



Regional hegemony as catalyst for continental integration: A comparative note on the roles of Nigeria and South Africa in Africa's integration and development

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Abstract

Since the formation of the Organization of African Unity in 1963 to the nascent African Union, regional integration has been very high on the agenda of political leaders on the continent. The principle underlying the formation of regional integration is premised on the belief and expectation that the vast potentials for development in Africa can better be harnessed through economic and political integration. Various efforts, including numerous programmes and declarations, have been made to realize the objective of regional and continental integration. Yet results remain mixed due to various intractable challenges which bother on application of wrong models of integration such as the market integration approach, conflict of interests among political leaders, massive infrastructural deficiencies and the influence of external powers, among others.

Following Joseph Nye's hegemony stability theory, this chapter argues that some states, due to their peculiar positions, are central to facilitating both regional and continental integration in Africa. In that context, the roles of Nigeria (in the Economic Community of West African States) and South Africa (in the Southern Africa Development Community) are examined with the aim of challenging the political leaders of these countries to lead and the African Union (AU) to further support these countries to deepen the process of integration on the continent. The central argument is that the success of pivotal states in facilitating regional integration in their sub-regions can be replicated at a continental level through deployment of resources, alignment of institutions, sharing learning experiences and serving as examples of political commitments to other countries. However, the prevailing domestic conditions in such states relating to political stability, peace and security, economic viability and citizen's mobilization in support of such integration efforts are important. Consequently, the African Union could play a significant role in enhancing the domestic conditions and the respective countries' inherent challenges in order that the respective purported pivotal states can pay more attention to continental integration.

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Introduction

The desire to find a lasting solution to the intractable challenges of underdevelopment in Africa has necessitated experimentation with different types of strategies following the attainment of political independence by African countries. Most of these strategies have been adopted either in response or in reaction to the prevailing orthodoxy of the 'best practice' in development process. Consequently, following the European experience of regionalism which started with the Paris Treaty of 1951 that established the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), African countries have embarked on one form of regional integration or the other as part of the overall development plans in the years after gaining independence.

From the Lagos Plan of Action in 1980 through to the Abuja Treaty of 1991 for African Economic Community Treaty to the New Partnership for Africa's Development of 2001, it has always been the view of the political elites and other Africans that integration on a continental basis could drive economic growth and bring about improvement in the standard of living of the peoples of the continent. As Shivji (2009: 15) put it, '[the] alternative frameworks have underlined the need for a holistic approach to Africa's development; called for a continental programme of regional integration...'. The current effort towards achieving full economic integration on the continent by 2017 is also cast in the mould of advancing the welfare of the continent (El-Agraa, 2004). Despite the various declarations and the multiplicity of integration arrangements on the continent, akin to what Bhagwati (1995) called 'spaghetti bowl', results on the performances of regional integration have been mixed. It is safe to contend that the number of regional integration arrangements on the continent has not reflected in the volume of intra-Africa trade, which is barely 11-12 percent of the total volume of trade in the region (World Bank, 2010).

The need for continental integration remains compelling, especially in the light of the evolving global trend, in which regional governance of trade is fast replacing multilateral governance of trade. The recent upbeat and top level discussion on the prospect of a Transatlantic Free Trade Agreement between the United States of America and the European Union (Shomberg and Rampton, 2013), further exemplifies the necessity of ensuring that the vision of a continental integration is realized sooner than later. This chapter argues that by their respective positions, Nigeria and South Africa have the capacity and probably the willingness to serve as regional hegemons in promoting integration, not only in their immediate locations (which they have been doing over the years), but in Africa as a whole. The need for regional hegemons to take the lead in fast-tracking integration on the continent is informed by the lacklustre attitude or political gimmickry of most of the leaders on the continent, their dependence on foreign countries for economic survival, lack of leadership of any country in sustaining the tempo of integration, and importantly, the high costs involved in achieving integration.

After this introduction, the rest of this chapter proceeds as follows. Section two interrogates the continental integration objectives of Africa and the challenges militating against the realization of these objectives. Section three examines the theoretical premises upon which the chapter is based, that is, hegemonic stability theory and its relevance and application to the two countries under study, while section four examines the roles of Nigeria and South Africa on regional integration in their respective sub-regions and the challenges that they are faced with. Section five concludes with recommendations on how the two countries can further push the agenda for African integration by redefining the model, focus, pace and, importantly, showing leadership examples by boosting relations with each other.

Africa Agenda for Continental Integration: Between Optimism and Reality

The pursuit of regional integration in Africa has both political and economic underpinnings. Politically, it was part of the strategies used in the struggle for decolonisation, especially in the context of Southern Africa. For instance, the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) was formed to promote liberation, cooperation and build loyalty among countries that were in opposition to apartheid regime in South Africa. Economically, regional integration has been conceived as a strategy for industrialization, economic diversification and development of regional infrastructure in Africa (Kingombe, 2013). The most ambitious agenda for full integration of Africa for the purpose of economic development was laid out in the Constitutive Act of the African Union and the African Economic Community as contained in the Abuja Treaty of 1991.

To underscore the importance that African states attach to integration on the continent, they are all signatories to the various charters and treaties drafted by both erstwhile Organisation of African Unity and its successor, the African Union in the furtherance of integration in Africa. In respect of the continental objective of integration in Africa, Article 3 of the Constitutive Act of the African Union states as follows: To (a) achieve greater unity and solidarity between the African countries and the peoples of Africa; (b) defend the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of its Member states; (c) accelerate the political and socio-economic integration of the continent; (d) promote and defend African common positions on issues of interests to the continent and its peoples; (e) encourage international cooperation, taking due account of the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration on Human and People's Rights; (f) promote peace, security, and stability on the continent (El-Agraa, 2004).

The Abuja Treaty also contains provisions which show the pursuit of continental integration as a high priority for African leaders. For instance, Article 2 of the Treaty shows, inter alia, that it aims at the following: (a) the strengthening of regional economic communities and the establishment of other communities where they do not exist; (b) the conclusion of agreements aimed at harmonizing and coordinating policies among existing and future sub-regions and regional economic communities; (c) the promotion and strengthening of joint investments programmes in the production and trade of major products and inputs within the framework of objective self-reliance. Other objectives relate to the harmonization of national policies of member states, removal of barriers to trade, adoption of a common trade policy, removal of obstacles to free movement of persons, goods and services and so on.

Had African leaders fully identified with these objectives and pursued them to logical conclusions, the story of integration in Africa today will have been markedly different. However, as argued elsewhere, various factors, which bother on leadership ego, narrow nationalism, domestic problems, multiplicity of integration schemes in form of free trade agreements and influence of external powers, have combined to weaken the achievement of the objectives of integration in Africa (Oloruntoba, 2013).

Notwithstanding, the limitations in implementing various agreements on regional economic cooperation, it appears that African leaders are committed to making constant effort geared towards integration. For instance, in 2012, African Heads of State and Government further agreed to an African Union Plan for Boosting Intra-African Trade and fast-track the evolution of the Continental Free Trade Area by 2017 (Kingombe 2013). There are concerns that despite the various integration arrangements in Africa, inter-African trade remains marginal when compared with trade relations with advanced countries. Several factors account for this pattern of trade. The most prominent of these is the form of economic structure bequeathed on Africa by the

departed colonial masters and the skewed ways in which African economies were integrated into the global capitalist system (Ake, 1981).

Although the World Trade Organisation's World Trade Report of 2011 estimated intra-African trade to be 12 percent of the total merchandise exports, a new study by Christopher Stephens and Jane Kennan of the Overseas Development Institute shows that intra-African trade is about 16 percent of total merchandise exports in Africa, which is about US\$57Billion at the end of the last decade (Stephens and Kennan, 2012). The study also showed that much of intra-African trade are in manufactured as against commodities, which is the dominant trade item with the outside world. It is on the basis of the continued search for the best method to achieve continental integration that this chapter seeks to explore the direct engagement of two leading regional hegemonies in facilitating integration on the continent. The next section examines the theory and its application to the discourse.

Regional hegemonies and regional integration

While there have been many theories that have been advanced by scholars to explain the trajectories of regional integration in Africa and elsewhere, hegemonic stability theory speaks to the roles of regional hegemonies in facilitating an environment that is conducive for facilitating international trade among member countries. The theory was developed by Joseph Nye Jr, to explain the need for a global hegemon to act as a leader in facilitating a liberal international economic order. It was developed as a response to the global economic depression of the 1930s, which was caused by wide scale protectionist practices among major world economies such as Britain, Germany, France, Japan and United States of America. As Gilpin (2001) argues, hegemonic stability theory is based on the assumption that a dominant power is necessary to the emergence of a liberal international economy. As the argument goes, while Britain served as the

global hegemon in the 19 century, United States of America became the hegemon in the 20th century especially after the Second World War.

The theory posits that the leader or the hegemon in the international system helps to facilitate international cooperation and prevents defection from the rule of the regime through the use of payments (bribes), sanctions, and/or other means, but can seldom, if ever, coerce reluctant states to obey the rules of liberal international order (Gilpin, 2001: 97). The theory also maintains that there can be no liberal international economy unless there is a leader that uses its resources and influence to establish and manage an international economy based on free trade, monetary stability and freedom of capital movement (Gilpin, 2001). Also writing in support of the theory and its relevance to the maintenance of order and stability in the international system, Kindleberger (1973) notes that a hegemon is needed even in times of crisis to perform the following functions: (1) maintain the flow of capital to poor countries, (2), provide some order in foreign exchange rates, at least among the key currencies; (3), arrange for at least moderate coordination of macroeconomic policies. These functions according to (Gilpin, 2001) are the main functions of a global hegemon.

In his own explanation of hegemony stability theory and its relevance to the international economic cooperation, Grumberg (1990:2) argues that 'by linking the economy's structure and evolution with the international distribution of power, the hegemonic stability theory combines political factors and economic outcomes and therefore satisfies the need for a truly political international economics'. He explains further that the theory holds that cooperation and a well-functioning world economy are dependent on certain kind of political structure, a structure characterized by a single actor.

Implicit in the theory of hegemony stability is the issue of interest and the provision of public good. While the hegemon may act to stabilize the global order based on the perceived interests

that it can derive from such a system, the possibility that other members of the global community can derive benefits from the system in form of public good such as higher volume of trade or higher inflow of capital can be Pareto-optimal both in the short and long-run. Given such scenarios, other countries can cooperate with the hegemon.

Although various critics have written against the feasibility of this theory, especially within the context of a decline in the economic position of United States of America and a rising multi-polar configuration of the world economy (Snidal, 1985), hegemony can be deemed a necessary but not sufficient condition for the establishment of a peaceful and prosperous global order.

A corollary to the global hegemon is regional hegemon, which refers to a powerful and dominant country exercising power over subordinate neighbours. According to Myers (1991: 3), regional hegemons are 'states which possess sufficient power to dominate subordinate state system'. This definition according to Prys (2008) is based on realist approach, which neglects both the internal workings of such a regional order and aspects such as acceptance, followership and the role of ideas central to most other understanding of hegemony. Meashiemer (2001 cited in Prys 2008) defines regional hegemon as the dominance of the area in which the great power is located. In his view, there can only be one regional hegemon in the world at a particular time. To this extent, he rejects the notion of multiple locations of regional power. This view is limited in application because in a multi-polar world, there could be various sites and locations of regional powers. In the current global capitalist system, China, Russia Brazil and, to a great extent, India have exercised influence on issues of global concerns which show that their views cannot be taken for granted. For instance as Alexander (2003:6) argues,

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union and its satellite states, the USA and to a lesser extent, the European Union, have all the leverage at their command in order to compel virtually all states to toe the line; China and India, to a lesser extent, Brazil, are simply too huge for such compulsion to work without unleashing the danger of a destabilizing reaction

Prys (2008) argue that regional hegemons play a dual role at the nexus of regional and global politics and thus have to accomplish at least two main tasks: the exclusion of external actors from their “sphere of influence” as well as the accommodation of the same actors in order to achieve both their global and regional foreign policy goals.

The realist perspective on regional hegemons is that they assume their responsibility in expectation of the gain that will accrue to them in the regions. The subordinate states defer to the dominance and hegemony of the hegemon in expectation of public good, which could be in form of security, trade or investment benefits. The capacity and willingness of the regional hegemons to underwrite the costs of promoting international trade is also very key and fundamental to the understanding of the role that they play. Despite the apparent relevance of hegemonic stability theory to regional integration in Africa, its application is limited. This is because of its focus on the promotion of a liberal international environment. As various scholars have argued, the liberal international environment that global hegemons such as the United States of America, Britain and Japan have been promoting since the end of the Second World War has only served to advance their interests rather than those of other countries in the world in general (Chang, 2007, Stiglitz, 2002). Also, while the theory is primarily concerned with promotion of international trade, the peculiar economic conditions of African states require a regional integration programme that goes beyond trade promotion to include drivers of development such as investment in infrastructures, industrialisation, improving relevant skills, innovation and relevant institutions at both regional and continental levels.

Nigeria and South Africa as Regional Hegemons in Africa

At the sub-regional level, Nigeria and South Africa have played prominent roles in fostering regional integration, with their involvement in the formation and sustenance of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and Southern African Development Community (SADC). The chapter considers the two countries as pivotal states that are critical to the achievement of full continental integration. Following Joseph Nye's hegemony stability theory, we argue that South Africa and Nigeria can and should, by their respective sphere of influence, resources and vantage positions, serve as catalysts for a full African economic and political integration.

While there are current challenges to the realization of the objectives of African integration, we contend that such challenges could be surmounted. Indeed, experiences of continental integration from Europe show that anchor states such as Germany and France are essential to bearing some costs that weak members of the union may not be able to bear, while also providing the required leadership in terms of political manoeuvring, coordination and policy direction.

There is no doubt that South Africa's economy is the most sophisticated in the sub-region and one of the best in Africa. However, the long term development and sustainability of the economy is inextricably linked to the health, progress and stability of other countries in the sub-region. The importance and salience of integration to the realization of the development objective of South Africa, in particular was emphasized by Habib and Selinyane, (2005: 9 cited in Hart and Padayachee, 2010) thus,

Stability in the region and, as a result, development and democracy, will only be achieved when a regional hegemon is prepared to underwrite these objectives. So long as that does not happen, South Africa's economic goals will remain compromised. For, as President

Thabo Mbeki has often stated, the fate of democratic South Africa is inextricably bound up with what happens in the rest of the continent.

The import of the above realistic interpretation of the central importance of integration to peace, stability and development in Africa is to show that regardless of the costs, compromises and complexities that may be involved in facilitating both regional and continental integration, ultimately, regional hegemons such as Nigeria and South Africa would derive substantial benefits from the consummation of the integration agenda. Given the natural tendency of people to migrate to zones of comfort and prospects, a developed South Africa surrounded by poor countries will continue to face pressure from migrants from these neighbouring countries.

It is in recognition of this dynamics and the historical roots that bind the people which have informed the policy of South Africa towards the promotion of regional integration in the sub-region and Africa as a whole, since the end of the apartheid regime. The country has made significant progress on regional integration by deliberately enlarging the membership of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to include countries such as Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. This large membership, according to Hart and Padayachee (2010:420), 'makes SADC potentially the largest regional economy in Africa'.

By virtue of their locations, military capacity, human and material resources as well as the volume of economic activities, Nigeria and South Africa jointly occupies distinct positions of advantage and influence in Africa. With an estimated population of 160 million people, Nigeria is home to one in every five black man. The population of the country is more than the other fifteen countries in the West African sub-region combined. As a regional power, the country also boasts of some sophisticated military hardware and know-how, which had been previously deployed in addressing conflict and security problems in countries such as Liberia, Sierra Leone,

Mali and Côte d'Ivoire. The sheer size of the country has evoked some fear of domination by smaller countries in the subregion (Bach, 2007). The fear that Nigeria may exercise undue control over former colonies of France in West Africa probably explained the undue presence of the France in the running of the internal affairs of these countries, even after gaining political independence from France.

Over the past five decades, Nigeria has performed various functions in West Africa and in Africa as a whole, which clearly predisposed the country as a regional hegemon. While some of the responsibilities that the country has taken upon herself can be said to be functional, others are structural and relational in the sense that they bear eloquent testimony to what Bach (2007) called the 'manifest destiny' of the country. In fact the country has, from inception taken it as a project to be the leader of Africa. This idea was taken forward by the various foreign policy clichés and projects such as the concerts of 'medium power' within the context of the country's relations with her immediate neighbours and the continent in general.

The bitter experience of the country during the civil war, especially her disappointment from foreign powers such as Britain and France, makes regional integration and continental integration high priorities on the Afro centric agenda of the country. It was in the context of this agenda that the Yakubu Gowon led administration (1966-1975) initiated the processes that led to the establishment of the Economic Community of West African States in 1975 (Bach, 2007). Till date, 'Nigeria contributes one third of the annual budget of the 16-member organisation, houses the Secretariat, and placed facilities at the disposal of ECOWAS, and provided bilateral assistance to member states of ECOWAS (Abutudu, 1993 cited in Obi, 2011). The role of Nigeria in the formation and funding of ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), which helped in no small measure to bring peace to Liberia and Sierra Leone has been duly

acknowledged in literature (Collier, 2007). The country has also played similar roles in bringing stability to beleaguered countries like Mali, Guinea and Cote' d'Ivoire.

Although the member countries of the ECOWAS have not been able to live up to the various treaties that establish the Commission, nonetheless, it has achieved some milestones in the areas of 'institution building, the harmonization of norms and the construction of regional transport and communication infrastructures' (Bach, 2007:305). The huge oil and gas deposit at the disposal of Nigeria as well as the population of the country has clearly put it in a leadership position in the sub-region (Obi, 2011). Has the country acted as a hegemon who mainstream her national interest into foreign policy objective or has it just acted as a benevolent leader who act in the interest of members without receiving commensurate returns in terms of reciprocal beneficial relationship? The latter seems to be the case. However, if Nigeria must leverage on its size, resources and influence to bring about the much needed continental integration, the country must be able to factor her national interest into the foreign policy objective in the sub-region. Obi (2011: 239) agrees, when he notes that 'perhaps, the key lies in practically demonstrating that there is a commonality of interest binding Nigeria and other member-states of the ECOWAS-survival in a globalised world'. It is the ability to link the national interest with regional integration agenda that will help in generating the needed support from the people. This will however depend on the ability of the country to address the numerous domestic problems that have served to frustrate the realization of its huge potentials over the past few years. Some of these problems include corruption, inept leadership, ethnicity, religious bigotry and now terrorism. These problems are not irredeemable. What is required in the words of Duncan Green are active citizens and effective states (Green, 2008). With democracy comes potential for inclusive and participatory development, institutional reforms and optimal utilization of resources. As soon as Nigerians can take more than passing interest in the governance of their country and deploy technology for mobilization in electioneering, the country may yet be on the

path to the realization of her manifest destiny both as a regional power and an influential member of the global community (Bangura, 2013).

South Africa occupies a historic position and exerts great influence in her neighbourhood. Post-apartheid South Africa has embarked on massive investment and trade promotion across Africa. To a great extent, South Africa has exercised some measure of hegemony in her neighborhood and increasingly in Africa. The country has promoted regional cooperation through the formation of regional organizations such as South Africa Customs Union (SACU) and Southern Africa Development Community (SADC). According to Alden and Soko (2005:368),

the Southern African Customs Union (SACU), the longstanding customs union made up of South Africa and the BINS states –Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland–represents the most institutionalized expression of South African hegemony; the Southern African Development Community (SADC), comprising 14 states where South Africa’s economic dominance is contested; in Africa north of the Zambezi river, the expansion of South African business interests and attempt to assert itself diplomatically are the main expressions of South African hegemony.

South Africa has acted both as a malevolent hegemonic power and as a benign hegemon in the SACU as it has led the process that led to the design of a custom union that allows mutual benefits for its members (Alden and Soko, 2005). As these authors further show, ‘South Africa has emerged as the largest foreign investor in Southern Africa in recent years. South African direct investment in the 13 SADC countries exceeded US\$5.4billion by 2000, while it amounted to R14.8 billion ...’ (Alden and Soko, 2005:375).

The country has used her position to bolster higher level of integration and development of inter-country institutional networks in terms of infrastructures such as roads, ports etc. Development Corridors have been established through which economic performances of the various countries are boosted (Alden and Soko, 2005). South Africa also has investment in other countries outside the region. For instance, the mobile telecommunication company, MTN is the leading

communication company in Nigeria. In recent times, retail outlets such as Shoprite are also making inroads to other parts of Africa. The foreign economic policy of post-Apartheid places a high premium on Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance because, as the former President Thabo Mbeki (1998:31-36) poignantly notes, the fate of South Africa is inextricably tied to the destiny of Africa as a whole. Alexander (2003: 14) further notes,

Like most of the leaders of the ANC before him, President Mbeki too is driven by the original vision of Edmund Blyden, who, like most of the first Pan-Africanists was from the Caribbean diaspora, and one of the first black people to define the meaning of the Pan-African vision. His stress on racial pride and on acknowledgement of the humanity of people of African descent laid the foundation of the subsequent anti-racist ideology which has characterized the approach of virtually the most prominent leaders of Pan-Africanism.

South Africa's involvement in the promotion of development in Africa is not limited to the economic sphere. The country has been involved in the promotion of peace, security and political stability in countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Central Africa Republic, Sudan and Zimbabwe (Habib, 2013).

Among other African leaders, Nigeria and South Africa under former presidents Olusegun Obasanjo and Thabo Mbeki were instrumental to the change in the continental organisation's nomenclature from Organisation of African Unity (OAU) to African Union (AU). The duo, with the former president of Senegal, Abdoulaye Wade, was also active in the establishment of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). One of the core objectives of this pact is the promotion of continental integration and the re-enactment of African renaissance (Olukoshi, 2007, Akinboye and Oloruntoba, 2011). Such political commitments suggest that the two countries are genuinely interested in promoting integration of African continent.

It is instructive that the post-Obasanjo Nigeria and post-Mbeki South Africa witnessed some levels of rivalry and undue competition. Such unfortunate developments, which bother more on the character of their successors, lowered the tempo of activities on African renaissance and

integration. As Adebajo (2013: 1) argues, the relationship between the two countries has always ‘represented a mix of cooperation and competition’. Such phenomenon, Adebajo notes, is a regular occurrence among other regional powers such as China and Japan, Brazil and Argentina, and Germany and France. Several cases, not the least the contest for the permanent membership of the UN Security Council, have exposed the mutual distrust and suspicion between the two countries. The anxiety over who becomes the leader of Africa remains a distracting one. Political leaders from various strata of the society, who believe in the Africa project should down play these issues and focus on the core objective of a Pan-African agenda for development.

Given the historic roles that these two countries have performed in their respective sub-regions, how can they leverage on successes to further enhance the realization of integration in Africa? We offer some recommendations in the next section.

African Integration: What Roles for Nigeria and South Africa?

The first and the most practical approach to enhancing the roles of these two countries in promoting integration on the continent is for the political leadership in the two countries to ensure that they address the domestic challenges that they are currently faced with. In Nigeria for instance, poverty and insecurity seems to be the two main challenges facing the country today. South Africa also needs to attend to the issue of poverty, inequality and unemployment. Charity, they say, starts from home. In as much as serving as a catalyst for continental integration requires substantial resources from both countries, the needed buy-in for the agenda from the citizens will be easier if the citizens’ welfare is guaranteed.

Secondly, the two countries must be committed to the objective of integration at the level of political leadership. This is necessary before they can effectively persuade or convince other

countries on the continent to fully cooperate for the realization of the integration objective. The current divergence in opinion between the two countries on the dates for full integration should be quickly streamlined. The dithering of Nigeria over the possibility of achieving a Continental Free Trade Area in 2017 should be replaced with a firm commitment. The political leaders of the two countries should also be more pragmatic in implementing the terms of the bilateral commission between the two countries. This is imperative for several reasons, not least, the huge volume of trade between the two countries, which is estimated at over \$2billion. Volume of investment between the two countries is also growing.

The Bilateral Commission jointly established by the two countries contains lofty objectives, which seem to explain the commitment of the two countries to mutuality of purpose and interest not just for the development of their respective countries but also that of Africa as a whole. Consequently, competition between the two countries should be a healthy one which spurs accelerated development rather than destructive rivalry. Political leadership between the two countries should ensure full implementation of the various agreements included in the bilateral commission and the commission should hold regular summits in the two countries to monitor progress.

As the two most important economies in Africa, windows of opportunities exist for investment in infrastructures, power generation and agriculture. Given the upstart advantage of South Africa in these areas, cooperation between the two countries on these areas will be mutually beneficial. It is also important for them to work more assiduously to strengthen regional integrations in their respective regions. Nigeria should show more commitment in ensuring the full implementation of the revised ECOWAS Protocol.

South Africa should also work more to ensure full integration of the SADC while addressing the concerns of smaller member countries on the dispersal of the gains of integration in the sub-

region. Given the historical ties that bind the country to other countries in the sub-region in terms of linguistic and cultural affinities, geographical contiguity and the cross-national loyalty during the struggle for decolonisation, no efforts should be spared to achieve deeper and developmental integration in the SADC.

As a more pragmatic step towards showing commitment to continental integration, South Africa and Nigeria can lead the way in proposing and working toward integration of ECOWAS with SADC. The involvement of the SADC in the Tripartite alliance with the Eastern African Community (EAC) and COMESA is an indication of the possibilities that lie ahead for full integration on the continent.

Thirdly, the two countries should strive to coordinate other members of the various regional economic communities to work towards the full harmonization of institutions, tariff regimes and development of continental integration. Lastly, as argued elsewhere, the two countries must evolve a developmental approach to regional integration, rather than the current market based approach, which is not conversant with the peculiarity of the African condition. The developmental approach to integration on the continent is concerned with building infrastructures such as rails, ports, airports, road and communication networks. It also involves massive support for industrialization as against the current preoccupation with market oriented integration, which is focused on market access, especially for goods and services from Europe and other advanced economies.

The problem of multiple integration arrangements, especially with advanced economic blocs such as the European Community and countries such as the United States of America and China remains very pertinent. While African leaders are talking about continental integration, the respective countries are also either negotiating or signing new trade agreements with the advanced economies. One of such negotiations, which could undermine integration on the

continent is the European Union-African, Caribbean and Pacific (EU-ACP) Economic Partnership Agreements. As Asante (2010) has argued, this proposed regional trade agreement has a high potential of undermining integration of African countries. To Asante (2010), the Economic Partnership Agreements is nothing but a ‘Trojan Horse’. The best that the Economic Partnership Agreements can achieve is to further integrate African economies to the global capitalist system, which has been proved to be detrimental to the economic interest of the continent (Schneider , 2003). Essentially, as argued in Gumede (2011), it is important that African economies (or Africa as a whole) pursue her own socio-economic development policies and a comprehensive vision for the African economy.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the quest of African leaders for African integration over the past five decades. Specifically, it examined the roles of Nigeria and South Africa in driving the integration process on the continent, within the context of their potential leadership as regional hegemons. We argue that by virtue of the respective positions of these countries and the roles that they have played in integration processes in their respective sub-regions, they are well capable of driving the integration process in Africa. What is required, though, is genuine commitment by the political leadership, pursuit of African unity, building of infrastructures and institutions and resolving domestic challenges.

The motivation for a radical departure from the gradualist approach to integration is based on the realization that protective nationalism, with its narrow interest, has slowed down continental integration in Africa. In order to realize the objective of continental integration, the ‘bondage of arbitrary and artificial boundaries’ which the imperialists created through what Adebajo (2010)

called the 'Curse of Berlin' and sustained through colonial and post-colonial designs must be unbundled and fundamentally altered (Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Mhlanga, 2013).

Given the enormous resources at the disposal of Nigeria and South Africa, these two countries should lead the way in championing progressive change.

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