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Abstract

For hundreds of years, peoples of various and diverse ethnic groups in West Africa had been migrating from their places of origin to far flung areas in the sub-region with freedom. The trend continued to the eve of colonial period. With the advent of colonialism in the sub-region from the turn of twentieth century, artificial boundaries were created and this made trips made to places outside the new borderlines become less easy to undertake. As such, people that once saw themselves as one prior to the appearance of the Europeans now discovered themselves to be foreigners in places inhabited by people that belonged to the same ethnic or even tribal groups as themselves due to the reason of their different colonial masters. This was the exact situation in the cases of the Yoruba of Benin Republic and Western Nigeria, Hausa of Niger and North Western Nigeria, the Fulani of Cameroun and North Eastern Nigeria. Interestingly these 'artificial' boundaries survived the colonial masters that erected them as those who took over the reins of power from them were in most cases their minions and acolytes. After the political independence of various component states the boundaries were still intact. Policies were formulated individually and collectively across the sub region to enhance political and economic cooperation as well as 'linguistic unity'. With all the resources expended on these strategic fronts, this researcher's findings show that migration plays a greater role in bringing the people of the sub region closer especially in economic, linguistic and cultural fronts during the colonial era and post colonial period. This is especially true of the Yoruba emigrants from the South western Nigeria. Thus, the aim of this paper is to examine the extent to which migration has assisted in the economic and linguistic cooperation of the West African sub region. Varieties of primary and secondary sources are used in this study.

Key words: integration, migration, sub-region, boundaries, ethnicity, colonialism

Introduction

If African states -both centralized and non-centralized- believed that they were not part of the international community, especially in terms of international politics and economy, then the events towards the end of nineteenth century showed they were mistaken. The Aztec, Inca and Maya people in the western hemisphere were to learn this fact some four centuries before the Africans: The Indian people too, including Pakistan and Bangladesh were also to come face to face with this reality more than a century before the Africans. Around the middle of nineteenth century, European traders were scattered around West Africa. For instance, during this period, 'legitimate trade' was taking place along the coast of what was to be later known as Nigeria, especially around Lagos and in the Niger Delta area. In this vein, as the suppression of the slave trade and even its complete elimination was of paramount importance to Britain, trade in slaves had been systematically replaced by trade in palm oil, the principal commodity to the Europeans during this period, especially Great Britain Osae and Odunsi (1973, p. 105). Lagos came into the orbit of the British power in 1853 when Benjamin Campbell was appointed as the first Consul of Lagos Thorp (2000, p.13). We have to note here however that during

the first half of the nineteenth century, British Christian missions had been very busy at work in various parts of Nigeria: Lagos, Abeokuta, Bomby, Calabar and Onitsha. During the period under discussion, that is around the mid-nineteenth century, Lagos attracted special attention from Britain for two important reasons: the consistency of the people, especially the rulers of Lagos in perpetuating slave trade despite all efforts by Britain to stop this odious trade and also the great value of Lagos as the main port to the big hinterland in the face of the growing importance of the now valuable palm oil trade in Yorubaland. Thus, it was within this context that Britain appointed John Beecroft as their consul to the Bights of Benin and Biafra in 1849 with oversight of Lagos affairs. Beecroft was a very active official and greatly advanced the British interests and influence in the Southern Nigeria (Osae and Odunsi, 1973, pp. 105-106).

However, having secure foothold in Lagos and the Niger Delta area, the British were determined to have effective control of Yorubaland. Thus, the defeat of the Egba by the British force in 1865 was an expansion of the British authority beyond the confines of Lagos, a crown colony. In preparation for taking over of the rest of Yorubaland, the Governor of Lagos sent a delegation to the warring factions in the area in 1886 in order to achieve a lasting peace. Meanwhile, as the British were in the course of pacifying Yorubaland, a French delegation from Dahomey approached the Alafin of Oyo to negotiate a treaty. As this alarming report reached the Governor of Lagos, he acted hastily to forestall the French move by concluding his own treaty with the sovereign (Osae and Odunsi, 1973, pp. 107-108). As Britain was trying to make a protectorate out of the rest of the Yorubaland, and Nigerian area for that matter, France was not ready to stand *à kimbo* without any share of the spoil. Thus, there was scramble for territory in Borgu area between Great Britain and France towards the close of nineteenth century. The main area of contention were the towns that bordered on Borgu, also known as the Ibarba which was then under the French control. The towns in question were Ilesha Ibarba near Saki and Kisi. The Lagos government acted promptly by putting measures in place to prevent French incursion into these towns. As a consequence, British troops were stationed at Saki as well as Bere and Ilesha which were both Ibarba towns. This action on the part of the British made French adventure into Saki impossible (Aranda, 1973, p.82). Their failure in securing Saki did not prevent the French troops from attempting to enter Kisi. In this enterprise too, they failed (Aranda, 1973, p.83). The last area of Nigeria to come under British rule was the northern part of the country, just as in some other cases, the Royal Niger Company was in large measure responsible for winning the region for Britain. Again France was determined to spread her influence to the territories north-east of Dahomey which she had already acquired. France's main target in this regard was the Fulani empire that covered virtually the whole of the north. Sir George Goldie and the Royal Niger Company were more determined to win the territory for Britain. The scramble for this territory in turn led to struggle over Borgu with the French and British missions sent to the King of Nikki, Borgu's overlord to sign treaty. This issue led to a very dramatic race for territory acquisition in the history of colonization of West Africa. The British eventually won out (Osae and Odunsi, 1973, pp. 115-116).

French failure to acquire territories in the Nigerian area doesn't mean they were not successful in the other parts of West Africa. France began active colonial in sub-Saharan Africa during the early years of the Second Empire. The period of Louis Napoleon, known as Emperor Napoleon III (1852-70) is referred to as the Second Empire. One of the French success stories in West Africa is Senegal. French's connection with Senegal dates back to 1659 when Jean de Caillie, a Frenchman founded the town of St Louis on an island at the mouth of Senegal River. The town was to become the most important French station on the West African coast. A very active Frenchman, Louis Faidherbe was appointed Governor of Senegal in 1854. Faidherbe's eleven years of service to France in Senegal laid the foundation for the French empire in West Africa. But whenever the history of Senegal is written, Britain is guaranteed, even if just in the foot note of that country's history. For instance, St Louis in Senegal fell into the hand of the British as a consequence of the Seven Years War fought in the period 1756-63 between France and Britain. It was returned to the former in 1779. During the Napoleonic Wars (1801-14), it fell again to the British and was eventually returned to France in 1817 (Osae and Odunsi, 1973, p.59).

At this juncture, it is important for us to note that in order to prevent scramble for territories like the cases discussed just above, the Berlin Conference was called at the instance of Germany in 1884. As a matter of fact, there was hardly any prominent area in West Africa not known to the Europeans by 1870. The activities of European missionaries and traders in the southern regions had led to contacts with many of the inhabitants of the areas. In this regard, throughout West Africa, authority was restricted to the coastal areas as these European powers were yet to grapple with the problem of ruling Africans. There was no real involvement in the affairs of Africans, except in the cases of Lagos, Gold Coast, Sierra Leone and Gambia in the British area of interest and Senegal in the case of the French. Then, within the short space of two decades (1880-1900), this situation changed suddenly as the whole of West Africa save Liberia was partitioned into colonies among the Europeans (Osae and Odunsi, 1973, p.119). There were various reasons for this suddenness, and one of such reasons was that industrialization started in Great Britain and for so many years during which her manufactured goods near monopoly with little or no competition throughout the world. When this situation changed around 1870 and other European countries especially France and Germany began to industrialise, they challenged British hitherto position of monopoly in the world market. There was, thus, the need to carve out areas of influence in Africa and Asia, especially West Africa, to serve as outlets for their industrial products and also to source for raw materials, especially, palm products (Osae and Odunsi, 1973, p.120). Another reason was the adventure of the Belgian king, Leopold II in the Congo, a vast area in the Central Africa. This Belgian king created a personal empire for himself in this area and the other European powers, especially Germany, Britain and France, felt that all nations should have free access to the interior of the continent unhindered. Hence, at the instance of Otto von Bismarck, the Chancellor of Germany, an international conference was arranged in Berlin in 1884. One of the declarations at the Berlin Conference was that all nations should enjoy free access

to the interior of Africa. Another declaration, considered even more important was that no European protectorate would be considered valid except there was incontrovertible evidence of effective occupation. As a consequence of this conference, the rivalry of the European powers led to a scramble for colonies in Africa. Thus, there was intense race for treaties with African rulers by the agents of these European powers in the region. This was the exact reason, for instance, for struggle for treaties with African rulers between the French agents and the officials of the Royal Niger Company in Northern Nigeria and the surrounding areas (Osae and Odumisi, 1973, pp.120-121). In the aftermath of their scramble for territories in West Africa, treaties were signed, areas of influence were carved out and colonial boundaries were drawn up without any regard for ethnic or tribal consideration. Hence, one of the most prominent nationalists and state men in the continent, Chief Obafemi Awolowo (1960, p.163) opines:

At the Berlin Conference 1885, the imperialist powers had paid no regard to linguistic or ethnic affinities, nor to geographical features or boundaries in their final share-out of the territories of Africa. The dominant note at the conference was the need to reach a compromise among the contending colonial powers, in order to ensure peace among themselves and a prosperous tenure for each of its newly acquired colonial territory. The result was that people belonging to one and the same linguistic group were split between two or more colonial powers.

1. Independent West Africa and their Attempts at Regional Integration

Starting from 1957 with Ghana, former European colonies in West Africa started gaining self government. It is important to point out here that nearly all political and administrative structure were intact in the first two decades of political independence. Even though the structures left behind by the two principal colonial powers in the region were markedly different, not much was done to effect fundamental changes as regards the tribal and ethnic groups forcefully divided in the region by France and Britain. Thus, the independence West African states are virtually all colonial creations. And it is the reason why colonial boundaries that were drawn arbitrarily throughout West Africa were roundly criticized. The basis of this criticism being that the boundaries so drawn cut across ethnic groups and divided peoples with common heritage. Not only this, the gratuitous division caused inconvenience and untold hardship to the indigenous people of the region for no fault of their own (Osae and Odumisi, 1973, p.131). It is however interesting to note here that the kinds of society left behind by the French people was markedly different from that left by the British due to their very different colonial policies. For instance, the French were, as a matter of policy, of the expectation that their subjects would acquire education and the French way of life so that they could eventually become French citizens. In this regard, the main policy of the French was that the people in their territories, especially those in Goree, St Louis and Dakar would progress eventually to become French citizens with full rights. Thus, the policy of assimilation, that is, turning Africans into Frenchmen was not effective as anticipated by the French (Osae and Odumisi, 1973, p.129). This is in sharp contrast to the British who were only interested in effective occupation of the territories secured and institution of a workable system. This is exactly what informed the introduction of Indirect Rule system which was a success in the northern part of the country, moderate in the western part of the

country and total failure in the east. Indirect Rule is, as observed by Lugard himself in Amalgamation Report and cited by Osai and Odumisi (1973), "The system of Native Administration in the separate Government of Northern Nigeria had been based on the authority of Native Chiefs. The policy of the government was that these chiefs should govern their people, not as independent but as dependant rulers" (p. 126).

At various times since independence, the government of Nigeria has formulated one policy or the other on the promotion of foreign policy in the country, especially as regards Arabic and French languages. Even though English language is a foreign language in the country, but then, it is the nation's official language and lingua franca, hence governments policy on foreign languages are in most cases pertaining to Arabic and French. Thus, governments policy on these two languages are mainly found in its education policy. In this regard, Ayiboye (2005) opines that it would be reasonable to take four principles into consideration when determining foreign language education policy. The four principles according to him are:contiguity principle,diplomatic principle,language-as-technological-short-cut-principle, anddivergent independence principle.145 Considering what each of these principles would yield for Nigeria in terms of foreign language policy, Ayiboye (2005) argues that the contiguity principle makes it reasonable that Nigeria should show interest in her immediate neighbours: Niger, Chad, Cameroun, Benin and Togo. To him, as all these countries are Francophone, the choice of French as one of the foreign languages to be included in Nigeria's foreign language policy is 'undebatable'. He is of the opinion that Nigerians have a lot to profit from learning French, the official language of their neighbours that are seen as ethnic brothers. It is on the basis of this that he is in agreement with Nigerian government for deeming it fit to show some concern for the promotion of French language in schools as well as colleges since the country's independence. He wonders whether Nigerian government's reason for introducing Arabic language into the nation's education curriculum is economic as it is religious, conceding the fact of the link between Arabic and Islam and the religion's position as one of the most widespread in the country (pp.45-46).

Seeing Arabic as a competing foreign language with French, Ayiboye (2005) opines that if the two languages are maintained as electives in secondary school curriculum, there is possibility that the aim of introducing them would be defeated. He then argues that making the two languages alternatively compulsory at the secondary school level would make it reasonable that provision would be made for their instruction at the tertiary level (p.50) Sharing Ayiboye's view on the contiguity principle, Adeniyi (2005, p.111) submits thus: One of the important reasons for Nigeria to open up for the French Language is that the country is totally surrounded by Francophone countries. Nigeria cannot therefore afford to stay in isolation. To encourage good neighbourliness maintain socio-economic ties, Nigeria needs French, while Francophone countries too need English.

He then acknowledges the government's efforts in backing its policy on these two languages with action by establishing the French village at Badagry as well as the Arabic Village at Ngala Adeniyi (2005, p.111). Joining this debate, Sami-Suleiman (2014)

states that French was officially introduced to Nigerian schools in the aftermath of the establishment of O.A.U now known as A.U. in 1963 when the decision was taken by the continental body that English, French and Arabic were to be the official languages of the organization. According to this French scholar, one of the resolutions of O.A.U. was that Francophone and Anglophone countries had to include each other's official language in their school curriculum (p.97). Of course, other countries in the sub-region implemented similar policy on foreign languages for the same reason as that of Nigeria. But it appears this language policy works better in some Anglophone countries. Take Ghana as an example. Aiyboye (2002) observes that whereas Ghana presented 3,419 candidates for O/L French in SSCE examination in 1990, Nigeria presented only 349 candidates for the same examination, despite the fact that their populations during the period were estimated at 12 million and 100 million peoples respectively (pp.21-22).

But at this point, we have to stress that Arabic and French as foreign languages do not share common fate, especially in societies where Islam predominates. And this is the exact reason why Aiyboye himself acknowledges, as cited above, the link between Arabic language and the religion of Islam. In this connection, Oladosu (2005) opines that the Nigerian Muslims are committed to Arabic and Islamic Studies. He proceeds by stating, citing Fafunwa, that you would always find some kind of Quranic and also advanced Arabic schools established wherever there is a Muslim population. In such schools, "both Arabic and Islam are taught simultaneously" (p.65). He observes, "As if Islam has learnt its own lessons from the experiences of Judaism and Christianity, it has struck religiously to Arabic and conferred on it the status of the official language of the religion" Oladosu, 2005, p.65. He thus concludes that the factor referenced above makes Arabic the "second language" as he himself emphasizes of every non-Arab Muslim as it is a language supposedly acquired next to his mother tongue, not only through the study of the Arabic Quran, but also other branches of Arabic and Islamic Studies (Oladosu (2005, p.65) Sami-Suleiman (2014) also attests to the importance of Arabic language in a predominantly Islamic society when she concludes thus "wherever Islam is established, Arabic language must follow suit" (p.96). Thus, to underline different status enjoyed by French and Arabic in a country like Nigeria, it is apposite to draw our attention to Oladosu's (2005) submission that "Arabic cannot be defined as a foreign language within the Nigerian context where a whole indigenous tribe ... has been identified as using the language as a mother tongue and where Arabic has been marked with specific functions ...". His argument is based on the fact that Arabic language is spoken as a mother tongue in Borno State of Nigeria by the Shuwa Arab tribe (p.61-62).

At this juncture, it is very important to emphasise the importance of French language to Nigeria. Just as the country's Francophone neighbours need English language, the Anglophone countries too need French language, to echo Adeniyi's submission as quoted above. But when this issue is closely examined, it appears a country like Nigeria is not so keen in promoting the speaking of French language among its citizens and this boils down to attitude as Aiyboye (2002) observes. As regards Nigeria's attitude to French language, he agrees with Parasher that nobody leans a second language except the need for it becomes inevitable, submitting that this is an established

sociolinguistic fact. He is of the opinion that attitude stimulate and nourish need when such attitudes are positive, in the case of a foreign language. This scholar therefore submits that "the fainter the need the farther the language. Positive attitude should therefore be in inverse proportion to the need" (p.24). It is however interesting to note at this juncture that in 1996, it was declared by the then Nigeria's Head of State that French would become Nigeria's second official language. Though, the fortune of the language seem to have improved with this declaration (Aiyboye, 2002, p.23).

The common step taken in the direction of regional integration by the West African countries was the establishment of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in 1975. Olusola (2015, pp.101-102) hits the nail on head when he states, in relation to the formation of this regional body:

Achieving regional integration was a major concern of West African leaders after independence. Aware of the weak sustainability of narrow domestic markets inherited from colonization, political leaders of the post-colonial West Africa, while continuing the integration project at the continental level, focused on setting up a wide space for regional integration, which transcends administrative, linguistic or political divides left by the colonial domination and administration modes.

In principle, the ECOWAS member states had lofty ideas about the likely outcome of their coming together, the first such since gaining their independence from Britain and France in the 1960s. The treaty that created ECOWAS was signed in Lagos on 28 May 1975 by the following West African countries: Nigeria, Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, Senegal, Gambia, Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Benin, Cape Verde, Togo, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and Sierra Leone. One of the articles of the Treaty, that is, Article 27 affirms a long-term objective of establishing a community citizenship that could be acquired automatically by citizens of all member states. Also, a key objective of the treaty is to remove obstacles to the free movement of people as well as capital and the goods in the sub-region (Olusola, 2015, p.106). But we have to note that, beautiful as the aim and objectives of the 1975 treaty may appear, the free movement of people in the sub-region has still not been realized. As a matter of fact, control on the free movement of persons, goods and even capital between states in the sub-region constituted impediments to direct investment in spite of the abundance of investment opportunities (Olusola, 2015, pp.102-103). But if truth be told, militating against proper functioning of this regional body are myriad of problems. At the root of these problems is a factor that is often neglected: copying what worked elsewhere in an alien environment. And it is why Olusola is of the opinion that a regional economic community like ECOWAS cannot be constructed without taking the specificities of the component states into consideration. He submits that "the idea of indiscriminately copying institutions found in Europe and elsewhere is not only a delusion, but an obstacle to progress in building a regional community in West Africa or elsewhere on the continent" (Olusola, 2015, p.103). In relation to this problem of adopting a strategy that worked elsewhere in West African sub-region, we have to note here that what was to later become the European Union started as the European Common Market which was the outcome of the Treaty of Rome that was signed in 1957. The signatories were those countries that had earlier

in 1951 formed the European Coal and Steel Community; West Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Belgium and Netherlands. Great Britain was conspicuously absent in the two regional organizations at the beginning because of her special relationship with the United States and the Commonwealth countries (Browne, 1970, p.223). The common market was later to be known as the European Economic Community (EEC). European Community (EC) and subsequently European Union (EU) One of the most important of these problems, however is the attitudes in the political arena and differences in the political cultures of member states. One of the greatest problems militating against regional integration as espoused in ECOWAS objectives is the legacy of national sovereignty, as Olusola observes, and also the jealousy with which the sovereignty is guarded. Closely associated with this is the colonial heritage that continually influence national institutions and the attitudes referred to above (Olusola, 2015, p.104). And on top of all these problems is the fact that complete freedom of movement, one of the cardinal objectives of the regional body has still not been realized.

2. Migration Among the Yoruba people in the West African Sub-Region

From the period before independence in the region, migration had been taking place, especially among the Yoruba and the other people of West Africa. As a matter of fact, migration had been taking place among the tribal and ethnic groups in the sub-region long before the colonial rule, especially in the nineteenth century. The migration trend of the Hausa people in the sub-region receives detailed attention in Adamu's (1978) seminal work on the Hausa people, *The Hausa Factor in West African History*. The Yoruba people, part of the so-called "Sierra Leone Experiment" were to transfer their religions, culture and manners to Sierra Leone when they were settled in that country by the British in the aftermath of the end of slavery. Religion in the context of these Sierra Leonean Yoruba was not just about the traditional African religion, but also Islam which some of them professed before being captured as slaves. The experiment that began with the transportation of four hundred "Black Poor" to Sierra Leone from the Great Britain in 1787 was to later incorporate the freed slaves who were also known as "Liberated Africans" or "Recaptives". Among these Liberated Africans were the Yorubas who emerge as a distinct tribal group in the peninsula of Sierra Leone. Of this Yoruba group, Spitzer observes, "Those Recaptives who were originally from Yoruba and known in Sierra Leone as 'Aku' remained exclusive far longer than others by virtue of their numbers, retaining their own language, often espousing Islam rather than Christianity, and tenaciously holding on to their customs" (Spitzer 1975, pp.9-11). However, just before the dawn of colonial era in West Africa, some Yorubas, among whom were adventurers, traders and Muslim clerics started migrating to other parts of West Africa, especially Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire. Though this migration only gained momentum from the first two decades of the twentieth century. In this vein, there is a sizable community of Yoruba migrant groups in Cote d'Ivoire, Benin Republic, Burkina Faso, and so on. And again, we have to note here that there are Yoruba people in Benin Republic who are citizens of that country, separated from their Yoruba brothers only by the reason of different colonial masters, just as in the cases of the Fulanis of

Adamawa and Cameroun and Hausas of Northern Nigeria and Niger Republic. In Cote d'Ivoire, there are so many Yorubas, especially the Ejigbo indigenes. This group of people had either migrated to the country or born by the parents who migrated to the country. As a matter of fact, there are some Ejigbo indigenes who are still residing in the country with their parents, and in some cases, grand parents who are still residing in the country. But one major characteristic of this group of people is that many of them were usually sent back home to Nigeria for primary education, before been allowed to return back to Cote d'Ivoire. A typical example been Mr. Olatomi Akinloye the current Chairman of the Nigeria's Supporters' Club in that country according to Alagbe (2019) Akinloye's parents sent him to Nigeria for Primary education in 1963 when he was only seven years old. He returned to Cote d'Ivoire in 1970 when he completed his primary education (Alagbe, 2019, p.56). This is the exact case with so many people of Ejigbo's extraction in that country. This is because most parents that are from Ejigbo always wanted their children to be familiar with the people and culture of Ejigbo. Thus, people like Mr. Akinloye travelled to Ejigbo once in a year. They were mostly drawn, to that country by the availability of such social amenities like electricity, potable water, and non-hostile business environment. Some of these migrants have married indigenes of the host country as wife or husband.

Migration by the Ejigbo people started around 1902, as reported by Alagbe (2019), when the first set of Ejigbo migrants to that country arrived in Treichville, a suburb of Abidjan. We have to note here that before Cote d'Ivoire became the hub of trade in the region, migrants from Ejigbo used to settle in Benin, Togo and Ghana. Since the major occupation of the Ejigbo people was farming, they were usually engaged in farming in their host communities or engage themselves in local clothing trading. Some grand parents of present day inhabitants of Cote d'Ivoire initially settled in Togo, before moving to Abidjan when the former was becoming saturated in terms of commercial activities. As of 2019, there is an estimated population of two million Nigerians in that country. Eighty per cent of Nigerian residents there are Yoruba with more than seventy per cent of the population from Ejigbo in Osun State of Nigeria (pp.56-57). It is interesting to note at this juncture that it is very common to see aspects of the Ivorian culture in Ejigbo town and among the Ejigbo people as Alagbe observes. Thus, the Ejigbo people imbibed the Ivorian culture to the extent that they imported their food, language music, etc., while they too exported the Ejigbo's religion and culture to that country. Any body familiar with Ejigbo would notice that the French music was very popular in Ejigbo in the 1990s. And as pointed out above, Ejigbo indigenes, especially the males were married to the Ivorian women, even though they mostly interacted among themselves. In order to preserve their culture in Cote d'Ivoire the Ejigbo people banded together in the late 1970s to form Ejigbo Parapo, a socio-cultural organization for people of Ejigbo extraction (Alagbe, 2019, p.58).

Just as in the case of Ejigbo people discussed above, the Saki people also form a formidable community in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. Even though, Burkina Faso is a net exporter of people, the country itself is a country of migrants with Syrians, Lebanese, Malians and Nigerians, especially the Yorubas well represented. The presence of the

migrants in the contiguous West African states like Benin Republic and also Togo naturally extended to such non-contiguous West African country like Burkina Faso. Yoruba adventure started in that country in 1920s with one Yusuf Ayanokun popularly called Baba Yusuf due to his old age before his death and the regard the Yoruba community had for him, according to Yekini (2018). This Ayanokun met an Hausa man called Serti in the course of his adventure. With this Hausa man, Baba Yusuf first settled in Dahomey in the present day Benin Republic, before proceeding to Togo, Ghana and Mali before eventually settling down in Burkina Faso (pp.14-15). Most of the Saki migrants in Burkina Faso are traders. Their trading activities were the main factors that took the early migrants from Saki to this country. In fact many migrants from Mali and Niger especially the Hausa and the Yorubas were attracted to Burkina Faso due to the opportunities that opened itself for traders in Ouagadougou. Yoruba traders in Burkina Faso were attracted to the country due to the favourable government policy as well as the structural arrangement of Burkina Faso economy which made it easy Yekini, 2018, p.30. The country's economy is dominated by informal sector that involves petty commodity production and distribution as very few Burkina engage in salary earning job. As active participants in this informal trade, the Yorubas have stalls by the major road sides and also in the main markets. They are part of the group of traders known as Wondoko in the central market and are scattered in other major markets like Sankar Yare, Dix Yare and Paglayani Yare Yekini (2018, pp.30-31).

These Nigerian traders served as middle men as they purchased and distribute their products in every nook and cranny of Burkina Faso like Bilbologo, Koulouba, Po, Kaya, Poutenga, Koupela and Tenkodogo. Yorubas were involved in various economic activities as diversified as banking, teaching, nursing, transportation barbing and administrative work in the country. Even though the Yoruba people in Burkina Faso adhered to their mode of traditional dressing of *iro* and *buba* for the female; *baba*, *sokoro* and *fila* for the male, they adopted the Burkina mode of dressing as they use Burkina Ankara to sew shirt and trouser Yekini (2018, p.33). Yoruba marriage ceremony in Burkina Faso is as is conducted in Yoruba land. All the Yoruba cultural elements in marriage are still observed in marriage conducted by them in Burkina Faso. Local musical instruments like *sekere*, *dunda* and *bata* drum are engaged in the course of marriage ceremony in Burkina Faso. Even though the Yoruba people in this country speak French and Burkina indigenous languages like Moore and the rest, they maintain their culture and mother tongue and brought up their offspring in *line*, with their own ways of life Yekini (2018, p.34).

However, apart from those travelling around the sub-region to improve their economic lives, we have those migrants who migrated to another parts of West Africa in order to proselytize. For instance, there were many Muslim scholars of Ilorin origin who not only extended their evangelical tentacles to the rest of Yoruba land but also to some other parts of West Africa. Already, the Hausas and Yorubas had played significant roles in the growth of Islam in Ghana during the 19th century. One of such Muslim scholars was Sheikh Muhammad Jamu, one of the second generation students of Tijl Adab, the great Muslim scholar of his time who hailed from Ilorin. Sheikh Jabaye was to become a

great scholar himself. He was a prolific writer and eloquent preacher. He happened to be the first National Missioner of Ansarul Islam Society of Nigeria in 1942 he travelled to many countries in West Africa. In his preaching enterprise, he toured countries like Benin Republic, Togo, Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire (Adia, 2013, pp.47-48). Another notable scholar who contributed immensely to Islamic scholarship in Ghana was Alhaji Hussien Uthman Dikko. Having migrated to Ghana, he became a renowned preacher at the central mosque of Accra in 1962. When he arrived in Accra, he met that able Muslim scholar whom we have just discussed above, Alfa Jimoh Jabaye who recognized the younger man's talent. His recognition as a great scholar in Accra did not rest only on his been a preacher in the Accra mosque, but also on his establishment of Arabic and Quranic schools for the Muslims in Cow lane in Accra and other parts of that city. This Muslim scholar is credited to have converted many Ghanaians into the religion of Islam (Adia, 2013, pp.44-45). Another leading light of Islamic propagation of Ilorin extraction in Ghana was Braimah Baba Abdul Rahim who was born in Accra in 1932. His grand father, Alhaji Abdul Rahman was a migrant from Ilorin. Sheikh Braimah is a great Muslim scholar who was learned in fiqh, kalam and Islamic History. He eventually lectured at the University of Ghana, Legon between 1969 and 1996. At the university, he taught Qur'an, Hadith, Doctrine Theology, Ethics, History and Arabic. He was the first black man in the university to serve as the Head of Department. He published many books on theology as part of his contributions to the development of Islam Adia (2013, p.45).

As a matter of fact, the trans-border dimension to the network of Ilorin scholarship was not restricted to only scholars of Ilorin origin preaching and teaching in other West African states as the case of Sheikh Adam Appiedu shows. He is referred to in some quarters as the father of Asante Islam as he is a great advocate of reform in Ghanaian Islamic education system while campaigning for a return to orthodox Islam. He was one of the students of the renowned Islamic scholar of Ilorin origin, Sheikh Adam Abdullah al-Ilori and graduated from Markaz based in Agege, Lagos, Nigeria, the Islamic school established by this great scholar. He went back to Ghana in 1959, after his graduation from this school (Anidu 2015, p.31). There are some other former students of this Islamic scholar, products of his school referred to above who are scattered around the West African sub-region, especially the Yorubas in Benin Republic. We have to note here however that the policies and or actions of some member states are not in line with the spirit of ECOWAS founding. For instance, in January 1983, the government of Nigeria made the announcement to the effect that all the aliens living illegally in the country should regularize their stay or leave the country within fifteen days. This was a painful decision for the affected aliens as this was the time Nigeria's economy was considered good and her currency strong. Nigeria was then a land of milk and honey and aliens from the other ECOWAS states flocked to the country in droves. At the peak of this influx it was estimated that aliens were crossing at just one border post at the rate of two hundred and fifty people per day (Oloaso, 1991, p.197). Thus, we can see that national immigration laws were, unfortunately, not harmonized before the ECOWAS protocol came into force. This is perhaps because migration policies are

responsibilities of different agencies in different countries as Olusola (2015) opines. And coupled with this reality is the fact that national immigration laws of the member states of the regional body were not harmonized before the ECOWAS protocol came into force (p.104). And again, Olusola's (2015) observation that "the long term regional benefits that might accrue from the free circulation of peoples and entrepreneurship within the community at present seems to have been heavily outweighed by very high short-term economic and political risks involved in their implementation in member states" (p.109) could not have been more relevant given Nigeria's recent closure of her land borders. Nigerian government closed her land borders in August this year 2019 in order to stop the importation of basic commodities like food items that could be produced locally, especially rice. The importation of items like these have been considered to be injurious to Nigerian economy, and the Buhari government decided to act.

However, away from the Yoruba migrants that are the theme of this study, there are some other factors that also play their parts in regional integration. The factor of poverty in some West African states makes it difficult to combat child trafficking. For instance, some girls been trafficked from a country like Togo to Nigeria are willing victims as Akakpo-Vizah (2017) observes. The failure of poor parents to meet the basic needs of their children makes them willing accomplices to their children been trafficked. Lack of awareness of these parents makes it difficult for them to realize that their children also have their own rights which they are duty-bound to protect (p.24). And as regards these willing victims, Akakpo-Vizah (2017) narrates the case of a 24-year old Togolese lady who was arrested and taken to Lagos office of the Togolese foreign mission as a victim of trafficking. She tried to defend herself and pleaded to be freed to continue living the life she lived before been arrested (p.59). Most of the girls trafficked to Nigeria are employed as domestic servants, roadside vendors, porters, or even exploited in prostitution syndicate. The boys are involved in works in plantations, construction sites, salvage yards and mines. The period of the highest rate of migration out of Togo is September to April of the following year when activities in farm at home are almost none existent. This is the period they refer to as "hibernation period". The flow of boys and girls to Nigeria during this time is always very high as it is the period of customary migration within which young people goes out in search of "fast economic breakthrough" (Akakpo-Vizah 2017, pp.24-25). The fact that some of these trafficked children or adults as the case may be, eventually stay back willingly as settled migrant is very significant.

Again, integration in the sub-region has been promoted by an unusual factor. The Sierra Leonean civil war that raged between 1991 and 2002 also provided a sort of avenue for integration. In the course of the war, Nigeria, played brotherly roles by supplying the largest contingent of the peace keeping force. So many Sierra Leoneans came to Nigeria as refugees and some of them were housed in army barracks throughout the country. Some women among these refugees got married to Nigerian soldiers and started family life together. Apart from these refugees, there were those Sierra Leonean women who also got engaged to the Nigerian soldiers serving as peace keepers in the

country. These women were brought home to Nigeria as wives. All these women had no choice than to be integrated into the larger Nigerian society. They not only learnt to speak the indigenous languages of their husbands, they had learnt how to prepare a variety of Nigerian dishes. They are now familiar with such local dishes like eba, amala, pounded yam and egusi soup, especially those married to the Yorubas. Some have even lost a little bit of their krio language (Sheriff, 2019, pp.49-50).

Conclusion and Recommendations

From the foregoing, it is clear that peoples of West Africa had been interacting among themselves before the coming of the Europeans. The European powers like Spain, Portugal, Germany, and especially, Great Britain and France were driven by various factors to scramble for territories in Asia and Africa. In the aftermath of colonization, the colonial powers divided their colonies without any regard for the cultural, ethnic and religious background of the peoples they divided. Thus, boundaries were drawn arbitrarily to divide territories in accordance with their own understanding and interests. The political elites that inherited political power from the colonial masters did not make it a priority that the artificial boundaries so created should be redrawn in accordance with common sense. As a result of this problem, the boundaries inherited were left intact and peoples of common ethnic group and language were then seen as foreigners in lands where people who speak the same language as themselves are indigenes.

Even though ECOWAS was formed in 1975 to foster interaction and integration among the independent states of the West African region, the aim and objectives of setting up this regional body were not achieved due to so many reasons that are not concerned with the different colonial experiences of these countries. In this regard, migration, it is discovered played much prominent roles in the integration of the region than respective countries individual and collective policies. As a matter of fact, peoples of the sub-region had been migrating to the ECOWAS member states since the earliest days of colonial era, long before the establishment of the regional body. And if this is the case, it would be hard to prove that the regional body's protocol on freedom of movement adopted in 1979 has significant impact on the intra-regional migration that has been taking place since the opening decades of 20th century, or even before then in a few cases. Even Muslim scholars who moved from one country to another as observed in this paper, played more crucial roles in the regional integration than the policies that has always been easy to formulate but very difficult to implement.

It is therefore the hope of this researcher that the politicians who direct the affairs of these West African states would not only formulate well-intentioned policies aimed at regional integration but also follow up by implementing such policies to the letters. Countries like Nigeria would do better by encouraging her nationals, especially the educated segment of the population, to speak French language. The country should take pro active measures in her French language policy and stop behaving as if she doesn't need the language due to her wealth and size. Our educated elites also have roles to play by calling the attention of any government in power to the danger of sacrificing healthy foreign policy on the altar of populist ideas. Since a handful of experienced diplomats

and international relations experts are in the employ of various governments across the region, it would be in the interest of the people of West Africa that the governments in power and the top technocrats be warned of the danger inherent in failing to implement in practice what has already been formulated in principle, in order to achieve regional integration in reality, rather than allowing it to remain a pipe dream.

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