and governance system in post-independence states in West Africa and even civil

wars and fragility of states enables zones of cooperation in the subsystem. However, within the state, cooperation can also be achieved amongst local institutions through intersubjective network of interaction that enables them to agree on set of rules, norms and activities towards the formation of NI4P in the state.

Cooperative institutionalization also postulates that commitment must be domesticated. In the case of West Africa where norms and regulations for conflict prevention are designed by ECOWAS, domestication is important through enactment of laws and implementation of policies and programs. NI4P represents this domestication of norms for conflict prevention at state and local levels. Thereby, connecting regional initiatives to national agendas for peace and security. This establishes a nexus between NI4P as a process with varying institutional arrangement at state level to building a preventive regime in the subsystem.

Also, N14P as a process enables convergence of institutions. As a method and process of responding to risk of conflict, it enables a network of cooperation with state, sub-state and local actors coming together, sharing responsibilities and take actions to tackle conflict issues in the state. These levels of cooperation enable NI4P processes to have increased advantages of legitimacy and recognition.

- **Challenges and Prospects in Operationalizing NI4P**

Building infrastructures for peace is not an easy fit. It is a long continuum of processes that require actions from different institutions, sectors and groups who work to achieve a common goal of peace. The government is required to support the process through policies; governance programs and even enactment of laws. However, this is not always the case. From studies conducted by scholars such as Odendaal (2010) and Tongeren (2013), they explain that the functional capacity of I4P is stifle by lack of political commitment by governments in providing institutional support. Policy changes by government or changes in government sometimes hinder the operational capacity of an I4P. Tongeren mentioned changes in policies by the

government of Columbia in 2002 created institutional vulnerability to the NI4P structure.[320]

Similarly, Hopp Nishanka mentioned the over ambivalent role of governments sometimes affects the process. This is because, state-government gets over involved in the process that it becomes politicized and thereby losing credibility and political neutrality, which is vital for its sustainability and inclusiveness.[321] Also, NI4P structures require the participation of stakeholders from national, subnational, local and community level. Therefore, an inclusive NI4P structure is important and must integrate marginalized and vulnerable groups such as the disabled women and children, ethnic minorities, poor and low caste etc.

NI4P structures are multi-level and multi-dimensional drawing different institutions and groups. Linking all these network of actors and processes across a country level process can be difficult. In some situation national structures work well. However, local institutions may not be well connected. These lapses create breakdown in the process and hinder the effective operation of the NI4P.

Lastly, leadership, integrity and institutional capacity are important parts of NI4P. During the formation of NI4P, it is important for the leadership structure to be made up of well-respected eminent personality in the state such as religious leaders or highly accomplished statesmen. The leadership structure gives the NI4P a serious image of trust, integrity and neutrality. In Ghana, the National Peace Council is made up of highly respected religious leaders who work towards a neutral process of building peaceful social relations across communities. However, in the case where the leadership structure is put into question; the entire process can be derailed. Not forgetting the issue of capacity building that enables local ownership and participation. Skills, knowledge and resources are required capacity amongst other and their absence hinders the implementation of a successful infrastructure for peace.[322]

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[320] Tongeren (2013), p. 15.
[321] Hopp-Nishanka (2013), p. 11.
[322] Aubyn, Festus (2015), Interview on NI4P in Ghana, KAIPTC, Accra, Ghana, 11 December.

7.5. Emerging Cases of NI4P in West Africa

This section analyses four case studies of evolving NI4P processes in Ghana, Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire and Nigeria. Sierra Leone and Cote d'Ivoire have experienced full-blown civil wars and are both in the process of peace building. Nigeria is currently overshadowed by violent extremism, whilst Ghana has ongoing localized conflicts. These countries present unique cases of the development of I4P through the prism of cooperative institutionalization of conflict prevention. They are all in different stages of its formation, with different structures, mandates and method of operations. Ghana is the most advanced whilst the rest are relatively new structures. These cases are analysed to establish, on the one hand, an understanding of the practice of institutional cooperation within state and sub-state structure, and on the other, to assess attempt by state governments in taking steps towards harmonizing and operationalizing NI4P policy frameworks in the sub-region.

At a regional consultative meeting held on 10th September 2013 in Accra, Ghana, between ECOWAS member states, the AU commission and the UNDP, a partnership agreement was forged 'to explore the feasibility and modalities for establishing and strengthening National Infrastructures for Peace in West Africa'. [323] A joint declaration was made by all partners and ministries of interior of member states to establish national infrastructures for peace in the next three years. In this regard, different forms of infrastructure for peace are emerging across countries in the sub-region. ECOWAS through the adoption of a conflict prevention framework for all member states, has established the normative approach to guide actions of governments, institutions and communities in building infrastructures for peace in different forms. In some countries, it takes the form of political reformation process; whilst in others it works as local community engagement process or networks of institutionalized cooperation for peace building etc. The following country level case studies of I4P are presented to provide an understanding of its emergence in the sub-region and its analytical relevance in conceptualizing cooperative institutionalization of conflict prevention in West Africa.

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[323] Amedzrator, L.M., Abdullah M. (2015), Escaping the Repertoire of Election Crisis: Prospects and Challenges of the Evolving Infrastructure for Peace in Cote D'Ivoire. *Policy Brief,* Kofi Annan International Peace Keeping Training Centre, p. 1.

- **Case Study 1: National Peace Council of Ghana**

In this case study, an historical assessment is made on the idea and practice of local infrastructures for peace in Ghana. It starts off with an assessment of existing localized conflict that culminated in the development of localized structures for response as the foundation for the establishment of a national peace council and its decentralization at sub-state level to form the building block for Ghana's I4P. It analyses the response of NPC with regards to risk reduction in violence during general elections and in the management of local conflicts in communities across the country.

Ghana has a population of more than 27 million people and is considered one of the relatively stable countries in the sub-region. It has been relatively peaceful in terms of security and governance and no high risk of violence or conflict. However, 'there are myriads of debilitating and often violent inter and intra-community conflicts, that threatens the stability of the country'.[324] Inter and intra-community conflicts have taken different forms. Some are long-term localized disputes whilst others are emerging tensions between groups. These conflicts have different structures and causes such as colonial legacies, bad governance, marginalization amongst ethnic lines, religious problems, land disputes, traditional and local government systems etc.

Notable amongst localized conflicts in Ghana are the Bawku and Dagbon chieftaincy in the Greater-Accra region, ethnic conflict between Nanumbra's and Kokombas in the northern part of Ghana, the Tsito-Peki land conflict and religious conflict within the Volta region and localized dispute between tribal groups in the central region of the country.[325] There are also political party disputes and elections-related violence intermittently creating social disturbances. These localized conflicts are sucking in state level actors with broader political implication to the Ghanaian society; and over the years this situation have affected stable social relations as well as socio-political integration of communities. Responses to these conflicts have been localized as well

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[324] Kotia, Aubyn (2013), p. 9.
[325] Ibid, p. 10, See more details on Brukum, N.J.K. (2004), The conflicts in northern Ghana. University of Ghana, Accra; Kwame Boafo-Arthur (2001), Chieftaincy and politics in Ghana since 1982. *West Africa Review 3*; Lund, C. (2003) 'Bawku is still volatile: ethno-political conflict and State recognition in Northern Ghana. *Journal of Modern African Studies* 41, p. 4.

through the use of local and traditional authorities such as inter-ethnic peace committees etc. However, these conflicts have proven difficult to settle as some are over values and needs that are non-negotiable and formed part of the deep-rooted problems which are usually left unaddressed. Therefore, an infrastructure for peace was envisaged and developed as an institutional mechanism to build peace and manage tensions, disputes and conflicts across communities.

- **Formation and Structure of the National Peace Council (NPC)**

The National Peace Council is the central structure of Ghana's infrastructure for peace. It was first established in August 2006 as part of the then governments plan for a national architecture for peace. It came from the operational experience and activities of the Northern Region Peace Advisory Committee (NRPAC) which is an inter-religious, inter-ethnic and inter-group structure set up in 2002 to mediate and resolve local conflict in the Northern region of Ghana. This group gained relative success in curbing election violence in the region in 2004 and led to the formation of similar structures to mediate on localized disputes in the Volta region. The success of these regional and localized structures led to renewed effort by the Ministry of Interior to form a country-level structure in 2006 to solve conflicts and build peaceful social relations across communities.

However, it was not until 2011 that it gained legal recognition under the constitution of Ghana. The National Peace Council Act 818 was enacted by the national assembly in order to give legitimacy to a country level infrastructure for peace. As stated in the NPC Act, the objective of the Council 'is to facilitate and develop mechanism for conflict prevention, management, resolution, and to build sustainable peace in the country'. [326] It has a broad range of functions that include harmonization, coordination, capacity building, make recommendation, increase awareness, and facilitate management, prevention and resolution of conflict in Ghana.[327]

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[326] Ghana's National Peace Council Act 818 of 2011.
[327] See more details on Ghana's NPC Act 818 of 2011.
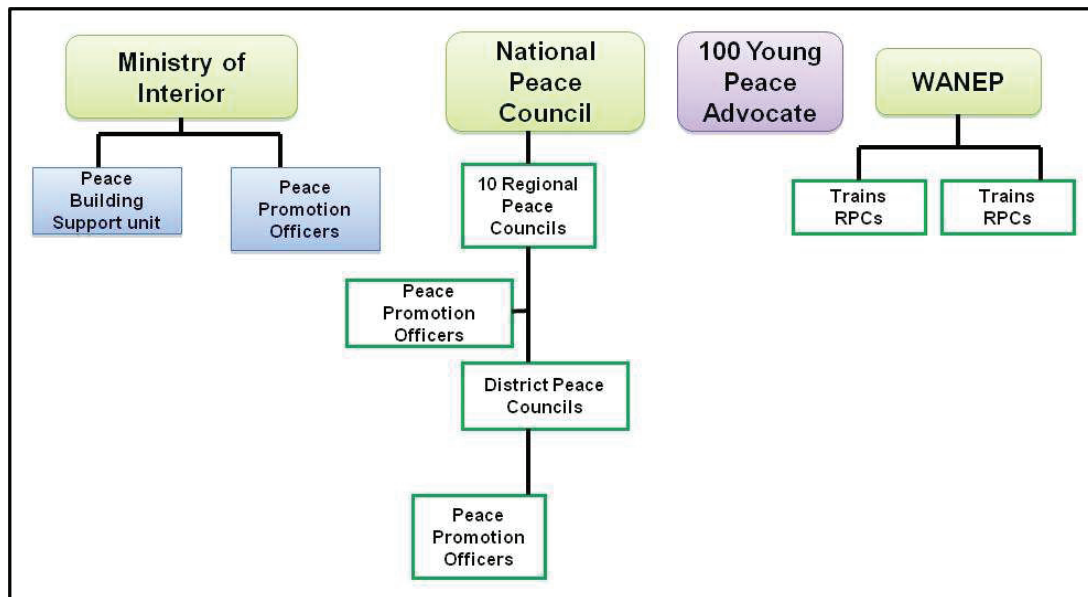
Figure 11: Structure of Ghana's National Infrastructure for Peace

Source: Adapted from IPCR Report (2016), Strengthening the Infrastructure for Peace in Nigeria: Report of Stakeholders Consultation, Abuja, Nigeria, p. 46

The structure of the NPC is developed with a three-tier approach. There is the national structure, then sub-national structures in the ten administrative regions and 212 districts spread across Ghana. As Kotia and Aubyn (2013) explained, this structure 'is to ensure the broad participation of all stakeholders at all levels of society in the prevention, resolution and management of conflict'.[328] Structurally, the governing board of the council is the highest decision making body consisting of thirteen prominent persons coming from the main religious institutions in the country. Below this tier are the regional peace councils (RPC) and the District Peace Councils (DPC).

Appointment into the council is done by a complex process of consultation, and nomination by the governing board, the government and identifiable groups across communities. Membership of the NPC is made up of 13 prominent individual coming from religious and traditional bodies and the government. Appointment into these position runs for four years with the possibility of reappointment by the constituent religious structures. The national governing council meets once every month to discuss the state of affairs in relation to it mandates. However an emergency meeting

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[328] Kotia and Aubyn, p. 19.

can be convened based on context and needs and the executive secretaries are placed in charge of the day-to-day activities of the council and serve as technical advisors.[329]

Furthermore, the Act of the NPC made provision for a peace building support unit (PBSU) within the Ministry of Interior and, the Ministry 'serves as the link between the government and the NPC and ensures that all the material and logistical support needed by the council are provided'.[330] The NPC is completely independent, however, the decisions of the Council are not binding as it lacks 'legislative and executive powers to enforce them'.[331] Peace Promotion Officers have been appointed by the Ministry of Interior to undertake 'effective coordination and communication across the national, regional and district structures; and with support from the UNDP, secretariat have been established for each of the ten Regional Peace Councils and for four of the District Peace councils'.[332]

- **The NPC, Elections and Management and Prevention of Conflict**

Ghana's NPC is the institutional pillar and carrier of its country level infrastructure for peace. It has been relatively stable, operational and in some cases successful and now represents a model for other West African countries to follow. The NPC is making head way in terms of engagement and interaction on local conflict issues. This is largely due to the structure of the council as it is inclusive, manned by top ranking religious representatives with integrity and who are highly trusted and respected across different social, political and cultural sectors of the society. They are able to get communities to come together and talk on conflict issues in order to resolve them. The council is seen to be independent, non-partisan and impartial with little interference from government, which has enabled opposition groups to open their doors for discussions, and consultations on shared values of peace and in building national cohesiveness and peaceful social relations.

The core mandate of the NPC is 'to facilitate and develop mechanisms for conflict prevention, management, resolution and to build sustainable peace in the country'. In

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[329] See more details in the National Peace Council Act 818 of Ghana.
[330] Kotia and Aubyn, p. 20.
[331] Ibid, p. 21.
[332] See more details on UNDP (2015), cited on Giessman (2016), op. cit., p. 28.

achieving this objective, it undertakes activities of mediation, good offices, reconciliation, early warning, peace education, capacity building, and resource mobilization across the three-tier structure. The NPC has engaged local and traditional leaders to undertake constructive negotiations between groups in conflicts, build confidence for reconciliation and social cohesion and mediate to find common grounds on issues that are potential sources and causes of local conflicts. In an interview with Dr. Festus Aubyn who is a research fellow with the program for Conflict management at KAIPTC in Accra, Ghana, he noted that:

> Over the years the NPC has undertaken dialogue and mediation process to solve inter-communal conflict in the Volta region and Northern region of Ghana. The Regional Peace Advisory Committee and in recent times the NPC engaged local authorities to dialogue and resolve the Dagbon Crisis and the Bawku conflict. When a clash broke out in 2007 in a community suburb in Tamale, the regional capital of the north, the Northern Regional Peace Advisory Committee intervened and was able to prevent a potential localized violence from ensuing.[333]

The NPC has been actively engaged with local and traditional authorities in undertaking conflict management and resolution processes on land, chieftaincy, religious and political issues. The most notable achievement of the NPC is its proactive engagement with political parties and local groups, which led to the prevention of electoral violence across Ghana in 2008 and 2012. The 2012 parliamentary and president election was highly charged with supporters of the incumbent National Democratic Congress (NDC) and opposition New Patriotic Party (NPP) undertaking acts of violence in different form. The NPC worked with all political parties through national dialogue leading to the 'Kumasi Declaration' signed by all political parties in support of violent free elections. The NPC supervises the enforcement of the code of conduct for political parties and 'campaign for peace across the country'.[334] And, at crucial stage of calling election result, it deployed all its resources to prevent a potential post-election chaos in the country.

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[333] Aubyn, F. (2015), Interview at the Department for Academic Affairs, KAIPTC, Accra, Ghana, 4th December.
[334] See details on Kotia and Aubyn, p. 26.

The NPC of Ghana has gained strong footing and it is a well-respected I4P that is proving useful in preventing conflict and promoting peace across the country. With support from UNDP, the Council is rolling out its five-year strategic plan (2013-2017) with the main goal of institutionalizing and operationalizing its programs and activities as stipulated in Act 818.

- **Case Study 2: Emerging NI4P in Sierra Leone**

Sierra Leone is one of the smaller countries in West Africa with a population of little over 6 million people. It was embroiled in more than a decade long civil war between 1991 and 2002, leading to a complete collapse of the political, economic and social structures of the country. A Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebel movement launched the civil war, the military got sucked in through multiple coups and counter coups, community and tribal groups evolved into civil militia groups, with mercenaries and neighboring countries playing a part in forging a protracted and implosive conflict lasting for more than a decade.[335]

However, Sierra Leone is now in transition from conflict to state building and post-conflict reconstruction. In the last decade or more, the United Nations undertook the most comprehensive conflict transformation and peace building process that has created some form of relative peace in the country. In fact, some observers view Sierra Leone's transition process as one of the most successful peace-building project by the UN in recent times. Sierra Leone's struggle for peace forms the historical foundation for its evolving infrastructure for peace. At the height of the brutal civil war, a country-level infrastructure for peace was envisaged and established in 1995. This movement was led by the trade union structure in the country. More than sixty different civil society groups including religious, youth, educational and student bodies 'signed on to the effort' and formed a network of civil society movement for peace. This organized civil society platform became known as the National Coordinating Committee for Peace (NCCP). This committee was the first I4P in Sierra Leone and it 'helped to pressure the military government in Freetown to

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[335] See more details on Hirsh, J. (2001), Sierra Leone: Diamond and the Struggle for Democracy, Lynne Rienner Publishers.

negotiate an end to the War, organize a national conference on 'election before peace' and return the country to a civilian rule in February 1996'.[336]

However, the NCCP was short-lived due to lack of an organized leadership structure, insecurities and complex nature of creating a civil response to a war that was raging on between a military regime, an exile democratic government and a disorganized rebel movement. Between 1997, 1998 and 1999, religious groups such as the Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone (IRCSL) and the Council of Churches (CCSL) and Women's groups such as the Mano River Women's Peace Network undertook dialogue with the rebels in the bush leading to gradual mediation between the then government and the RUF rebels. This became the foundation for a comprehensive peace agreement signed by all the warring parties in Lome, Togo, in July 1999.

The transitional process from conflict to peace building in Sierra Leone has been comprehensive. The process of state building was conducted through the development of new institutions, the reforming of old ones, designing and implementation of national policies for peace building, enactment of new legislations as well as physical infrastructures etc., all forming part of the state building and post conflict transformation and reconstruction efforts. At the end of the war, a country level I4P was not developed in Sierra Leone as the country was overwhelmed by a plethora of peace building processes. However, it was stated in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) report recommendation that an infrastructure for peace must be set up to serve as a coordinating body for peace initiatives at community and national level.[337] In this regard, the process of establishing I4P took the form of government policies designed that were implemented to respond to specific risk factors to conflict. For example, prior to the presidential and parliamentary elections in 2007, the UNDP supported the Political Parties Registration Commission (PPRC) to develop an independent mediation structure within the commission to serve as a platform to mediate and resolve emerging conflict amongst political parties to ensure political stability across the country.[338] It also provides support for 'the deployment of local-

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[336] Jusu-Sheriff, Y. (2004), Civil Society. In Adebajo, A. and Rashid, I., (eds.) *West Africa's Security Challenges: Building Peace in A Trouble Region,* International Peace Academy, Lynne Rienner Publishing.
[337] See details on the Sierra Leone TRC Report.
[338] See more details on http://www.pprcsierraleone.org.

level mediators, alongside a sustained advocacy campaign for peace that was often led and conducted by disempowered youth'.[339]

However, the sort of I4P that has evolved over the years in the country is structurally developed within institutions, sectors and groups. They are implemented as programs, and policy guidelines serving as pillars and carriers to build sustainable peace in the country. Before the 2012 general elections, the UNDP supported the National Electoral Commission (NEC) to develop and implement an electoral code of conduct for political parties thereby forming rules, regulations and activities for the conduct of a peaceful national election. Institutional development in the sectors of security, human rights, justice etc. such as National Human Rights Commissions, justice sector development program are all part of the larger institutional foundation for infrastructure for peace in Sierra Leone.

Furthermore, civil society groups such as West Africa Network for Peace Building in Sierra Leone and its constituent networks across the country have started a national dialogue process for the government to develop a Department of Peace at the Ministry of Internal Affairs, or a national peace committee or commission to be the building block for a country-level infrastructure for peace. The UNDP has expressed willingness to support its development. In this regard, WANEP and other national NGOs and even the Department for Peace and Conflict studies in the University of Sierra Leone are using their operational networks to get a comprehensive agenda that can be operationalized into a NI4P. In an interview with Moses Seiwoh who is one of the UNDP program specialists for the development of country's NI4P he states that:

> 'since the withdrawal of the United Nations Integrated Peace building mission in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL), the UNDP has been working on various related issues of peace infrastructure in the country. Last year under the country program, we trained local peace mediators and dialogue facilitators at chiefdom levels. We trained 149 peace mediators spread across every chiefdom in the country. These structures have been

[339] Kumar, C., Haye, Jos Del la (2012), 'Hybrid Peace Building: National Infrastructure for Peace' *Global Governance,* Vol. 18, No. 1, p. 16.

developed as part of the larger vision to institutionalize a local peace infrastructure'.[340]

The potential for a NI4P to be developed in Sierra Leone is gaining a stronger footing. In an interview with a senior consultant in this process, its development and institutionalization will start with a National Peace Policy translating into national, and subnational structures involving government ministries, department and agencies, civil society networks, national early warning systems, local partners and community leaders. Mrs. Memunatu Pratt who is the Head of the Department for Peace Studies at Fourah Bay College and a consultant for the UNDP peace building support projects maintains that 'the I4P program is about building a web of relations between different institutions working on peace building in Sierra Leone but with a central structure to coordinate activities at national to subnational levels'.

In the current conceptual framework that has been developed by UNDP, the National Commission for Democracy and Human Right has been identified as a possible institution whose mandate can be transformed or expanded to accommodate a national I4P. [341] WANEP-Sierra Leone has developed National Early Warning System (NEWS) that is fully operational with community monitors reporting on communal insecurities and risk of conflict. The NEWS program is a preventive mechanism that is envisaged to be part of the I4P structure. There are many institutions that will be sucked into the I4P process but will be driven by civil society community. Religious and traditional authorities have been identified as partners, the Sierra Leone Police and its local police partnership board, political party organizations and related government departments and agencies are expected to be involved. Having explained these developments, I must state that Sierra Leone still has a long way to go in establishing the institutional foundation of the process. The infrastructure itself is yet to be fully set up but UNDP has taken the initiative to establish it before the general election in 2018.[342]

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[340] Seiwoh, M. (2016), Interview at UNDP head office, Freetown, Sierra Leone, 29 November.
[341] UNDP Sierra Leone, Project document.
[342] Pratt, M. Interview at the Department for Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Sierra Leone, 28 November, 2015.

- **Case Study 3: Emerging NI4P in Cote D'Ivoire**

Cote D'Ivoire is a francophone country with a population of more than 20 million people. It is home to diverse ethnic groups with different languages and culture. It gained independence in 1960 under the leadership of Felix Houphouet-Boigny who ruled the country until his demise in 1993. Under his leadership the country flourished socially and economically and became one of the most developed countries in the sub-region. Houphouet-Boigny was a charismatic leader who employed an effective political patronage system to control the various political constituents in the country and as a pan-Africanist established closer ties with his West African neighbours. The country flourished and many people emigrated into the country for a better life. However, the political foundation of the country was based on a one party political system that lacked well-organized democratic institutions of governance; and the demise of its leader led to the collapse of the governance system of the country.[343]

Cote D'Ivoire has been clouded by more than two decades of political conflict. Since 1993, the desire of successive leadership structures to consolidate their hold on political power developed an ideological agenda of Ivoirite- a concept that sought to divide and discriminate between indigenes of the country and the immigrant population. Over the last two decades the ideological underpinning of Ivoirite gave 'anti immigrant sentiments an explicitly ethnic connotation and laid the ideological foundation for an emerging political culture dominated by ethnic and regional loyalties'. [344] Successive presidents have used it to suppress opposition and disqualified potential contenders. Then President Henry Konan Bedie exploited the concept throughout the 1990s for political gains. General Robert Gueii who removed him from office through a military coup in December 1999 used the same ideology, and also Laurent Gbagbo used it against his opponent Alassane Ouattara. This xenophobic social and political agenda damaged the prospect for national cohesiveness and created a divided country that imploded into civil conflict.

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[343] See more on Kasuka, B. (2013), *Prominent Africa Leaders Since Independence*. New Africa Press, Dar es Salaam.

[344] Amedzrator, L.M., Abdullah M. (2015), Escaping the Repertoire of Election Crisis: Prospects and Challenges of the Evolving Infrastructure for Peace in Cote D'Ivoire, *Policy Brief*, Kofi Annan International Peace Keeping Training Centre.

However, the change of power and an evolving democratic process is increasing the prospect for peace and stability in the country. But there are still social tensions and political divide. This has encouraged the government to develop the Ivorian Infrastructure for Peace.

The Structure, composition and prospect of the Ivorian I4P

Cote D'Ivoire is currently developing an infrastructure for peace. The structure is expected to take the form of a national peace council with an executive secretariat with 'local representation in districts and sub-district' across the country. The composition of the council will include representation from the government, traditional and religious leaders, civil society groups, women's groups and a member of the Academy of Science, Art, Culture and Diaspora (ASCAD); and many stakeholders view this structure as good enough to undertake conflict prevention efforts.[345] However, civil society groups have expressed concern over the credibility and impartiality of the participation of some traditional and religious leaders who have lost integrity and respect due to their involvement in the politics of the state. The current structure of the I4P will be put forward to the national assembly for approval and enact a legislative bill to give it institutional legitimacy in the country.

Nonetheless, there are potential challenges on coordination between government institutions and other local stakeholders. Many fear that the process will be politicized. Also, the Ivorian Electoral Commission is said to be relatively weak and connected with government. This will affect the ability of the national peace council to constructively engage with the commission on possible elections related conflict situation. Religious and tribal authorities are said to be involved in politics, therefore, building confidence and trust amongst religious institutions matters for a viable I4P. However, it is hoped that the Ivorian I4P will help to consolidate peace in the country and constructively engage in political stabilization of the country.[346]

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[345] Ibid.
[346] See more details on Amedzrator, L.M., Abdullah M. (2015), op. cit.

- **Case Study 4: National Peace Policy of Nigeria**

Nigeria is the most populous country in West Africa and the entire Africa continent with over 173.6 million people. It is also home to the largest economy in the sub-region and the continent. The country has managed the most complex state building process since independence, and has had its fair share of conflict. Since its independence in 1960, the country has been overshadowed by challenges to its statehood and the prospect for building a national cohesive society. This has come about as a result of multiple crises that threatened to destabilize the country. Secessionist tension looms large while the country has been overran by a Boko Haram militant group terrorizing the communities in the northern region of the country. As noted in the IPCR report of December 2016, 'the constituent groups and regions of the country have variously witnessed conflicts that includes, land ownership and boundary disputes, indigenes-settlers conflict, farmers-herdsmen conflict, livestock rustling, ethnic-religious violence, chieftaincy and traditional leadership tussles, political and electoral conflict, thuggery, cultism, vigilante and other forms of criminality, oil-related conflict and self determination agitation amongst others'.[347] The conflict over the country's natural resources continues to evolve in the Niger Delta region and has become protracted across communities. Nigeria has faced political crises for decades with multiple coups and changes of governments. Even though the political system has evolved into a stable democratic structure with a viable governance system, the country needs a cohesive institutional platform to deal with and find common grounds in preventing and managing social tensions and political problems.

Nigeria is a huge country with a heterogeneous social system that is founded on hundreds of tribal groups with different frame of social interactions, political networks and economic arrangements. It has a federal system of government that covers thirty-six states within six geopolitical zones making up the geo-political governance framework of the country. This geo-political structures form part of the protracted nature of conflict and insecurity in the country. However, there are Peace Management Organizations (PMOs) that form part of a network of institutions

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[347] Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (2016), Strengthening the Infrastructure for Peace in Nigeria', Report of a Stakeholders. Consultation on the I4P Programme, p. 9.

responding to various conflict situations in the country. These PMOs include 'statutory institutions and agencies that are backed by governmental laws and policies and vested with general or specific responsibilities at local, state and national levels' and also include local and national legislative systems, security and emergency agencies and relevant government departments.[348] There are also non-state actors made up of community-based and civil society organizations such as religious organizations, traditional institutions (i.e. council of chiefs, town unions etc.), professional and trade groups, labour unions, academia and the media that are engaged in different programs within their domain of operations in response to conflict and insecurities across communities in Nigeria.

These existing PMOs and related institutions have been responsive to the Boko Haram insurgency in the North-East geopolitical zone by 'actively involved in effort to combat the insurgency, protect and support the victims and vulnerable and finding solutions for long-term cessation of violence and rehabilitation of their communities and livelihood'. In the South-South geopolitical zone PMOs have been responsive to the resource-based conflicts and violence involving the Niger Delta militants. In these looming conflicts across communities, there have been opportunities for engagement amongst PMOs to 'create peace councils and intergroup platforms' to respond to risk of conflict[349].

However, these interactions amongst PMOs are indications that the country has institutional pillars that make up the building blocks for the establishment of a countrywide infrastructure for peace. In this regard, there is the need to integrate this network of interactions amongst PMOs from state level to non-state level into a broader NI4P framework. The Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR), an institutional component of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nigeria, has taken the pioneering work of achieving this goal.[350]

Established in 2000 with an initial focus to be the hub for policy relevant research and capacity building in peace and conflict management, IPCR is now the central platform

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[348] Ibid.
[349] See more details on IPCR report (2016), p. 10.
[350] Ibid.

working on the development of NI4P in Nigeria. It convened a stakeholder's consultation in 2015 that culminated in the formalization of a program plan towards the development of NI4P in the country. The core objective of its NI4P program is to 'establish and entrench an overarching framework for understanding, enabling, empowering and coordinating appropriate policies, institutions, structures and mechanisms for peace building and conflict management'.[351]

IPCR has drafted a National Peace Policy. The Policy is comprehensive and calls for the development of a national peace commission under a broader national architecture for peace in Nigeria. The National Peace commission will be an 'independent peace-building body that will be established by an Act of the national assembly to solve, reduce, counter or prevent conflict or disputes between some of the country's many distinct conflicts'.[352] This commission is expected to 'operate at local, regional and national levels and will involve local communities and individuals representing various religious, political and social groups in peace building'.[353] The Federal Executive Council will ratify the policy to serve as a legitimate road map to manage and prevent conflict. In December 2016, IPCR undertook a national stakeholder consultation on strengthening the infrastructure for peace in Nigeria. These consultations were held in Abuja, and in the top two conflict-sensitive geopolitical zones of the country, which are North-East (Yola, Adamawa states) and South-South (Calabar, Cross River state). In an interview with Andy Nkemneme, a Research Fellow with IPCR, he stated to me that:

> These zonal and national consultations brought together a mix of state and non-state actors including the legislature, security agencies, federal and state government institutions, traditional institutions, religious organizations, women and youth organizations, civil society groups, community-based organizations, donor agencies, international partners and the media.[354]

This cluster of groups within the context of a NI4P process is conceptualized as cooperative institutionalization of conflict prevention.

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[351] Ibid.
[352] See details on the draft National Peace Policy for Nigeria.
[353] Draft National Peace Policy of Nigeria.
[354] Nkemneme, A. (2016), Interview, Aster Plaza, Hiroshima Prefecture, Japan, 17 February 2016.

In another development, prior to election in 2015, there were serious concerns that the country would descend into chaos from a hotly contested election process. In this regard, the Office of the Special Adviser to the President on Inter-Party Affairs in collaboration with the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA) on January 14, 2015, facilitated the signing of the 'The Abuja Accord' on the prevention of violence and acceptance of results by parties contesting the elections. The signatories also committed themselves to the monitoring of the adherence to the Accord by a National Peace Committee made up of respected statesmen and women, traditional and religious leaders.[355] And, following the signing of the Accord, UNDP has continued providing both financial and technical support towards efforts aimed at promoting good governance and peace in Nigeria.[356]

7.6. The Relevance of NI4P for Cooperative Institutionalization of Conflict Prevention

NI4P is a good approach to institutionalize the process of conflict prevention. Country level I4P brings together national and local actors under one institutional process in finding common grounds for stability and peace in the society. This means that it is a standing capacity for conflict management, and institutionalizes the process of response to produce results that lead to conflict transformation and peaceful social change. NI4P represents the interconnected web of institutional processes that prevent conflict. In other words, NI4P in its entirety forms the institutional and operational carriers for cooperative institutionalization of conflict prevent.

The collective decision and actions of all actors within an infrastructure for peace is a sign of conformity and acceptance; as it gains recognition and legitimacy, it becomes institutionalized. Furthermore, NI4P as a process depends on existing organizational structures, and mechanisms of problem solving that enable collective actions and interactions on conflict issues in order to respond to risk factors and avert a crisis situation. For example, early warning is a form of I4P. It is a mechanism that enables response to risk of conflict. The interaction between different institutions and groups in its operationalization automatically lead to its institutionalization.

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[355] See more on The Kukah Centre website at http://thekukahcentre.org/peace-committe/.
[356] See more on The UNDP Nigeria website at http://www.ng.undp.org.

Therefore, the emergence of NI4P across countries and communities in West Africa is a good approach to institutionalize a country level conflict prevention program. It becomes a platform for a sustainable process of interactive engagement amongst and between different groups. This sustained interaction through mediation, negotiation, early warning or confidence building makes conflict prevention processes to become embedded in the activities of stakeholders, and overtime becomes institutionalized.

- **Linking the ECPF to NI4P**

The ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework is a comprehensive plan for conflict prevention across countries in the sub-region. It calls for cooperative interactions through multi-actor and multi-dimensional actions by member states in defusing and eliminating potential threats of conflicts in an institutional manner. The framework asserts that state-government is 'the principal implementing agencies of conflict prevention and peace building and must take the lead in creating conditions for the full and active participation of all citizens and their organizations…in the conception, elaboration, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of conflict prevention and peace building initiatives'[357]

In this regard, country level infrastructures for peace meet the institutional needs for the implementation of the ECPF by government of ECOWAS member states. NI4P builds synergies and network of interactions of groups and institutions to prevent conflict. It involves different component of activities as stipulated in the ECPF such as early warning, peace education, human rights and mediation processes; and it has the institutional platform that includes different groups in all sectors of the society to prevent conflict.

- **NI4P and Early Response to Conflict**

Early warning needs to be complemented by early response to risk of conflict to enable prevention and transformation. In this regards, NI4P is a good institutional structure that can undertake early response to emerging threats of conflict in any

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[357] ECPF (2008), op. cit., p. 57.

community. The I4P leadership structure whether formal or informal can intervene through consultation, fact-finding, negotiation, mediation and resolution processes as a real time early response to prevent the conflict situation from escalating. Therefore, the network of interaction within the framework of an I4P can actively become a pillar for response to situations of conflict across communities. A good example is the early response undertaken by the National Peace Council of Ghana in engaging political parties and quelling violence during the 2012 general elections.

- **Coordination and Harmonization**

A well-organized and operationally viable infrastructure for peace can be a central pillar for coordination and harmonization of a country-level level peace building agenda. For example, Ghana's NPC has a three-tier structure with a top-down approach starting from the national, regional and down to local peace councils or advisory committees. The national structure coordinates and harmonizes the general structure of operations and interaction in all peace promotion activities and are structured the same in the country. The NPC also coordinates with WANEP and other country-based peace building institutions in harmonizing their programs for peace building interventions. Therefore, NI4P gives institutional support for coordination and harmonization of wide ranging programs for peace in the country.

- **Localization of Response and Prevention**

One of the core strength of NI4P structures is their potential to use indigenous processes for conflict prevention. It encourages localized responses to local conflict by using traditional value system to address conflict. As local actors and peace committees form part of country level I4P, indigenous methods are applied as part of responses to conflict issues. In West Africa, local responses take the form of intervention by tribal and religious leaders who used their cultural methods of engagement and conflict-handling mechanisms to prevent localized conflict situations.

7.7. Conclusion

The emergence of NI4P across communities in West Africa is a good approach to institutionalize a country level conflict prevention program. The case of NI4P is applied in this chapter to connect cooperative institutionalization for conflict prevention within state and sub-state systems across communities in West Africa. NI4P is a comprehensive structure that is established at the country level to respond to potential conflict issues. This means that it is an institutional platform that brings different set of actors with different interest and constituencies to harmonize their programs and activities in ways that respond to conflict risk factors mitigate potential crisis and maintain stable process of conflict prevention.

Local conflicts demand local responses and communal structures such as traditional and religious bodies applied belief systems of peaceful social relationships to reduce risk of conflict. In this regard, Chukwuemeka Eze head of WANEP states that 'issues like communal conflict, chieftaincy disputes, electoral dispute and violence that are not national or subnational in character can be handled by local peace infrastructures'. The four countries analysed in this chapter are in different stages of developing NI4P. Ghana has a NPC and it is always equated to NI4P. However, the NPC is just one aspect in a NI4P program. The NPC is not comprehensive enough and does not build synergies with other local and national processes. Therefore, the process needs more public awareness and the government of Ghana should provide more financial support to strengthen its operations.

In the other case studies of Sierra Leone, Nigeria and Cote d'Ivoire, some context-specific local response initiatives have been in existence from the aftermath of post conflict peace building initiatives in these countries. However, a comprehensive country level I4P process is being developed now to harmonize national programs in mitigating risk factors of conflict. In Nigeria, IPCR is establishing a database of PMOs that will be used to coordinate peace-building activities; while in Sierra Leone, WANEP is using its civil society platform to increase sensitization for the development of I4P. These recent development creates more possibilities for harmonization of I4P initiatives across communities in West Africa through institutional cooperation.

Conclusion: Towards Cooperative Institutionalization of Conflict Prevention in West Africa

West Africa remains one of the most advanced regional subsystems in Africa with regards to building architecture for peace, conflict management and prevention. ECOWAS has successfully taken leadership roles in building the foundation for peace making and peacekeeping as well as institutional frameworks towards management of conflict in the sub-region. It operates the most sophisticated early warning system in Africa, has strategic advantage in peacekeeping and enforcement systems and an operational architecture to manage conflicts. There are regional initiatives and national processes as well as local platforms that are constantly emerging to tackle conflict issues. These new institutional frameworks are laying emphasis on collective action to build a preventive regime in the sub-region and require that regional cooperation and integration put more emphasis on conflict prevention and must be operationalized through institutional cooperation.

This is the premise of cooperative institutionalization as an analytical framework to understand the convergence of institutions, methods, structures and processes towards implementation of preventive action. Part of the study (Chapter Three and Four) focused on developing an analytical framework to explore the network of interaction between and across regional, national and local setting. This framework can change to fit different forms of cooperation (both vertically and horizontally) across sectors and institutions within a subsystem. It can be cooperative institutionalization between states, within states, between state-government and NGOs or NGOs and local actors as well as state-government and regional organizations. It is a flexible framework that can take different shape or design but is meant to serve the purpose of conceptualizing institutional cooperation for conflict prevention in any given regional subsystem.

However, I make no claim to its analytical viability in all settings as structures of subsystems can change and operational methods of prevention are evolving as conflict processes change. However, within the context of this study, cooperative institutionalization conceptualizes the convergences of institutions in taking decisions or actions towards managing conflict. In this regard, the study's methodology used case studies (in Chapter Five, Six and Seven) to analyse various methods of

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preventive actions, and understudy, observed and collected data on methods of cooperation amongst different types of institutions in West Africa. The study covered institutional and normative case studies (regional institutions in Chapter Five), operational case studies that features interactions between regional institutions and NGOs in Chapter Six and country-based case studies in Chapter Seven within the analytical framework of cooperative institutionalization.

The data collected are analysed within the context of West Africa and are organized and presented in a descriptive case study format of facts and findings. The findings show different types of institutional cooperation towards conflict prevention and based on participants' observation and interviews presents three methods of cooperative arrangements that are applicable in implementing policies or initiatives in responding to risk factors for conflicts across communities. Data were collected on WANEP and ECOWAS institutional cooperation, the organization of preventive diplomacy and the framework for operationalization of the ECOWAS Standby Force. The analysis in chapter six is organized within these case studies but with a focus on understanding the interconnected web of relationship amongst multiple institutions in implementation of preventive measures across countries.

However, the data analyzed does not present a holistic framework of a step-by-step structure of how an institutional cooperation led to the end of a conflict but instead conceptualizes the different ways institutions have work together in building a preventive regime in the sub-region.

The data and conceptual analysis presented and the organization of descriptive facts and findings ascertain that institutional cooperation for conflict prevention is fundamental to building a preventive regime in the sub-region. The analytical approach also shows that the process of institutional cooperation is still a work in progress with opportunities for concrete actions and more convergences of sectors and processes to achieve the goal of managing and preventing conflict. However, as part of the concluding commentary, I want to highlight some key issues that are relevant towards achieving institutional cooperation for conflict prevention in West Africa.

- **Institutional Awareness for collective action**

Building preventive regime in any society does not end with the development and adoption of norms. It must be followed by its institutionalization through structured programmes, which must be undertaken within the short, medium to long term. However, the foundation of all these processes starts off by raising awareness. For instance, the implementation of the ECPF is strongly reliant on the level of awareness of its operational relevance by state institutions and non-state entities in the field of conflict management and peace building. Section IX, Paragraph 103. a., of the ECPF, states the need for 'awareness promotion' as an important aspect in order to enable the implementation of the framework. However, in a study undertaken in 2010 by KAIPTC to assess 'State-level Awareness of the ECPF in four ECOWAS member states (Benin, Burkina Faso, Liberia and Ghana), the findings shows that even though there is high level of interest in the ECPF, 'the level of awareness about it is low in all the four countries where the study was carried out'.[358]This downplays the potential for better integration and institutionalization of preventive actions across member states.[359]

In this regard, there is the need for ECOWAS to embark on a sub-regional awareness campaign in all member states, in order to sensitize people about the content of the ECPF, and what activities can be undertaken 'in an institutional manner'. This will make governments and peace building institutions be more interested and gradually take ownership and commitment that will lead to action.

- **Legitimacy and Acceptance across West Africa**

The utilization of any institutional approach in undertaking preventive actions must be backed by its recognition, acceptance and legitimacy across different sectors of society. Whether a bottom-up or top-down method is applied, it must gain the acceptance and legitimacy of its constituents for its application to be realized and make meaningful impact. As suggested by Williams (2011), 'in developing peace

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[358]KAIPTC Report (2010), op. cit., p.41.
[359] Courtesy of Skype Interview with Samuel M. Atuobi, Former Head of International Institutions Programme, KAIPTC, 19 March 2014.

instruments, we must first seek legitimacy and acceptability before making them legal and binding through signatures'.[360] The struggle for legitimacy and acceptance of conflict prevention framework and its 'institutional retooling' by ECOWAS, member states and peace building institutions is because, as postulated by Ismail (2008), the process has been 'restricted to government to government interactions'. Therefore, he suggested that 'regional systems of justice, security and law making among other systems that affect local population, need to be considered legitimate by local people if they are to work well'.[361] This means that preventive actions can gain the support and acceptance of local communities, if its contents and propositions speak to the needs, disaffections, insecurities and vulnerabilities of the people whether directly or indirectly.

Also, legitimacy and acceptance will be measured on the network of institutions (i.e. state entities, non-state actors and local groups, across communities) that work collectively towards the realization and sustainability of preventive actions. For example, in the implementation of an early warning system, governments, civil society groups, local authorities, security sectors, NGO, etc. must all see themselves involved in the process. This will increase the legitimacy of the early warning programme and its acceptance and ownership by different institutions in the community or the State.

- **Adapting Traditional Approaches: Building Top-Down to Bottom-Up Approach**

Cooperative institutionalization in the context of conflict prevention espouses both top-down and bottom-up processes. However, the adoption of the ECPF was undertaken using a top-down approach, in which experts, institutional bureaucrats, diplomats and politicians came together in the drafting and adoption of the framework. Though it is stated that the implementation of the ECPF must be done in an 'institutional manner', the methods for implementation presented in this study can work effectively and gain meaningful impact if in the conduct of preventive actions

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[360]Williams, I. (2011), Reflecting on Our Knowledge in Peacemaking. In Jaye, Garuba and Amadi (eds.), *ECOWAS and the Dynamics of Conflict and Peace-building*, *CODESRIA*, Dakar, p.193.
[361]Ismail, O. (2008), The Dynamics of Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Peace Building in West Africa: Between Change and Stability. The Nordic Africa Institute, p. 32.

more emphasis is given to bottom-up approach. This means that responses to risk and insecurities must target local communities using indigenous approach to problem solving such as infrastructure for peace rather than top bureaucrats and politicians.

Bolaji (2011) writing on 'adapting traditional peace-making principles to contemporary conflicts' in the ECPF, argued that local or traditional methods such as 'dialogue, reconciliation, and reparation, prevention of the rupture of relationships, use of local philosophies, mores, laws, and customs' can be effectively used to prevent violence and conflict across states.[362] Traditional systems of dialogue and mediation, building capacity of local actors and social processes of reconciliation can be undertaken using bottom-up approach. Also, it can be adopted in the implementation of preventive actions such as preventive diplomacy, practical disarmaments, human rights and rule of law and even on early warning programmes.

The establishment of national infrastructure for peace in different countries in the sub-region uses both top-down and bottom-up approach to pursue preventive action; and borrows from local methods and traditional structures within local communities. For example, matters related to the component on 'women, peace and security' can be implemented using local and socially constructed women peace constituencies.

- **Partnership and Coordination across State and Non-State Actors**

It is stated in section IX, para. 103e of the enabling mechanism of the ECPF that 'Partnership' is fundamental for the implementation of preventive actions and that 'ECOWAS shall maintain and reinforce partnership with development partners, research institutions and civil society organizations'.[363] However, such partnership can be managed by the 'delineation of roles'[364] within a coordinated framework of engagement among institutions.

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[362]Bolaji, Kehinde, A. (2011), op. cit., p. 195.
[363]ECPF, p. 53.
[364]Bolaji (2011), op. cit., p.197.

In addition, states and non-state actors must try to collectively engage. This will help to create common understanding and common purpose among actors in both sides of the aisle towards the prevention of conflict or in tackling security concerns within a given state.[365] For example, in the prevention of cross border crimes, state security structures must work with local authorities, community groups and can even form a policing partnership board in preventing cross border crimes.

- **Harmonizing Obligatory Regional and National Legislative Mechanism to fit Local Context**

Crucial to the adoption of norms in a regional subsystem is the need for these frameworks to be enacted into the national legislative structures of the various states that have signed and ratified them. In the context of ECOWAS, the Revised Treaty of July 1993 stipulates in Article 57 that 'member states undertake to co-operate in judicial and legal matters with a view to harmonizing their judicial and legal systems'.[366] However, there has been the ever-existing challenge of regional norms becoming useless or redundant because the leaders of member states lack the political will to transform ECOWAS institutional rhetoric into practical reality. This is because, states fail within their national constituencies to boldly initiate, not to talk of implementing new polices, or undertake reforms or put forward legislations which may lead to the harmonization of ECOWAS norms into the national legislation of the state.

However, more leadership commitment is required in order for relevant legislations and polices to be instituted in direct relation to conflict prevention. This is based on the rationale that if ECOWAS member state undertakes legislation or policies to provide response mechanism to risk factors, then a preventive regime will emerge across the sub-region.

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[365] Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect/ECOWAS (2012), *Regional Policy Forum on the Responsibility to Protect, (A Report)*, Protea Hotel, Abuja, Nigeria, p.3.
[366] See detail Revised Treaty of ECOWAS (1993), op. cit., p.28.

- **On the Issue of Supranationality, Subsidiarity and Complementarity**

Using institutional structures towards the institutionalization of regional norms must be matched, not only by solid political commitment, but also by equally binding laws, which are agreed upon by all its member states. This means that the decisions, laws, treaties, declaration and agreements that member states signed, ratified and agreed upon, must in principle and practice be binding in a 'supranational' manner.

In simple sense, the powers, decisions and actions of the regional institution supersedes the power, decisions and actions of the member states that make up the grouping. In practical reality, the policy decisions that come out of the regional grouping should be accepted by all its member states. In doing so, the member states can take up legislative policies to meet the needs of the regional grouping. In some cases, the decision of the regional body automatically becomes the new policy, norm, and laws of the states that make up the grouping. European Union is a classic example of the supranationality of an intergovernmental body at its best.

In the case of West Africa and ECOWAS, the Revised Treaty of July 1993, conferred the status of supranationality on the regional grouping. This principle of supranationality in the Treaty, is stated in Chapter 3, Article 9, 4 which states that 'decisions of the Authority shall be binding on member states and institutions of the Community' within 90 days after adoption by the chairperson of the Authority. In relation to regional security, Paragraph 2, Article 58 of the Revised Treaty maintains that 'member states undertake to co-operate with the Community in establishing and strengthening appropriate mechanisms for the timely prevention and resolution of intra-state and inter-state conflict'.[367] It is important for West African governments to recognize that the principle of supranationality must apply to the formation of a preventive regime in the sub-region. In this regard they must enact legislation that reinforces national policies to manage and prevent conflict.

Subsidiarity and Complementarity is useful for institutional cooperation. Subsidiarity of preventive measures create space for devolution of decisions, programmes and activities stated in the ECPF. This means that ECOWAS, state and non-state actors,

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[367] Ibid.

local institutions guide their level of cooperation and engagement in a way that preventive programmes are devolved to different institutions at different levels of the operational ladder.

Similarly, in a situation where there has been a clear-cut process of delegating programmes to subsidiary institutions at the state and non-state level, there will be more room for all institutions cooperating on preventive actions to complement one another. For example, taking the case of humanitarian assistance as a method of responding to risk factor its implementation can be realized through engagement between ECOWAS department for Humanitarian Assistance, Early Warning Directorate, the government of the state concern, the military force, humanitarian NGOs, local community leaders, local groups etc.

- **The Need for Viable Democratic Regimes**

The organization of political systems of governance amongst states in the sub-region is usually manipulated by the leadership elites in different social setting leading to political crisis and civil wars. Such situation has led to the breakdown of social systems and collapse of many states.[368] In this regard, a viable process of state building is needed and must be anchored on democratic systems of governance. As argued by Ramsbotham Woodhouse and Mail 'democratization may indeed become an instrument of conflict prevention and conflict management when democratic institutions flourish in ways which are appropriate to local conditions'.[369]

When there are internal mechanisms and institutional norms, which deepen democratic values towards the prevention of conflicts, political will becomes functional. An agreeable political environment can easily absorb and sustain institutional pillars towards the prevention of conflict within the society. For example, in a country where democratic institutions thrive, institutions that promote human rights are developed, the media creates awareness, and social systems that promote

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[368] More on this issues in Adebajo, A. (2002), Building Peace in West Africa: Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea Bissau. *International Peace Academy Occasional Paper Series*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, pp. 23-41, Francis, D. (2008), Introduction: Understanding the Context of Peace and Conflict in Africa, in Francis, D. (ed.), *"Peace and Conflict in Africa"*, Zed Books, London, pp. 3-15, Francis, (2006), op. cit., pp. 59-90.
[369] Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, and Mail (2011), op. cit., p.130.

peace and stability becomes operational. In the midst of such organized democratic structures in the state, the potential for regional norms to fit into governance systems will become a realistic possibility. Therefore, institutionalization of preventive mechanisms require the 'deepening of regional democratic processes' [370] across ECOWAS member state, and represents the necessary ingredients for structural prevention to be undertaken in an 'institutional manner'.

- **Conclusion from Theory and Case Studies**

The purpose of this study is to re-conceptualize the process of implementing conflict prevention mechanisms in West Africa through the lens of institutionalization. In doing so, cooperative institutionalization was theorized as an analytical framework to understand the different method of relational arrangement amongst different types of institutions in making decision and taking action to respond to risk factors to conflict. The analytical framework maintains that cooperation is always possible between regional, state, non-state and sub-state structures in the subsystem. It argues that in West Africa, where shared history of conflict and violence have dominated the social fabric of communities, where cultural identity form bonds and unions amongst nations, where shared values of kinship, traditions, cultures and religious life exist, the opportunity for cooperation is possible. The presence of regional organizations, civil society groups, traditional systems of dialogue and reconciliation and democratic regimes etc. that cut across communities is a readily available platform for institutions to cooperate vertically and horizontally. It is on this premise that cooperative institutionalization of conflict prevention mechanism is possible in responding to potential risk factors to conflict and insecurities across communities in the sub-region.

To prevent conflict in West Africa, risk factors must be identified early enough for responses to be undertaken for the prevention of potential crisis situation. This is done through an effective early warning system that must be institutionalized across communities. One of the case studies analysed is the operationalization of early warning system across West Africa by ECOWAS and WANEP. These two institutions with different status and constituencies have been able to put into

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[370]Musah (2011), op. cit., p.164.

operation the most sophisticated early warning mechanism to identify risk factors and take action to respond. This is a very unique case in Africa and represents a good case study that falls within the theoretical framework of cooperative institutionalization of conflict prevention. Early warning as a mechanism to identify risk factor is now being operationalized in all ECOWAS member states in the form of national early warning systems with WANEP serving as hub for coordination and control. In this regard, early warning mechanism has slowly achieved cooperative institutionalization. ECOWAS, state governments and WANEP have taken collective action and shared responsibilities in its operationalizing in the sub-region.

Similar development can be seen in two other case studies analysed. The first case is the operationalization of the ECOWAS Standby Force. This force is designed to undertake peacekeeping and humanitarian intervention in the sub-region. ECOWAS member states are collectively involved in its development and operationalization as all countries have pledged troops, sharing responsibilities in policy planning, coordination, logistical support and deployment. Nigeria leads one battalion, Senegal leads another and Sierra Leone will provide logistical depot and airfield. This arrangement of cooperation leads to institutionalization of the Standby Force as a mechanism for conflict prevention in the sub-region. The other case study is institutionalization of National Infrastructures for Peace. In September 2013, a joint declaration was made by all partners and ministries of interior of member states of ECOWAS to establish NI4P. This is a response mechanism that uses local peace constituencies to deal with state and sub-state level conflict issues before they get out of control. In this regard, case studies on the emergence of NI4P in Ghana, Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire and Nigeria are analyzed to explain how NI4P is being institutionalization by governments and non-state actors as a response mechanism to localized conflict issues. The process of establishing NI4P across communities in West Africa and the outcome of their formation are both what I conceptualized as Cooperative institutionalization of conflict prevention.

As a conclusion from theory, I want to state that the case studies analysed shows that the process of conflict prevention in West Africa is practice through a network of cooperation between regional, national and sub-state structures as observed in the case of ECOWAS partnership with WANEP in operationalization of early warning

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system. In addition, the institutionalized approach needed for the implementation of the ECPF can be conceptualizes through the theoretical lens of cooperative institutionalization. Also, the network of local peace constituencies needed to establish NI4P, can also be conceptualized through the prism of cooperative institutionalization. However, I will like to not that the impact of these cooperative arrangement may be hard to evaluate as a result of the multiple actors that are involved. Also if needs and interest of institutions change, the process of cooperation may be altered and by extension affects the sustainability of response system. For example when political commitment changed it has a dramatic impact on the analytical framework for cooperative institutionalization.

- **Concluding Remarks**

This research project is largely inspired by my experiences of working in West Africa as a peace-building practitioner in the last decade. I worked for more than four years with WANEP in Sierra Leone and had the opportunity to be involved in the organization's program on early warning and conflict prevention, serving as focal point for civil society in the ECOWARN system and a consultant for ECOWAS on a risk assessment study of its member states. As a peace-building practitioner I had extensive opportunities to engage with local communities, government institutions and regional organizations and traveling across the sub-region on coordination meetings and capacity building programs with different stakeholders and partners cooperating on regional peace and security issues. This enabled me to observe, participate, engage and understand the idea and practice of conflict prevention in the sub-region and the nature of cooperation amongst different peace building organizations in implementing programs that responds to risk of conflicts. Working as a practitioner I was able to observe the different levels of institutional cooperation that takes place in the sub-region, how they are arranged, the sort of activities that enable cooperation and the challenges encountered in the process of collaborating on initiatives for peaceful co-existence.

In as much as conflict prevention should be given priority, its practice and implementation is considered by donors and politicians to be less attractive. One reason is a lack of understanding of what it is as an idea and how it should be

practiced. Donors do not think it is attractive enough and so there is lack of investment in the translation of policy related agendas of conflict prevention into practical reality. Who should pay for activities of prevention is a big challenge as governments and donor organizations prefer to focus on other issues of state building. However, with the level of state fragilities and risk of conflict in West Africa, ECOWAS, state governments and NGOs are putting more emphasis on policies and activities to respond to risk of conflict. These ongoing efforts by various organizations and the nature of their interactions in policy design and implementation of programs are the premise for cooperative institutionalization of conflict prevention in the regional subsystem.

Human security concerns and risk of conflict in recent time goes beyond a single border and affect communities across countries, sub-regions and the international society. Threats of terrorism, proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons, drug trafficking, health epidemic and climate change are transnational in scope and responding to such risk and vulnerabilities demands a systematic process of cooperation across countries and institutions in order to prevent or mitigate them. These new ideas of response to reduce risk have not been given much analytical attention especially within the context of regional subsystems in Africa. In this regard, this study presents a framework to understand the organization of institutional responses towards systematic prevention of conflict using West Africa as a case study. I analysed institutional case studies, operational case studies, policies, and evolving methods of responses to risk of conflict.

Part of the case studies conceptualizes infrastructures for peace as a response mechanism to deal with risk of national and local conflict and are analysed through the lens of its operationalization in Ghana, Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire and Nigeria. Having analysed current development of I4P in these countries, I will conclude that there is some level of optimism in its development. However, these countries are in different stages of its development. Ghana has made progress with successful stories of its application in responding to conflict issues. At the same time, other countries are working on policy frameworks and consultations; whilst others have ad hoc initiatives and community led programs. These developments increase the potential for harmonization and coordination of policies and programs to reduce risk and

respond to conflict issues in different communities. This is the rationale for cooperative institutionalization of conflict prevention.

From the various academic research and literatures I dogged through, I observed that there is little or no research connecting the conceptual ideas of institutionalization to conflict prevention or the practice of conflict prevention through the prism of institutionalization and with specific reference to regional subsystems. Therefore, as my contribution to knowledge, I have attempted to establish an analytical framework to conceptualize conflict prevention within the discourse of institutionalization; and to validate this social theory I analysed observable phenomenon in recent practices of conflict prevention in West Africa. As an analytical framework, cooperative institutionalization of conflict prevention can be used to analyse new trends in other regional subsystems in Africa and subsystems outside the continent as well as in undertaking comparative studies on the practice of conflict preventions between subsystems in different regions of the world.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: List of Interviews conducted

No	Name	Designation	Organisation	Date
1.	Samuel Monday Atuobi	Head International Institutions Programme	KAIPTC, Accra Ghana	19th March 2014
2.	Edward Jombla	National Network Coordinator	WANEP- Sierra Leone	3 December 2014
3.	Prof. David Francis	Head of the African Centre	Bradford University	6 November 2015
4.	Mrs Memunatu Pratt	Head of Department Peace and Conflict Studies	Fourah Bay College University of Sierra Leone	28 November 2015
5.	Frank Okyere	Researcher Fellow, Conflict Management Programme	KAIPTC, Accra Ghana	16th November 2015
6.	Emma Birikorang	Head Peace Support Operations Programme	KAIPTC	18th November 2015
7.	John Mark Pokoo	Head Conflict Management Programme	KAIPTC	18th November 2015
8.	Chukuemeka Eze	Executive Director	WANEP, Regional Office, Accra Ghana	20th November 2015
9.	Dr. Kwesi Anning,	Director, Faculty of Academic Affairs	KAIPTC	24th November 2015
10.	Mustapha Abdallah	Research Associate	KAIPTC	26th November 2015
11.	Serwaa Brewoo	Research Associate	KAIPTC	27th November 2015
12.	Dr. Fiifi Edu-Afful	Deputy Programme Head, Peace Support Operations	KAIPTC	27th November 2015

13.	Levina Addae-Menseh	Programs Director	WANEP Regional Office, Accra Ghana	3rd December 2015
14.	Dr. Festus K. Aubyn	Research Associate Peace Support Porgramme	KAIPTC	4th December 2015
15.	Colonel Edwin A. Adjei	Director of Training, KAIPTC	KAIPTC	14th December 2015
16.	Andy Nkemneme	Chief Research Fellow	IPRC, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of	17th February 2016
17.	Moses Seiwoh	Program officer, Conflict prevention and Peace Preservation	UNDP Head Office, Sierra Leone	29th November 2016
18.				