

African Nationalism and its Implications for Regional Integration

¹Michael Kanyange Macharia, ²Maria Nzomo & ³Timothy M. Shaw

¹Department of Diplomacy and International Studies, University of Nairobi, Kenya

²International Relations & Governance at Institute of Diplomacy & International Studies Director,
University of Nairobi, Kenya

³Adjunct Research Professor, University of Massachusetts, Boston, University of Ottawa, Carleton and
Dalhousie and RUDN, Moscow

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ABSTRACT

Africa has endeavored to make material regional integration since the early independence years. Nationalism creates identities that are antagonistic to regional integration. The aspiration for continental unity was first conceived by the pan-Africanist movement at the turn of the twentieth century. Pan-Africanism was pivotal in creating a black race consciousness and identity at a time when the black people were dehumanized and subjected to slavery in foreign lands. This article seeks to assess the implication of nationalisms in Africa on her regional integration efforts. It argues that nationalism has been responsible the slow pace of regional integration on the continent. Through a qualitative analysis, this article finds that nationalism in Africa is not a homogenous reality and that it finds expression in different variants and forms and as such has and continues to influence negatively regional integration processes on the continent.

Keywords: Nationalism, regional integration, self-determination, continental unity, identities

INTRODUCTION

Africa has endeavored to make material regional integration since the early independence years but the reality is that the continent has not made great strides towards realizing this quest. The aspiration for continental unity was first conceived by the pan-Africanist movement at the turn of the twentieth century. The idea of African unity and cooperation has been a key tenet of African nationalism, and has led to the establishment of organizations such as the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and other regional economic communities on the continent. Pan-Africanism was pivotal in creating a black race consciousness at a time when the black people were dehumanized and subjected to slavery. The movement, started by Africans in diaspora, like Martin Delany, Alexander Crummel, Marcus Garvey, Wilhem du Bois, among others, sought to pursue the unity of all Africans both on the continent and in diaspora. The pursuit for regional integration was later taken up by the independence leaders led by Léopold Sedar from Senegal, Aime Cesaire from Martinique, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana among other independence leaders across the continent. They sought political as well as socio-economic unity of all Africans, on the continent and in diaspora based on their common cultural and historical heritage. Kwame Nkrumah's efforts were particularly important in the formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), a compromise organization due to the different groupings that emerged at independence, each pursuing unity of the continent from a different premise and with a different goal. From the start, the process was shattered by differences in identities that were largely related to colonial heritage, affiliation as well as lingua franca. Later, the late president of Libya, Mummar Gadhafi would call for the establishment of a United States of Africa while the then President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, called for African renaissance.

The journey towards African integration has been a vicious circle of efforts put in place but without tangible

results. What could be the problem or what is it that Africa is not getting right? This article argues that the impact of the different forms of nationalisms manifest on the continent have been responsible for the slow pace of regional integration and is the main challenge bedeviling the African integration process. It attempts to draw a relationship between the stagnated regional integration process and the various forms of nationalisms present in Africa. Through a qualitative analysis of articles, books and archival records, this article finds that nationalism in Africa has not been a homogenous reality and that it finds expression in different variants and forms and as such, has and continues to inform and influence the pace of the integration process.

THEORETICAL MODEL

This study will use the relational model theory (RMT) developed by anthropologist Alan Page Fiske. He drew from the works of Max Weber, Jean Piaget and Paul Riceour. According to this theory human beings are fundamentally social, employing relational models to structure and understand social interactions. According to this model, regardless of how complex an RMT is, it is analyzable on four basic elements: Communal sharing, Authority Ranking, Equality Matching and Market Pricing. A relationship informed by communal sharing presupposes a bounded group whose members are not differentiated from each other. Members of this group feel they share something in common such as culture, blood, human suffering, national identity, among others, and therefore, have no need of distinguishing individual identities.

In authority ranking relationships, a hierarchy is created in which individuals or groups are placed in an order either higher or lower relative to each other. Those placed higher enjoy certain privileges and prestige not enjoyed by those in the lower order. Those in higher positions control the actions of those in the lower echelons.

In equality matching, one attempts to create a balance and a peer relationship with individual and groups. According to Fiske, “equality matching is like using a pan balance: People know how to assemble actions on one side to equal any given weight on the other side” (Fiske, 1992).

Market pricing involves the application of ratios to social interactions. This means that one can only give as much as he given. You give more where you are likely to benefit more. This can involve maximization or minimization of profit or loss respectively. “In market pricing, all socially relevant properties of a relationship are reduced to a single measure of value, such as money or pleasure” (Fiske 1992). In this relationship, an individual or groups, attaches value to the relationship in terms of how much he/she or it can maximize respectively. It is more of a utilitarian relationship.

Studies have shown that these elementary models play a critical role in cognition that includes how one perceives other. This theory is helpful in the analysis of nationalism, since the later involves social interactions that apply communal sharing model while regionalism is an application of the equality marching model. Nationalism is perceived as identity sharing in an in-group that sees every individual member as homogeneous.

NATIONALISM REDEFINED

Nationalism in Africa arose out of imposed circumstances that ontologically differed from the other parts of the globe. In the western world for instance, nationalism emerged from a political dispensation that introduced borders to demarcate national territorial spaces and spheres of influence as well as limits to a state’s legitimate use of force. The treaty of Westphalia is seen as the hypothetical beginning of the European state system that introduced territorial borders and sovereign authority of the state. Before then, nations existed but without being limited to territorial spaces nor with claims to sovereign powers. They

were nations based on communal sharing, defined not by common borders but by shared social and cultural identities. The treaty essentially ended the papal political authority and established territorial units around which the nation-state was established. However, Africa's experience differs with that of Europe in many respects. It arose from different historical circumstances that beleaguered the continent, and that were characterized by slavery, colonialism and the struggle for liberation. The modern state system on the continent was forced through a colonial process that drew arbitrary borders that gave little consideration to traditional communities with common nationhood.

The post war period ushered in a new international political dispensation, a new world order, and introduced new actors on the world stage. Intergovernmental organizations and supra-national institutions were set up that sought to regulate the behavior of the nation-state towards the other. So, the General Agreement on Tariff and Trade (GATT) was set up to facilitate international trade reduction of tariff and non-tariff barriers. The Bretton Woods institutions were also set up during this time as well to help rebuild states torn apart by impact of the World War II. But most importantly was the establishment of the United Nations Organization following the end of the Second World War. Its main purpose, at formation, was the maintenance of international peace and security and to facilitate friendly relations among nations. It has over time become an "important forum to address issues that transcends national borders." (UN, 1945).

Nationalism is basically a cultural phenomenon, but has often taken a political dimension. In Africa, it emerged as mode of political liberation against foreign domination exemplified by slavery and colonialism. Such writers as Rev. Ndabaningi Sithole, Kwame Nkrumah among others used it to demand for political freedom (Virmani 1993). African nationalism has been expressed various in literature. African writers used literature as a tool for political activism and to express their desire for self-determination and cultural identity. Some of the most notable works that address African nationalism include Chinua Achebe's "Things Fall Apart," Ngugi wa Thiong'o's "Petals of Blood," and Wole Soyinka's "A Dance of the Forests." These works explore themes such as decolonization, cultural identity, and the struggle for independence, and they continue to be important in shaping contemporary African literature.

Other notable works include "Black Skin, White Masks" by Frantz Fanon, which explores the psychological effects of colonialism on African people, and "The Wretched of the Earth" by the same author, which discusses the process of decolonization and the challenges of building a new society. African nationalism in literature has also been expressed through poetry, such as the works of Leopold Senghor and Aimé Césaire, who were part of the Negritude movement, which celebrated African culture and heritage. African nationalism in literature has played a significant role in shaping African identity and promoting the struggle for independence and self-determination.

Nationalism denotes two realities: on one hand it denotes a commitment to self-determination; a struggle for independence. On the other hand, it denotes a commitment to one's national identity at the expense of other identities; a commitment to unity and homogeneity. Kathleen E. Powers conceptualizes nationalism as two dimensional; commitment and content. Commitment informs the strength of one's nationalist identity, while content refers to the norms that define a nationalist (Powers, 2022). It is in the second sense that nationalism is used in this study. How does nationalism contradict regional integration process? Nationalism is an identity creating process that leads to an intersubjective relationship between the 'self' and the 'other', a 'we' versus 'them' relationship. It is a process that is both inclusive and exclusive at the same time. It includes people who are seen to bare common identity, who can speak the same language, live in cultural environment even though those people may not necessarily know each other. It gives them a sense of belonging. It excludes people who are seen as 'outsiders' as belonging to different identities other than their own. It labels them as 'others'. Nationalism, according to Andrew Lohrey, "represents a form in which our identities are constructed for us" (Lohrey, 1986). It is a political working of our being, that is, the 'is-ness' of our identity perpetuated and held in place by those interests which benefit from such much identifications

(Lohrey, 1986). Nations, therefore, are borne out of people's recognition of their shared commonality but not out of the commonality itself.

The 21st Century is characterized by globalization, a process that tends to homogenize markets and regions. Besides this homogenizing character, globalization is unifying two seemingly contradictory and antithetical forces: the force of regionalism and the force of nationalism. Regionalism is antithetical to nationalism; a form of dialectical materialism synthesized by globalization. Regionalism is a process that tends to bring together, different nationalisms into a single nationalism either at the regional or continental level; in so doing it creates different kinds of identities. The various identities created by the multiple nationalisms in a regional integration are then set up into a single super identity; a supra-national identity. In this way, nationalism becomes an identity-creating force, one that seeks to identify the 'self' and isolate it from the 'other'. It gives the 'self' a sense of belonging to a particular cultural grouping. The 'self' shares in some common characteristics that it identifies with: common culture, language, ethnicity, and in the modern world shared political boundaries. In the Encyclopedia of Nationalism, is nationalism described as, a condition of mind, a feeling or a sentiment of a group of people living in a well-defined geographical area, speaking a common language, possessing a literature in which the aspirations of the nation have been expressed, and, in some cases, having a common religion. There are, of course, exceptions to every part of this definition (Latawski, 1995).

Anyone who does not share in these is labeled as 'other', the person is differentiated as an outsider. Such a person is met with indifference that makes him/her unwelcome to the in-group. On the other hand, regionalism does not create such identities based on shared commonalities; rather, regionalism homogenizes those heterogeneous identities of the different nations and nationalisms into a single supra-nation; a supra-nationalism which is the ultimate objective of regional integration process. Thus, nationalism is a social construct that derives its meaning from social and cultural identities that are transferred and become entrenched in the national psyche. Nationalism is thus a social phenomenon that exist because people connect to certain groups with shared identities. (Powers, 2022)

Regionalization introduces new ethnic and cultural identities to nationals of a state who are made to recognize their equality. It tends to create a new culture at the supranational level; a 'supra-cultural identity'. A receiving state, limited to a territorial space, lays claim to domestic laws in accepting the new ethnic and cultural identities, drawn from 'other' cultures and nationalities. There is tendency to be somehow resistant to them, to consider them as subjective 'others' as people with who they do not share anything in common. There exists an intersubjective relationship between people who share a common national identity and those considered as 'aliens. It is a relationship of 'us' versus 'them', one that also defines their social and political interactions.

This is a characteristic in the 21st Century migration crisis. It manifests the dialectical quality of nationalism: that of inclusion and exclusion, of unity and equality. It includes those people who subscribe to the same nation, culture, language, that is, who share a common identity that is largely political, and excludes those that seem to be 'others', or outsiders. Kumar notes that "the very process of including people who share the same objective and subjective characteristics in the political community of nation inevitably excludes those who do not share these" (Kumar 2010). This becomes problematic in the regionalization process. It is problematic since integration seeks to make equal heterogeneous cultures and identities. Where one identity excludes other identities, then integration might become a mirage. Kumar further contends that nationalism has other dialectical qualities of either being constructive or destructive. It can be constructive through its "enormous emancipatory potential of mobilizing those who are oppressed" (Kumar 2010). It is in this sense that nationalism tends to be violent or hostile to outsiders. They come together through their subjective feelings of common identity as oppressed, to create a national consciousness that leads to claims

of self-determination.

The contemporary international political landscape has witnessed a new manifestation of rising nationalism. There are new variations of nationalisms that are representations of dynamism of self-determination globally. States have redefined their national identities and become more self-conscious in a rapidly changing world. The New Right Movement notes that “from Brazil to Brexit, Trump’s America to Duterte’s Philippines, the rise of new radical rightwing leaders, movements and ideas is transforming not only domestic politics but also the dynamics of international relations.” (Abrahamsen et al, 2020). Trump’s ‘America first’ and ‘Taking back Control’ are manifestations of nationalist identity that transcends the national borders. However, nationalisms in Africa remain descendant of their historical and cultural heritage characterized by slavery and colonialism. It differs in the context of its rise and in the form of its appearance from other global forms of nationalism. The continent has not witnessed right-wing leaders inspired by such radical ideologies that appeal to national consciousness and identities. Rather, such appeals, whenever they occur, are inspired by a need for political survival and they last as long as the leader of such ideology is in power.

NATIONALISM IN AFRICA

As noted earlier, nationalisms in Africa differ ontologically with nationalisms in the rest of the world. African states’ territories were drawn by the imperial masters based on their economic and political interests towards the end of the nineteenth Century. While ethnic identities and cultural differences existed in Africa even before the coming of the imperial powers, they were not a hindrance to their economic relations. Africans engaged in trade across the different communities as exemplified by long distance traders like the Mijikenda, Kamba and Nyamwezi in East Africa, Yao in West Africa, among other communities.

Ntalindwa contends that nationalism is a European phenomenon. He claims that, doctrinal nationalism, which aims to establish standards that allow people living in a particular geographic location to receive exclusive protection from their government. According to this ideology, people should have a legitimate say in state affairs and organize themselves into recognizable social structures in order to achieve this goal. Additionally, doctrinal nationalism assumes that human beings are divided into distinct nations, each with unique characteristics and the ability to govern themselves. While it originated in Europe, this concept has gained widespread acceptance around the world (Ntalindwa, 1989).

The first traces of nationalism in Africa were marked by nationalist and liberation movements against imperialism that predate independence struggles. Pan-Africanism was its ancestor as it spoke to black consciousness and liberation of the black race from slavery and indignity that dehumanized Africans, especially those in diaspora. Pan Africanism inspired the independence nationalist movements in different parts of Africa leading to different ideological inclinations. For instance, Léopold Sedar Senghor’s *Négritude*, Kenneth Kaunda’s *Humanism*, Kwame Nkrumah’s *Consciencism*, Julius Nyerere’s *Ujamaa (socialism)* among others.

Unlike in the West, nationalism in Africa was, and is, not a homogeneous reality. It is unique and characterized by differences in cultural identities spread across the continent. They are also a result of a historical heritage influenced by slavery, colonialism, struggle for independence and competing religions as well as the drawing of territorial borders that interfered with traditional ethnic borders. Nationalism arose as a response to these heterogeneous experiences and influences on the African peoples’ psyche. Though heterogeneous, these nationalisms are not in conflict but are in constant competition especially on important international issues. They complicate and demean Africa’s bargaining power on the international scene. Nationalism arose as a reaction to foreign influences and more specifically to colonial heritage and slavery. African nationalisms have risen as a response to slavery and colonialism and its proponents were young

people influenced by missionary activities. They had received colonial education and were ashamed of being subjugated under foreign powers. (Ntalindwa, 1989). For this reason, nationalism in Africa differs from that of the other regions of the world and thus cannot be analysed through the same lenses as Western nationalism.

African nationalisms have had both positive and negative impacts on regional integration in Africa. Positively, it has helped foster a sense of unity and common purpose among African nations. This has led to a greater need for cooperation and collaboration, as well as a shared commitment to addressing common challenges such as poverty, disease, and conflict. It has also helped to promote the idea of “African solutions to African problems,” which emphasizes the importance of African countries taking ownership of their own development and working together to address common challenges. However, African nationalisms have also had some negative impacts on regional integration. For example, it has led to increased focus on national interests at the expense of regional interests, which have hindered efforts to create a more integrated and cooperative continent. It has also led to conflicts between African states, particularly where there have been disagreements over issues such as borders, resources, or political systems. These conflicts have undermined efforts at regional integration and create barriers to cooperation and collaboration.

It is equally important to note that African nationalism is dynamic. It has transformed over time, depicting the socio-political changes on the continent. The pre-independence manifestation of nationalism in Africa differs from its independence and post-independence manifestations. At pre-independence, nationalism had ideological inclinations that were defined by their proponents. At independence, however, ideological inclinations disappear and nationalism is informed by the lingua-franca of the group advancing it. Thus, we have three emergent nationalistic grouping at the first attempt at continental unity. African nationalism draws its uniqueness also from the colonial heritage. Africa was adulterated by several foreign cultures during the colonial period. That influence continues to inform and influence African states’ behaviour on the international stage. The goal of the Organization of African Unity at inception in 1963, was the liberation and integration of the Continent. However, ideological and power struggles of the newly independent African states derailed the organization from realizing its goal. While Kwame Nkrumah had envisioned a united Africa through Pan-Africanism, political interests became manifest at the formation of OAU with the different groupings pulling in different directions.

Two important issues were identified; power struggles and fear of political uncertainty. (Makinda and Okumu, 2008). There were power struggles between Ghana and Nigeria which escalated to sub-regional blocs and continued to take different forms in different countries. The fear of political uncertainty concerned protection. “The OAU sought to preserve state boundaries that had been established by colonialism, territorial integrity and sovereignty of each state...”(Makinda and Okumu, 2008). Thus, from the start, integration efforts for a united continent became a mirage as various manifestations of nationalisms informed the process. States became more protective of their territories and sovereignty and pulled in different directions. Kwame Nkrumah’s vision was shattered from the onset. While Nkrumah’s vision was universalist, majority of the leaders in the newly independent states were particularist; they were more concerned with their political survival and immediate state interests. With variant and vested interests, continental unity was doomed.

The other issue that played out at the formation of the OAU was ideological differences. Prior to its formation, Africa was divided into three political groupings that comprised of Brazzaville, Casablanca and Monrovia groups. Comprising of twelve French speaking countries, the Brazzaville group made the impression that they wanted African unity pursued from an economic cooperation front rather than political integration (Makinda and Okumu, 2008). The group supported political unity of Africa as a prerequisite for economic cooperation. (Makinda and Okumu, 2008).

The Casablanca group comprised of eight countries, however, none of the countries in the Brazzaville group

was a member. The group envisioned a federal government based on mobilization of resources along socialist lines (Makinda and Okumu, 2008). However, for Nkrumah, to achieve effective economic cooperation, political unity was necessary. He pursued a socialist approach to Africa's development. This group aimed at forming the United States of Africa and this was preceded by the formation of the Ghana-Guinea-Mali Union (Harshe, 1988).

The third group, Monrovia group, consisted of 20 countries. This group agreed on several principles which were later re-issued as the Lagos Charter on The Organization of African Unity and Malagasy states. The formation of the OAU was a compromise among the three groups and was a departure from the envisioned United States of Africa, as envisaged by Kwame Nkrumah (Nkrumah, 1964). The principles were based on the need to protect the sovereignty of the states as a reflection of the fear that existed at independence of most African states. Thus, they entrenched nationalism and this became one of the major obstacles to the vision of a United Africa. From the start, two ideological differences defined the integration process in Africa: on the one hand was Kwame Nkrumah and his disciples who took a pan- African stance that sought a federation of African states as the appropriate model to integration. They initiated a "universalist African citizenship based on their common ancestry and the need to unite as a people. Nkrumah, Sekou Toure and Modibo Keita took steps towards the first political union with a goal of uniting all political institutions, including armed forces of their respective countries" Carciotto and Agyeman, 2017). They intended to unite all political institutions and allow for free movement of persons across the continent. The second ideological group was led by Leopold Sedar Senghor of Senegal who took a nationalist stance Carciotto and Agyeman, 2017). They were opposed to a political federation. Instead, they opted for a functionalist approach of a gradual integration based on need and international cooperation on economic matters.

The disagreements that informed the formation of the OAU have continued to play out even in contemporary Africa under the African Union. It is these differences that led to the formation of the OAU as a compromise entity. Its formation was far from creating a 'supranational nation-state' (Fagbayibo, 2013) as it was aspired in the pan-African dream. Its successor, the AU, equally has not succeeded in bringing the dream closer to a possibility. The pursuit for continental unity has been characterized by push and pull informed by these emergent independence groupings that have derailed the prospects of a united Africa from the onset. One of the greatest challenges to the call for Africa to unite has been the contentious principle of sovereignty, according to L.J. Farmer (Farmer 2012). African states were more preoccupied with the protection of their territorial integrity at independence and were unwilling to cede it to some supranational institution in the name of a united Africa. Despite these efforts, there are still many obstacles to regional integration in Africa, including political instability, economic disparities, and logistical challenges. However, the continued commitment of African leaders to the ideals of pan-Africanism and regional integration suggests that progress will continue to be made in this area.

REGIONAL INTEGRATION AND NATIONALISM

The relationship between regional integration and nationalism is not causal. It is not a cause-and-effect relationship. Nationalism does not cause regional integration, but, it impedes. Nationalism is built on opposing tenets to liberalism upon which regionalism is hedged. Where nationalism thrives, regional integration dives. Regions where nationalism is on the rise risks losing on the gains made in regional integration. For instance, the former president of the US, Donald Trump extolled America nationalism and limited the migration of people into America through anti-migration policies and caused the withdrawal of America from several international treaties.

In Africa, the various forms of nationalism have made it a herculean task for integration efforts to materialize despite the process predating independence. Regions that have seemingly succeeded have states ceding some of their sovereignty and nationalism at the national level and committing to nationalism at the

regional level, a kind of regio-nationalism, what is otherwise called supra-nationalism. The European Union exemplifies a successful regio-nationalism that made it the most successful regional integration process globally. European states had succeeded in ceding state nationalism until Brexit. The United Kingdom's exit from EU was a reversal on the *regio-nationalism* that was taking shape in Europe. This became a clear manifestation that states are unwilling to let go their political nationalism even when economic supra-nationalism seems to be succeeding. It is noted that nationalism is on the rise globally, especially post the Cord War era. Africa is not immune to this global force that is coming at a time when the continent aims at becoming borderless.

Supra-nationalism surpasses national borders and influences a people's behaviour and mind. Cronin and Acharya contend that supranationalism allows people to think of themselves as part of a transcendent group that is unlimited by national borders, to the extent that they stop dividing "us" from "them" along national lines. (Cronin, 1999; Acharya, 2001). Citizens across the continent can say that as fellow Africans, "we" trust one another to resolve disputes without force. Kathleen Powers further argues that "when people embrace national or supranational identities, they commit to an idea about how people who share that identity think and behave" (Powers, 2022). When African states accept and promote supranationalism, every African will be at home in any African nation. Supranationalism entrenches cooperation within the supranational entity while some nationalist policies prescribe aggression and opposition to cooperation.

Supranationalism as well as nationalism are about social interactions and how people behave towards others. While supranationalism is more about equality among heterogeneous groups, nationalism is about unity and homogeneity of the in-group. According to Powers, nationalism is about a shared culture, history or identity or any other shared material that binds people together. She contends that "unity requires a binary separation between 'us' and 'them', where a 'feeling of kinship' allows people to embrace national or supranational insiders as family and guard against outsiders" (Powers, 2022). Equality, on the other hand, requires reciprocity, fairness and is reflected in peer-like social interactions (Powers, 2022). It is more accommodative to heterogeneity, thus creating more flexible boundaries that avoid the divisions created by nationalism. This kind of nationalism is based on equality rather than unity, cultural diversity rather than homogeneity, on friendship rather than family hood. It is this kind of nationalism that the African union needs to propagate at the continental level towards building a supranational culture and identity as it promotes geopolitical unity. This will bring supranational political identity that will propel states towards more open borders.

Pan- Africanism espoused the attributes of equality and cooperation. In his book, *The African Union: Pan-Africanism, Peacebuilding and Development*, Timothy Muriithi defines pan-Africanism as "the struggle for social and political equality and the freedom from economic exploitation and racial discrimination" (Muriithi, 2005). The aims of the movement were to bring the peoples of Africa together as equals. It envisioned a people free from political and economic domination who would achieve economic development through cooperation. At the core of pan-Africanism was a firm commitment to regional integration, however, it failed to chart the way through which these objectives were to be achieved.

Regionalism seeks to introduce a new organizing unit other than the state. The post war period has witnessed growing changes in the international scene. The once hitherto enemies have been generally stable, and new actors have come on board, while countries from the South have come to play increasingly influential roles on the global stage. There has been an increasing realization that economies are interdependent and increasingly interrelated. States have made numerous efforts to come together for economic cooperation. If not by themselves, globalization process has forced them to. For their survival, and that of the modern world, characterized by increasing cross-national links and externalities, the need for global cooperation is imperative (Biswaro, 2011). The economic and political climate has changed radically, from competition for military and political power to economic cooperation and interdependency albeit

driven by national interests. Countries divided by ideological differences have come together for mutual benefit.

Nationalism is a strong ideological force that has great political influence even on economic cooperation. It has been conceived as being either inclusive or exclusive. It includes people who seem to share certain cultural identities and excludes those who seem not to 'belong' to that culture. It creates an inter subjective relationship of 'us' verses 'them', that is, it identifies with the 'self' against the 'other'. Territorial boundaries have contributed to entrenching political nationalism in Africa. Before the coming of the colonialists and the creation of arbitrary borders, nationalism in Africa was ethnic based but still around for socio-cultural interactions across the different communities.

Contemporary African nationalism is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that has evolved over time. It is characterized by various manifestations and expressions across the African continent. Contemporary nationalism has continued to manifest itself in various ways and areas of concern that include: Regional integration where many African nations are participating in regional organizations such the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). These organizations promote regional integration and cooperation, reflecting a form of nationalism that seeks unity at the regional level. Resistance to neocolonialism which is the continued economic and political influence of former colonial powers or other foreign actors. African states are working to assert their independence and reduce external control. Some contemporary African nationalist movements prioritize environmental conservation and sustainability as part of their national identity. This includes efforts to protect natural resources and combat climate change.

IMPACTS OF NATIONALISM ON REGIONAL INTEGRATION

Nationalism has had both positive and negative impacts on regional integration in Africa. On one hand, nationalism has promoted a sense of unity and pride among citizens of particular nations, which has in turn fostered a desire for cooperation and collaboration with neighboring countries. This has led to increased regional trade, investment, and cultural exchange, which has helped strengthen regional integration.

However, nationalism has also had negative impacts on regional integration in Africa. When nationalism became extreme, it has led to a sense of superiority over neighboring nations, which has created tension and fostered conflict. This has made it difficult for countries to work together on issues related to regional integration, such as trade agreements or infrastructure development. Additionally, nationalism has led to a focus on domestic issues at the expense of regional concerns, which has hindered progress towards greater regional integration. The covid-19 is a great example of how states fell back to domestic policies that led to closure of borders and delayed close border clearance for transit goods.

The impact of nationalism on regional integration in Africa has been a slow pace of continental unity. Africa's pursuit of regional integration predates independence; however, little progress has been realized. African states have been slow to agree on the modalities of regional integration and their commitment to the legal instruments, such as the Abuja Treaty, has been wanting. However, if nationalism becomes extreme or exclusionary, it can hinder progress towards greater regional integration.

Its first manifestation as a strong force on the continent was during the formation of the Organization of African Unity in 1963. Three ideological schools emerged each pulling in different directions towards the pan-African vision of a United Africa. Continent integration efforts failed at this early stage but led to a compromise in the formation of OAU. Two reasons could be attributed to this turn of events: power struggles and the fear of political uncertainties that prevailed at the time of OAU's formation (Makinda et al, 2008). Several efforts have been put in place to realize continental integration, but little has been achieved.

States have tended to be more protective of their sovereign authority which they are not willing to cede to a supranational entity.

Some of the efforts made include the Abuja treaty which sought to establish the African Economic Community which was followed by the Lagos plan of Action. The culmination of these efforts has been the creation of the African Continental Free Trade Area which brings together 55 countries and unites over 1.3 billion people on the continent. It is going to be the largest market globally. But even as Africa launched its Af CFTA, trends globally indicate a rise in nationalism, for instance, Brexit that led to its withdrawal from European Union, Trumps' America First, Japanese Shinzo Abe and India's Noredra Modi among others. Will Africa withstand these forces of rising nationalism in its endeavour for continental unity? "While Africa has placed "developmental regionalism" at the center of its strategy for growth and structural transformation, current global trends show a growing skepticism towards regional integration and trade agreements" (UNECA and AfDB, 2017).

The arrival of European settlers on the African continent brought about a significant shift in the paradigm of free movement. The political, social, economic, and cultural organization of African peoples underwent a structural change. The creation of arbitrary territorial borders led to the division of communities and ethnic groups that had previously formed single political and cultural units and the creation of cultural identities. Thus, free movement became regulated and controlled by the new governments. This meant that trading activities among the different communities became almost impossible without government presence. Today, intra Africa trade is at only 12%, indicating the negative impact that nationalism has had over the years.

CONCLUSION

As a strong political force, nationalism has a determinacy character on regional economic cooperation among states. It determines who to identify with as part of in group, 'us' or to be considered as 'other'. In the context of nationalism, determinacy plays a key role in shaping the national narrative and the way a nation views its history. For example, a nationalist movement may emphasize a particular historical event or figure as evidence of the inevitability of their nation's existence. This has be seen in many nationalist movements around the world, where historical narratives are used to justify claims to territory or political autonomy.

However, determinacy can also be used to challenge nationalist narratives. For example, highlighting the role of chance or contingency in historical events can challenge the idea that a particular nation's existence was inevitable. This can be particularly important in contexts where nationalist movements are based on exclusionary or discriminatory ideas, as it can challenge the notion that some groups of people are inherently destined to be part of a particular nation while others are not. Overall, determinacy and nationalism can be closely intertwined, but the relationship between them is complex and multifaceted.

Nationalism, thus, been conceived as being dualistic as it can be either inclusive or exclusive. It includes people who are seen to share certain cultural identities and values and excludes those who are seen not to 'belong' to that culture. It creates an inter subjective relationship of 'us' verses 'them', that is, it identifies with the 'self' against the 'other'. The states' claim to territorial spaces has contributed to the entrenchment of political nationalism in Africa and beyond, and this has made complex regional integration efforts. Besides, the Constitutive Act, as was its predecessor the Charter of the Organization of African Unity, seeks to preserve the borders as inherited at independence (AU, 2002). This legal principle of, *uti possidetis juris*, is contradictory to the aspiration for a borderless continent as envisioned in the Agenda 2063. For the continent to become borderless and achieve unrestricted movement of people, goods and services, there is need to reconcile this legal norm with the Continental aspiration as enshrined in the Agenda 2063. The principle, as it is, entrenches state nationalism across the Continent and no state is willing to let go of its

claim to territorial spaces.

Before the scramble and partitioning of Africa and the creation of arbitrary borders at the Berlin conference of 1884, nationalism in Africa was ethnic based, a kind of ethno-nationalism. Yet it is still allowed for socio-cultural and economic interactions among the different communities across the continent. However, this did not limit seamless social and economic relations among those communities. To achieve successful regional integration at the continental level, there is need for the African states to confront the challenge posed by nationalism that has usually hindered its progress towards integration. It is noted, however, that states are hesitant to surrender their exercise of sovereign powers to supra-national institutions. There is need to cultivate supra-nationalism in place of nationalism. It is important still, to challenge the existing nationalisms prevalent on the continent that have hindered the continent's progress towards regional integration. These nationalisms that have over the years limited African states' commitment to supranational ideals of a political and economic integration. There is need for all actors on the continent to work together towards implementing the legal norms and policy frameworks that exist to achieve unrestricted movement across national borders. While nationalism has had both positive and negative impacts on regional integration in Africa, it is important for African leaders to recognize the need for greater cooperation and collaboration in order to fully realize the developmental potential of the continent.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The paper recommends that;

There is need encourage the promotion of supra-nationalism over nationalism in African states to facilitate regional integration and unrestricted movement of people, goods, and services across national borders. Equally, African states need to be encouraged to confront the challenge posed by nationalism that has hindered progress towards integration, and to cultivate a culture of cooperation and collaboration.

The African Union should advocate for the reconciliation of the legal principle of *uti possidetis juris* with the aspiration for a borderless continent as enshrined in the Agenda 2063. There is also need for African leaders to fully implement legal norms and policy frameworks that exist to achieve unrestricted movement across national borders.

African states need to challenge the existing nationalisms that have limited their commitment to supranational ideals of political and economic integration. There is also need to promote the importance of greater cooperation and collaboration among all actors including the non-state actors on the continent to fully realize the developmental potential of Africa.

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