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# Regions as Security Providers

The Evolution of the West African  
Regional Security Complex

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# Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the region in its role as a regional security provider through a within-case study of West Africa. The point of departure is on one hand that contemporary threats to international peace and security are increasingly regional, arising within states rather than from a global or out-of-region origin, and on the other hand that the regions among the world has become salient security providers. The theoretical and epistemological basis rests on social constructivist concepts and theories on the evolution of the West African Regional Security Complex. I have found that the processes of securitisation and desecuritisation among the states in West Africa are so interlinked that their security problems cannot reasonably be analysed or resolved apart from one another. The security interdependence between the states has been highly dependent on *de jure* changes in distribution of power, shifts in the pattern of amity and enmity, and alternations in penetration of external actors. Three characteristics have continued to hamper the evolution of the security complex: (i) the weak state capacity of its members resulting in a gap between agreed norms and rules of conduct, and institutional capacity and resources; (ii) the principles of state sovereignty and search for consensus in regional decision-making blocking collective conflict prevention and management; (iii) the phenomenon of presidentialism and prevailing pattern of executive dominance in member states and its repercussions on regional decision-making.

*Keywords:* West Africa, Regions, Security, Constructivism, Norms, Institutions  
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# Abbreviations

Accord de Non Agression et d`Assistance en Matiere de Defense	ANAD
African Contingency Operations Training Assistance	ACOTA
African Union	AU
African Peace and Security Architecture	APSA
British Military Assistance Training Team	BMATT
Comunidade de Pais de Lingua Portuguesa	CPLP
Defense and Security Commission	DSC
Economic Community of West African States	ECOWAS
ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group	ECOMOG
ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework	ECPF
ECOWAS Stand-by Force	ESF
European Union	EU
Early Warning System	EWS
Gross Domestic Product	GDP
Human Development Index	HDI
International Crisis Group	ICG
Mediation and Security Council	MSC
National Patriotic Front of Liberia	NPFL
Political Affairs, Peace and Security	PAPS
Protocol of Mutual Assistance on Defense	PMAD
Protocol of Non-aggression	PNA
Provisional Ruling Council	PRC
Peace Support Operations	PSO
Regional Economic Community	REC
Regional Security Complex	RSC
Regional Security Complex Theory	RSCT
Reinforcement of African Peacekeeping Capacity Program	RECAMP
Revolutionary United Front	RUF
Secretary General	SG
Security Council	SC
Standing Mediation Committee	SMC
United Kingdom	UK
United Nations	UN
United Nations Development Programme	UNDP
United States	US
United States Dollars	USD

# 1. Introduction

The point of departure for this thesis is that regions among the world have become increasingly salient actors in the space between the domestic and global levels in international relations. In the introductory chapter I present the identified scientific problem, and the purpose and research question of the thesis. Further on, I introduce the theoretical and methodological approach of the study, its context and outline.

## 1.1 Purpose and Research Question

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the region in its role as a regional security provider through a within-case study of West Africa. In my study West Africa is defined as the territory comprised of the following fifteen states: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. In studies of international relations (IR) the traditional ontological point of departure have been a focus on two levels of analysis; the state and the international system (Waltz 2001). However, latest decades has experienced a rise of sub-systems, in particular, regional organisations as a level of analysis (Buzan 2009). Scholars argue that contemporary security threats are increasingly regional, arising within states rather than from a global or out-of-region origin. Thus, imposing an emphasis on regional solutions based on regional co-operation (Buzan&Weaver 2003; Bellamy 2004). The case for developing regional mechanisms in Africa is often captured in the phrase 'African solutions to African problems', intended to mobilize Africans to solve their problems (Ayangafac&Cilliers 2011:116).

The scientific problem that I have identified is not the growing regionalization, *per se*, rather the delimitation of the region as an autonomous ontological entity from on one hand the state and on the other hand the global level. Some argue that it is a distinct level (Buzan&Waever 2003), others that the levels, in particular, the regional and international levels conflate (Lake&Morgan 1997). In short, what is at the center of my paper is whether the region is a security actor that ontologically could be defined as an autonomous level of analysis or if it is an institution through which states on the regional level as well as the global level have decided to act.

My research question is: *What are the mechanisms behind the region as a security provider in the case of West Africa?* My argument is that regional co-operation matters when it comes to securitisation and desecuritisation, however, the processes are dependent on the interests of regional hegemony and global actors. From a critical perspective the proposition raises two questions; (i) how

can regional co-operation be a tool for regional hegemons? (ii) how can regional security mechanisms be dependent on global actors? The answer on these two later questions would address the initial problem of my research; whether the regional level ontologically could be considered as an autonomous level of analysis or a part of on one side the state level or the global level on the other.

The concept of security could be understood as the pursuit of freedom from threat (Buzan 2009:37). Traditionally security has been linked to territoriality and the political or military sectors. Thus, in the context of the international system, security has been about the ability of states and societies to maintain their independent identity and their functional identity. However, contemporary security studies have found it necessary to include other sectors working with societal security, i.e. the economic, societal and environmental sectors (Buzan&Waever 2003:70). The question is whether these sectors should fall under the rubric of security or relate to it only through their impact on the threat and use of force (Lake&Morgan 1997:21). An emphasis on physical safety that is the focus of this thesis narrows considerably the threats and the key resources needed to cope with them. Further on, the fact that states continue to operate as if physical safety is the core element of security also influence what is at the center of the concept, mainly military-political resources (cp. Lake&Morgan 1997:22). This is not to say that there sometimes is a need to broaden the definition of what needs to be included in the concept of security, e.g. new types of security threats such as organized criminality, drug and human trafficking, illicit exploitation of natural resources, and terrorism (OECD 2012; UN 2012a; Aning 2011:149). From the discussion follows that I understand a security provider as an actor with ability to successfully reduce/remove a specific threat against a specific object.

## 1.2 Theoretical and Methodological Approach

The theoretical approach of the thesis follows a worldview that broadly could be linked to the traditions of the English School. Thus, my approach is characterized of a pragmatic position to the influence of international institutions between on one hand realism and liberalism, and on the other hand social constructivism (Hurrell 2009:12). Following the English School I accept the realist position that the international system is anarchic and the sovereignty of states. However, attracted by the idea of social constructivism I find it possible to establish common norms and rules of conduct within that system.

My theoretical framework departs from the Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) developed by Barry Buzan and Ole Waever (2003) and the concept of Security Communities (Bellamy 2004). A RSC is defined as 'a set of units whose major processes of securitisation, desecuritisation, or both are so interlinked that their security problems cannot reasonably be analysed or resolved apart from one another' (Buzan&Waever 2003:44). Security Communities could be understood as communities whose members renounce the use of force in their relations with one another in accordance with a heightened sense of 'we-feeling' (Bellamy 2004:14). In order to qualify as an RSC the members must possess a certain

degree of security interdependence sufficient both to establish them as a linked set and to differentiate them from the surrounding regions (Buzan&Waeber 2003:47).

My hypothesis is that the degree of security interdependence that decides on the evolution of the RSC is dependent on, firstly the polarity or distribution of power within the RSC, secondly the social construction or pattern of amity and enmity between the members of the RSC, and thirdly the penetration of external actors or 'outside' actors inside the RSC. These variables can in turn be analysed in terms of ideational structures (e.g. identities, interests and norms) and material aspects (e.g. institutions, political/military interaction). Following my methodological approach of constructivism, ideational factors have causal priority over material factors. Ideational structures are therefore a necessary condition for the outcome of the dependent variable. Material structures are independent variables that are contributing causes, though neither necessary nor sufficient, however important for the degree of security interdependence.

### 1.3 Context and Outline

Regional cooperation in West Africa started out as a collective quest for self-reliance and economic development with the establishment of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) (ECOWAS 2012a). The current security framework, *ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework* (ECPF) makes West Africa in many aspects the forerunner in advanced mechanisms for addressing regional peace and security in Africa (ECOWAS 2012b; Obi 2009:120). The African Union (AU) mimics ECOWAS in many aspects (Utas&Jörgel 2007:31). As one of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) that constitute the *African Peace and Security Architecture* (APSA) ECOWAS had taken decisions before the birth of the AU on Peace Support Operations (PSO) in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau and Côte d'Ivoire and to establish essential components on the regional level which has come to characterize the APSA on the continental level (Elowson&MacDermott 2010:27). In this thesis I will show how ECOWAS has developed an extensive normative and institutional framework for conflict prevention and management; however, also that its capacity to move from rhetoric to practice has been dependent on its regional hegemon Nigeria and external actors.

The thesis is organized in the following way. Next chapter discusses the theoretical framework that provides the basis for my analysis of the West African RSC. It examines theories and concepts on international order, regional security and the state in Sub-Saharan Africa. Chapter 3 considers methodological aspects, such as the implications of philosophy of science, the research method and case selection, and data collection and sources. In Chapter 4 I analyse the evolution of the West African RSC. The analysis includes two dimensions: the development of norms and rules of conduct, and how these have been materialized in the establishment of institutions and collective action. The thesis finishes with my conclusions from the study.

## 2. Theories and Concepts

The objective of the following chapter is to provide the theoretical basis for my thesis. It embraces three questions: (i) how can we understand different aspects of international order; (ii) how can we understand the concept of regional order; (iii) how can we understand the contemporary state in Sub-Saharan African (hereafter Africa). Following the English School and its eclectic traditions my theoretical approach is characterized of a pragmatic position 'attracted by elements of realism and idealism', gravitated towards the middle ground (Linklater 2005:85). This is not to say that 'everything works' rather to show that it is necessary to move beyond the divide between empirical analysis on the one side and a purely normative approach on the other (cp. Hurrell 2009:13). The chapter is organized in three sections that in proper order discuss dynamics of international order, theories on regional security and features of the contemporary African state.

### 2.1 On International Order

Theories on international order have traditionally been influenced by the assumption that the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 contained the core principles of how international order is shaped (Hurrell 2009:54). The Westphalian order builds principally on the maintenance of balance of power between states in a uni-, bi- or multipolar system. The era of the Cold War could typically be characterized as a bipolar system. The features of the post-Cold War period have varied from a unipolar system that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union, but transforming into a multipolar system with several global actors, however, dominated by one hegemon, the United States (US) (Buzan&Weaver 2003:54). The European Concert that evolved after the Napoleonic Wars illustrates typically a multipolar system where peace and security was built through equilibrium (Holsti 1991:114).

The origin of the Westphalian system departs from Niccolò Machiavelli's and Thomas Hobbes's pessimistic view on human egoism and how that govern the behavior of human beings, 'the life of man, solitary, poore, nasty, brutish and short', and subsequently the behavior of states, 'a warre, as is of every man, against every man' (Hobbes 2006:70). However, the Westphalian system also includes agreed rules of conduct and an expectation that those rules will be observed. The Westphalian paradigm is therefore characterized of three features. The first is the assumption that the system is anarchic, meaning that there is no authority or hierarchy that can decide on conflicts between sovereign states. The second is that the state is the primary actor in the system, and the third, the assumption that states interest are to maximize national interests and their own security, *raison d'état*, relative other states (Dunne&Schmidt 2008:92). The ideas

of anarchy, sovereignty and non-intervention are deeply connected to mainstream theories focusing on 'the acts of individuals or the acts of states' that makes up the forces in international relations (Waltz 2001:232). From this position would follow that realists reject the influence of international institutions on international order that instead reflects the balance of power between states where institutions do not influence individual states behaviour (Mearsheimer 1995:13). Liberal ideas move beyond the realist perspective in recognizing the role of international institutions, however, departs from the same ontological position that states are the primary actors in the international system (Bauer 2006:25).

For scholars of the English School it is important to move beyond the Westphalian system and realist assumptions about the unbridgeable gulf between domestic and international politics to understand contemporary changes, such as regionalization, in international order (Hurrell 2009:54). I will refer to this 'move beyond' as the 'constructivist turn' in international relations that has become influential on the development of theories on regional order, a matter to which I turn in the next section. As a general theory on how international order is produced constructivism departs from a view that order is socially constructed and the result of interaction and interdependence between states. Constructivists also recognize the importance of international institutions in the development of norms and rules of behaviour, and therefore, contrary to realists and liberalists view international institutions as autonomous actors in the international system (Barnett&Finnmore 1999:726; Bauer 2006:24).

Members of the English School adhere to the ideas of an anarchic international system and the sovereignty of the state; however, they come to the conclusion that the international system is more civil and orderly than realists suggest (Linklater 2005:85). Hedley Bull, one of the founding fathers of the English School, distinguished between an international system and an international society. The former, a Hobbesian security seeking one, could be understood as a system where two or more states have sufficient contact between one another, and have sufficient impact on one another's decisions to cause them to behave as parts of a whole. The later, a Lockean progressive one, is a society of states that comes into being when a group of states, conscious of certain common interests and values, form a society in the sense that they conceive themselves to be bound by a set of common rules in their relations with one another, and share in the working of common institutions (Linklater 2005:90). The focus on normative and institutional factors that gives the international society its own logic distinguish the English School from realism and illustrates the constructivist turn in international relations (Linklater 2005:92). Thus, emphasizing the process which transforms systems of states into societies of states and the construction of norms and institutions which makes up the political order (Linklater 2005:93). Barry Buzan, a later member of the English School, further developed the third tradition of the English School, i.e. the Kantian idea of a world society or cosmopolitanism envisaging a world order (Kant 1795; Buzan 2006:9). Together these three strands on one hand form a complete and interlinked picture of international relations, and on the other hand illustrate the English School of perspective and its theoretical pluralism. I turn

now to how these theories and concepts could be transferred to ideas on regional security.

## 2.2 On Regional Security

During the Cold War there was a tendency in IR to focus on the balance of power between the two super powers and thus a focus on the global level (Buzan&Weaver 2003:6). Therefore, regional order became more or less a reflection of the international system (Buzan&Weaver 2003:16). However, the post-Cold War has seen the rise of on one side a globalist perspective and a regionalist perspective on the other. The former departs from the replacement of the Westphalian order by deterritorialisation of world politics (Buzan&Weaver 2003:31). The later, the regionalist perspective that I would argue is be relevant for this thesis, rests on two assumptions; (i) that the decline of superpower rivalry has reduced the penetration of global actors in the rest of the world and opened up for regional security dynamics begun with decolonization; (ii) that domestic dynamics have pulled great powers away from military engagement and strategic competition leaving local states and societies to sort out their military-political relationships with less interference from great powers (Buzan&Weaver 2003:10-20). The increasingly focus on regions could, however, also be explained by three other factors: (i) new threats that arise within states are not contained within that state alone; (ii) increase in international interventions requires the international community to develop partnership with regional organizations; (iii) regional arrangements have become more proactive in addressing security threats than international organizations (Williams&Haacke 2011:49).

The Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) understands the regional level as a distinct ontological level of analysis located between the global and the local level, however, not automatically with actor quality (Buzan&Weaver 2003:27). Lake and Morgan in principle concur with Buzan and Weaver's approach to the theory on regional security complexes. However, they divert in two important aspects that are relevant to this thesis. On one hand they narrow the concept of security within a complex as a matter of physical security, on the other hand their revised theory opens up for possible members of a complex not located in the neighbourhood (Lake&Morgan 1997:30-31). Thus, there is in their view not a clear distinction between members of the complex, and actors from the outside, instead outsiders could sometimes be regarded as inside the complex. International institutions should as well be assessed with the security order they operate (Lake&Morgan 1997:38). In short, their approach does not view the regional level as a distinct ontological level of analysis, rather as conflating with the global level. Although, the central element in a RSC is its security relations and the elements of interdependence between its members, Lake and Morgan come to the conclusion that great power solutions to regional conflicts will be likely to prove elusive for the foreseeable future (1997:66). Great powers and superpowers could be understood as global actors that operate at the system level, and regional powers as states operating at the regional level. What differs between

a great power and a superpower is that the later require broad-spectrum capabilities exercised across the whole spectrum of the international system, and the military-political and economic capacities to support such capabilities. The former has appropriate levels of capabilities, but not necessarily big capabilities in all sectors; however, they are recognised by other states on the basis of system level distribution of power. A regional power is a state that defines the polarity of a given RSC. From a regional perspective their capabilities are large, but on the global level they remain of less consequence or appropriateness (Buzan&Weaver 2003:34-37).

A RSC is defined as 'a set of units whose major processes of securitisation, desecuritisation, or both are so interlinked that their security problems cannot reasonably be analyzed or resolved apart from one another' (Buzan&Waever 2003:44). The RSCT represents the constructivist turn in international relations and builds on one hand on the pattern of amity and enmity among the units in the system, and on the other hand on the polarity or the distribution of power in that system (Buzan&Weaver 2003:49). The theory does not say that the regional level always is dominant, rather that it operates within a security constellation of levels; the state, the regional and the global level where the regional level may or may not be dominant, but nearly always plays a significant role and therefore cannot be left out of the analysis (Buzan&Weaver 2003:52). Central to the theory is the idea that adjacency is important to security because 'threats travel more easily over short distances than over long ones', thus, giving security dynamics a strong territoriality (Buzan&Waever 2003:45). Following the definition of a RSC the process of securitisation and desecuritisation is to what extent the members of the RSC are so interlinked that their security problems cannot reasonably be analyzed or resolved apart from one another. In order to qualify as an RSC the members must possess a certain degree of security interdependence sufficient both to establish them as a linked set and to differentiate them from the surrounding security regions (Buzan&Waever 2003:47).

The essential structure of a RSC is defined by four variables; (i) the boundary that differentiate it from its neighbours; (ii) the anarchic structure within the RSC (between two or more units); (iii) the polarity or the distribution of power among the units; (iv) the social construction or pattern of amity and enmity among the units. Variations in these variables would influence the evolution of a RSC, either through internal or external transformation, ranging from conflict transformation, through security regime to security community (Buzan&Weaver 2003:53-54). These evolutionary steps could broadly be related to the types of international order discussed in the previous section. The first, a Hobbesian anarchic system characterized of a pattern of security interdependence shaped by fear of war and rivalry. The second, a Lockean model shaped by fear of war and rivalry, but a regime where fears and expectations are restrained by agreed set of rules of conduct. The third, a Kantian model where states do not expect or prepare for the use of force in their relations with each other (Buzan&Weaver 2003:471). Among regions in the world, e.g. Europe could clearly be defined as a security community, while many others belong to the two first types pending on the yardstick by which they are measured. Implementing the definition of a RSC on

the African continent it is Southern Africa and West Africa that have come furthest in their evolution as a RSC, while the Central and East African regions do not yet qualify as a RSC. In short, the RSCT tells us that it is the polarity or distribution of power, and the pattern of amity and enmity among members within the complex that decides the characteristics of a given RSC. The theory treats RSCs as distinct ontological units between the local and the global level; however, it includes aspects of global actor's penetration as a possible variable. I turn now to the concept of security communities.

The concept of Security Communities, communities whose members renounce the use of force in their relations with one another in accordance with a heightened sense of 'we-feeling' was developed by Karl Deutsch (Linklater 2005:106). Drawing on the writings of Deutsch *et al.* (1957) Alex J. Bellamy has further developed the concept of security communities and their role in contemporary IR (Bellamy 2004:14). His theoretical approach represents no exception from the tradition of the English School and the constructivist worldview that the international society is socially constructed. The constructivist turn would, thus, mean that normative and ideational structures are just as important as material structures (Bellamy 2004:17). Contrary to the neo-realist and neo-liberalist approach that states actions are based on the logic of consequence or rational behaviour, the process of socialization, social learning and norm construction, and the logic of appropriateness, thus, becomes important in his theoretical reasoning. The logic of appropriateness implies that actions cannot be separated from its social and normative context. Similar to the construction of communities, the perception of security in the international system is framed by notions of identities and interests (Bellamy 2004:17-27). Thus, logic of consequence and logic of appropriateness could be seen as 'the basic logic of action by which human behavior is interpreted' (March&Olsen 1998:949). However, political action cannot be explained exclusively in terms of logic of either consequences or appropriateness. Any particular action probably involves elements of each. Political actors are constituted both by their interests, by which they evaluate their expected consequences, and by the rules embedded in their identities and political institutions. They calculate consequences and follow rules, and the relationship between the two is often subtle (March&Olsen 1998:952).

Bellamy's framework for analysis of security communities includes four areas. The first two areas investigate the ideational aspects of security communities; how they are constructed by assessing identities, interests and norms and then locating them in a broader regional and global context, and to what extent the identities, interests, norms of the community overlap with those of its neighbours (Bellamy 2004:52-58). The second two areas focus on the materialization of the community; the degree of institutional, economic and social ties within the security community, and then the scope and quality of relations between insiders and outsiders (Bellamy 2004:58-62). Bellamy differentiates between communities that are more mature and tightly-coupled and those that are less mature and loosely-coupled. Situating security communities in a global perspective Bellamy argues that the more security communities there are and the more tightly-coupled they become the more blurred will the boundaries between insiders and outsiders

become. Thus, security communities may have a mitigating and even eliminating role on violent conflict between states irrespectively of on what type of governance they are founded (Bellamy 2004:187). I turn now to how theories and concepts on the African state could help analysing the domestic influence on regional security.

## 2.3 On the African State

In IR there has been a tendency to consider all states alike, following the ideal type of state that typically has its origin in European experiences. As discussed in the previous section the RSC cannot be analysed without taking into account the domestic level. The challenge here is that the Weberian state and Westphalian system has not taken root on the African continent (Williams 2007:5). Instead the African state could be interpreted as a hybrid copy of the ideal type of Weberian state (Reno 1998:18). This is not to say that it would be impossible to characterize the contemporary African state. Although there is a variation caused by different pre-colonial and colonial heritages, states in Africa bear some type of similarities and common features that are relevant in studies of IR (Hyden 2007:54). At the same time it is important to notice the diversity of the African continent and its domestic varieties.

Most African state has during a relative short period in history gone through far-reaching and large-scale changes with external rather than internal origin. The two most significant could be linked to the processes of on one hand colonization followed by decolonization and on the other hand the Cold War followed by the post-cold War era. This is not to say that internal transformation has taken place. The circumstance that decolonization took place during the Cold War and the shift that followed after the end of the Cold War made the African state particularly vulnerable for outside penetration (Reno 1998:45). The most significant features were; firstly, that the independent state inherited the colonial structure of a bifurcated state created by indirect rule and the practice of customary law (Mamdani 1996:287-288); secondly, international development assistance and programs has been built on conditionality and forced democratization through *inter alia* pre-mature elections (Duffield 2007:222); thirdly, the transformation of rivalry on the global level into conflicts on the African continent (Buzan&Weaver 2003:250). In the following paragraphs I highlight two characteristics of the African state that have an influence on domestic politics, and in turn regional security. Firstly, the weak power of the state and how that has affected regional capacities. Secondly, the phenomenon of neo-patrimonialism and how it has effected state-formation. The point of departure is that most African states are not consolidated nation-states, rather still in the process of state-formation (Hyden 2007:70).

The discourse of weak and failed states or fragile states has become the focus on the security and development nexus in the African context (Patrick 2011:268). Fragile states could be described along a continuum of declining state capacity, as weak, failed and collapsed states (Rotberg 2003:4-9). States fail because they

cannot provide public goods, such as security, rule of law, basic social service or economic well-being, and legitimacy of government to their people (Herbst 2000:259; Rotberg 2002:87; Williams 2007:2). One of the most central roles of the state is to provide security and order across the whole of its territory and not limited to a capital city and one or more ethnically specific zones (Boege et al. 2009:15). Control over territory and borders is assured not only by physical means, such as military force or police authority, but also by developing state institutions and infrastructure to exercise more substantial control over the whole state. In weak or failed states, people instead tend to turn to traditional leaders and local warlords for security and basic needs (Herbst 2000:270). In short, the inability of the weak state to provide basic human needs can on one hand explain root causes of intra-state conflicts, and on the other hand help understand the transition to what William Reno (1998) labels 'warlord politics' on the African continent. I would argue that 'warlordism' did not come to an end with the civil wars in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire or Guinea Bissau, rather it can still be observed in recent instability in Mali, Niger, Nigeria and again in Côte d'Ivoire.

Weak and failed states concentrate poverty and its effects, and have therefore come to be perceived as a great threat to global stability (Duffield 2007:167). One of the reasons is that they have been viewed as potential breeding ground for new transnational threats (Williams 2007:3). However, the connection is not clear-cut, much less universal (Patrick 2011:242). As most states fall along a continuum of state-capacity between the poles of 'good' and 'bad' governance it is a mistake to frame African states as a cohort, as a mortal threat to global security. Weak and failing states can, however, under certain conditions, contribute to transnational threats, but the connection between weak governance and global insecurity is less straightforward than often portrayed (Patrick 2011:243).

Weak states can be characterized by the degree of institutionalization and capacities of state institutions, and their autonomy (Holsti 2004:84). Such a characterization needs to distinguish between the scope of state functions and the strength of institutions (Fukuyama 2005:9). Goran Hyden argues that the executive capacity of the state can be strong or weak and the legality or adherence to rules can be seen as firm or soft (2007:69). In his categorization of state types, the state in Africa is both weak and soft (Hyden 2007:229). James Ferguson argues that many states in contemporary Africa are 'no longer able to exercise the range of powers we usually associate with a sovereign nation-state, or even (in a few cases) to function at all as states in any conventional sense of the term' (2007:93). The solution presented by development agencies and a priority of external assistance is strengthening state institutions in core fields of statehood. The lists of state functions that need to be addressed to overcome fragility varies, but always include institutions of the security sector, basic social services, the rule of law and legitimacy of the government (Boege et al. 2009:17). I would argue that there is a clear linkage between the capacity of the individual state in the region and the outcome of regional cooperation. I turn now to the second feature of the African state.

Domestic politics in the African state is characterised of an interaction between formal institutions and informal practices. However, many scholars argue that

informal practices like highly personalized rule and patron-client networks prevail over formal institutions, thus influencing the process of state-formation (Bratton 2008; Hyden 2007; Lindberg 2003; van de Walle 2002). I would argue that informal institutions are not a specific African phenomenon, it exists all over the world and the practice, *per se*, does not necessarily have restricting effects on state-formation, rather sometimes supporting ones. However, in neo-patrimonial systems informal practices will continue to challenge formal political and administrative institutions, because the later are overruled by informal patron-client networks that dominate the political and socio-economic structure of the society (Bratton&van de Walle 1997:278; Hyden 2007:96; Jörgel&Utahs 2007:52). Following Hyden, neo-patrimonial systems could be understood as a private and personalized system of rule rather than public realm that not separate the official sphere from the private realm (2007:229). Informal institutions exists side-by-side with formal institutions, but are so influential ´that it is their self-regulating logic rather than such principles as transparency and accountability that determine the conduct of state agencies` (Hyden 2007:230). Thus, the prevalence of informal practices could be seen as the biggest challenge to formal institutions facing most African countries of today (Hyden 2007:265). The phenomenon of neo-patrimonialism is in its nature anti-democratic because it is based on the private appropriation of public goods (van de Walle 2002:69). A persistent pattern of neo-patrimonial politics therefore has a counteracting effect on the process of democratization (Lindberg 2006:121). I would argue that the phenomenon of neo-patrimonialism in domestic politics partly could be identified in regional politics, illustrated by on one hand patron-client networks on the regional level, and on the other hand a pattern of executive dominance or ´presidentialism` in regional decision-making.

# 3. Methodological Considerations

The objective of this chapter is on one hand to link philosophy of science to methodology, and on the other hand to discuss my basic methodological reflections on how to conduct the study. It is centered on three issues: (i) ontology or what exists in the world and how researchers conceptualize what they study; (ii) epistemology or how researchers know what they know about the world and how it is formulated and evaluated; (iii) methodology or how researchers select their specific research tools (cp. Jackson 2011:26). The chapter is structured in three sections that in turn discuss the choice of philosophy and how it influences the study, the selection of research method and case, and the collection of data and sources.

## 3.1 Implications of Philosophy of Science

The philosophy of science or the worldview from where one departs will have a significant influence on how the study is organized and conducted. Patrick Thaddeus Jackson argues that positivism, or more adequate neo-positivism, has traditionally been the default position in IR, because it has more or less been compatible to most theories in the field (2011:204). Positivism means that the researcher positions himself/herself outside the social phenomenon of the study, i.e. an exogenic perspective, and draws his/her conclusion from what is only observable. From this follows the weakness of positivism that it not take in to consideration neither the influence of the mind of the researcher, nor what is unobservable, such as social structures and informal practices within the social fabric of the situation at hand.

In the previous chapter I discussed the influence of the process of socialization, social learning and norm construction on the evolution of a RSC and its implication on the degree of security interdependence among its members. From this follows that my methodological approach needs to move beyond positivism towards a philosophical ontology based on a constructivist position where I view myself as participating in the construction of the knowledge of the phenomenon at hand, i.e. an endogenic perspective, without a clear line of demarcation between the mind of the researcher and the world (cp. Jackson 2011:115). In short, this means a constructivist focus on the socially constructed nature of knowledge and institutions, in this case the West African RSC and the way in which knowledge bear the marks of its social origin or represents nothing more than social constructions (cp. Sayer 2000:90).

In constructivist methodology the real-but-unobservable mechanisms are replaced by imaginative analytical constructions, ideal-types, e.g. the Weberian

state or the Westphalian system, which are used to order the complexity of empirical reality into more comprehensible and manageable forms (cp. Jackson 2011:113). The focus of this study on the ideas of regional security complex and security communities typically illustrates such ideal-types of social constructions. However, the methodology of constructivism should not be confused with the scientific ontology of constructivism used in political science that represents a set of foci such as norms, ideas and culture (Jackson 2011:141).

Methodologically the study faces one major challenge. That is the consideration whether the constructivist notion of ideal-types of a Weberian state and a Westphalian system can be understood as universalistic or just a pure Eurocentric phenomenon that cannot be applied to other cultures and societies. The challenge here is that the Weberian state and the Westphalian system were never really transferred to the African continent, in the same way as it has been to other regions of the globe (Williams 2007:7). The Western ideal-type of state that is the assumption of most IR theories does simply not exist (Buzan&Waever 2003:219). Instead the African state needs to be interpreted as hybrid copy of the ideal-type of the Weberian state. This is not to say that ideal-types of states cannot be applied to the African region, however, it indicates that it has to be done with a high degree of context sensitivity and reflexivity.

Like positivism, constructivism considers neither the unobservable nor normative questions, and is in its nature relativistic. Therefore, it is sometimes necessary to adopt a philosophy of critical social science, e.g. critical realism, feminism and post-colonialism, if one wants to move beyond the observable and empirical in order to produce knowledge, or addressing what is good and bad or what ought and ought not to be (Sayer 2000:161). Critical realism typically helps in identifying dispositional configurations and causal mechanisms and how they can be interpreted and understood (Brante 2001:74). From this follows that RSCs can be viewed on one hand as an imaginative ideal-type of construction and on the other hand as products of multiple components and forces that cannot be understood on the model of regular successions of events (cp. Sayer 2000:17).

### 3.2 Research Method and Case Selection

Case study research as a qualitative method is prevalent across a range of academic disciplines. Political science is not an exception. Acknowledging the impossibility of studying society as a whole, the case study offers a method from which to draw broader conclusions about social trends and developments based on the assumption that societies could be delimited and have a sufficient homogeneity that the right unit of analysis, or case, could provide a mirror on a broader social system (May 2011:221). Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett defines a case 'as an instance of a class of events', e.g. revolutions, types of government regimes or economic systems that are investigated regarding the causes of similarities or differences among those instances (2005:17). A case study is thus a well-defined aspect of a historical episode that one selects for analysis, rather than a historical event itself. The distinctiveness of the method lies

in the bounding and in the question; what is this a case of? (May 2011:231). Related to this study, regions among the world that has developed into RSCs represent a designated and integrated social phenomenon that easily could be defined historically and territorially as an instance of a class of events. From this follows that my thesis is a case of evolution of RSCs, delimited to the African context, and specifically West African.

Rationales for choosing case study research vary from theory-building, theory-development and theory-testing (George&Bennett 2005:109). Depending on one's specific research objectives it is necessary to decide on how many cases to select and whether comparison is necessary. Many times the choice is about the extent of generalizing *versus* particularizing modes of interest, and how that is linked to the potential for different research aims (May 2011:221). As discussed in the previous chapter on theories and concepts my primary interest is to test and refine the Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) by applying it to a particular region. While instrumental studies related to theory-building and theory-development tend to involve multiple cases to seek analytic generalization with an optimum number of cases, intrinsic case studies are characterized of particularization and the specificity of a single case (May 2011:233). In this study it is depth not breadth that counts, and West Africa is chosen because it is revelatory and unusual among the approximately dozens (depending on how one cluster regions, sub-regions and super-regions) of regional security complexes (cp. Buzan&Weaver 2003). Compared to regions that represent more mature security complexes, e.g. Europe and North America, the African continent as a whole and the West African region in particular, typically form a security complex in being, thus, suitable for theory testing and refining.

Regional cooperation in West Africa started out as a collective quest for self-reliance and economic development. Shortly after its inception the region started to develop mechanisms for conflict prevention and management (Bah 2010:78). The current security framework makes West Africa in many aspects the forerunner in advanced mechanisms for addressing regional peace and security in Africa (Obi 2009:120). The AU mimics ECOWAS in many aspects (Utas&Jörgel 2007:31). At the time of the establishment of the *Peace and Security Protocol of the AU* the West African security complex had already been in existence for a period of time and made varying degree of progress in peace and security. As one of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) that constitute the *African Peace and Security Architecture* (APSA) ECOWAS had taken decisions before the birth of the AU on Peace Support Operations (PSO) in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau and Côte d'Ivoire to establish essential components on the regional level which has come to characterize the APSA on the continental level (Elowson&MacDermott 2011:27). Clearly ECOWAS has developed an extensive normative framework for conflict prevention and management; however, as I will show, its capacity to move from rhetoric to practice has been dependent on the regional hegemon Nigeria and external actors, in particular, the former colonial powers, and the US and the UN. Thus, the choice of West Africa complies with the primary criterion of relevance for case selection to the research objectives of the study, and provides the kind of control and variation required by the research

problem (cp. George&Bennett 2005:83). My theoretical approach posits particular causal mechanisms, such as amity and enmity among member states, and the polarity or balance of power within the complex as an explanation of a particular case, but if these prove to be demonstrably absent, then the theory is greatly weakened as an explanation for this case. George and Bennett define causal mechanisms 'as ultimately unobservable physical, social, or psychological processes which agents with causal capacities operate, but only in specific contexts or conditions, to transfer energy, information, or matter to other entities' (2005:137).

Regions among the world are one and each complex social constructions and cannot easily be compared as most similar or least similar, nor crucial or deviant cases of actors in relation to the theoretical model of ideal-type of a RSC. From this follows the question whether conclusions from one specific region could be generalized to other regions. It is inevitable that the depth and understanding inherent in the analysis of a single, as compared with multiple, cases will differ significantly (May 2011:233). Comparison may be useful, but only to illuminate difference and not to ensure representativeness (May 2011:233). Comparison or multi-case investigations may contribute to the sum of total knowledge through theorization. However, in-depth studies depart from a position that such a totalizing view is neither possible nor desirable given the complexities of the social world and its compositions of autonomous, irrational human actors (May 2011:221-222). Contrary to the method of controlled comparison the within-case method chosen for this study allows for causal interpretation through the methods of congruence, process tracing or both. The features of the congruence method is that the research departs from a theory, in this study the RSCT, and then assess its ability to explain or predict the outcome of a particular case through investigating the variance in the independent variables and variance in the dependent variable (George&Bennett 2005:181). The method can take into consideration theoretical reasons why the hypothesized causes (ideational and material structures, influenced by penetration of external actors) vary in effect, or whether there are unexplained variance in the dependent variable (security interdependence) (cp. George&Bennett 2005:183). The objective of the method of process-tracing is to identify the intervening causal process (the causal chain and causal mechanism) between the independent variables and the outcome of the dependent variable. George and Bennett argue that like the congruence test it is a method suitable to test theories in research with a constructivist approach in a social world that is characterized of multiple interaction and causality (2005:206).

My research question - *What are the mechanisms behind the region as a security provider in the case of West Africa?* - is operationalized in firstly the outcome of the process (the dependent variable) and secondly the variables that have an impact on the outcome. The outcome of the process of securitisation and desecuritisation is to what extent the members of the RSC are so interlinked that their security problems cannot reasonably be analysed or resolved apart from one another. In order to qualify as an RSC the members must possess a certain degree of security interdependence sufficient both to establish them as a linked set and to differentiate them from the surrounding security regions (Buzan&Waever

2003:47). The independent variables depart from Bellamy's analytical framework on security communities and are structured in two dimensions; the ideational aspects and the materialisation of the RSC. The ideational dimension is about how the RSC is constructed by assessing identities, interests and norms (formal and informal), while the material dimension focuses on the materialization of the RSC in terms of institutional, economic and social interaction and interdependence.

Following Buzan, Waever and Bellamy my hypothesis is that the degree of security interdependence that decides on the evolution of the RSC is dependent on, firstly the polarity or distribution of power within the RSC, secondly the social construction or pattern of amity and enmity between the members of the RSC, and thirdly the penetration of external actors or 'outside' actors inside the RSC. These variables can in turn be analysed in terms of ideational structures (e.g. identities, interests and norms) and material aspects (e.g. institutions, political/military interaction). Inspired by the logic of experiment two questions could be asked. First, is the consistency spurious or of possible causal significance? Second, are the independent variables a necessary condition for the outcome of the dependent variable, and how much explanatory or predictive power do they have? The later question is important since a condition may be necessary but still contribute little to the explanation or prediction of the outcome of the process (cp. George&Bennett 2005:185). Following my methodological approach of constructivism, ideational structures have causal priority over material aspects. Ideational structures are therefore a necessary condition for the outcome of the dependent variable. Material structures and penetration of external actors are independent variables that are contributing causes, though neither necessary nor sufficient, however important for the degree of security interdependence.

### 3.3 Data Collection and Sources

The distinctiveness of the case study method lies in its bounding, however the methods of collecting data (interviewing, participant observation, documentary analysis etc.) are generic across the social sciences (May 2011:228). The main method of data collection for this thesis is documentary research, read on one hand as narratives of events, and on the other hand as accounts of aspiration, intentions and decision-making (cp. May 2011:192). Sources for documentary research include a wide variety, such as historical documents (declarations, statutes, protocols) and people's accounts of incidents or periods in which they were actually involved (May 2011:194). Data required for this study is determined by my theoretical framework and my within-case study design. The data obtained should help achieve the objectives of the research and provide answers related to my hypothesis (cp. George&Bennett 2005:86-87). Documents could be approached from two different perspectives. The first is that they represent a reflection of reality, and social facts which exists independently of interpretation. The second perspective is to move beyond the idea that a document independently reports social reality and instead engage in a hermeneutic approach, where the

process of its production including the social context becomes important (May 2011:198-199).

The theoretical framework and the methodological approach of the thesis draws on academic works in political science, international relations and African politics, and literature on the philosophy of science and research in social science. The empirical part of the study builds on both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources that are used consist of treaties, protocols, reports, resolutions etc. from ECOWAS, AU and UN. These official documents provide reliable and valid data on the evolution of ideational structures and the materialization of the West African RSC; however, they do not reveal the extent of observance of norms and rules of conduct. Another weakness is that protocols from key organs of ECOWAS are not official. Decisions taken are often made public through the issue of press releases without comments on the decision-making itself. Therefore, the study draws on secondary sources for the analysis of the observance of norms and rules of conduct, and strengths and weaknesses of capabilities related to the actual variations in the independent variables. Secondary sources consist of in principle of two types: articles in academic journals and material from research institutes and organizations. Some of the material includes valuable interviews with officials from ECOWAS and member states. Further on, I have to a limited extent used media as a source when covering most recent (2012) development in West Africa.

In my criticism of the sources I found that scholars and institutes with different origin come to divergent assessments in their analysis of progress in peace and security made by ECOWAS. In most cases I have identified a significant variation on how to view its capabilities. The circumstance could to some extent be explained by, on one hand that the concept of security is not interpreted in the same way, and on the other hand the phenomenon of adaptation in which individuals adopt their expectations to the way of life they know (cp. Nussbaum 2008:136). These conditions illustrates that documents do not stand on their own, and needs to be situated in the context in which they were produced (cp. May 2011:209). Hence, I have scrutinized the material case by case and when useful and applicable balanced the use of sources with different origin. However, without being captured in the fallacy of bias I have deliberately searched for scientific publications and articles produced by African scholars attached to African institutions dealing with security studies on the African continent. Thus, my aim have been to come as close as possible to primary sources.

## 4. Focus on West Africa

The objective of this chapter is to analyse the evolution of the West African Regional Security Complex (RSC). My point of departure is on one hand the Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT), and on the other hand the research question; what are the mechanisms behind the region as a security provider, and the hypothesis that the degree of security interdependence that decides on the evolution of the RSC is dependent on, firstly the polarity or distribution of power within the RSC, secondly the social construction or pattern of amity and enmity between the members of the RSC, and thirdly the penetration of external actors or 'outside' actors inside the RSC. Throughout the chapter these variables are analysed from two perspectives. The first is how the variables are related to the domestic, regional and global levels. The second is the influence of ideational structures, such as common norms and rules of conduct and the materialization of the RSC in terms of institutions and collective action.

In the chapter on theories and concepts I introduced how one could distinguish on one hand between an international system and an international society, and on the other hand how that image of the division could be transferred to the regional level (cp. Buzan 2006:6-10). The process which transforms systems of states into societies of states and the construction of norms and institutions which makes up the political order represents ideas and concepts that in the case of this thesis is transferred and applied to the evolution of the West African RSC. I have identified three distinctive phases related to ideal-types of evolutionary steps in the process of securitisation and desecuritisation in the case of West Africa ranging from conflict transformation, through security regime to security community (cp. Buzan&Weaver 2003:53-54). These phases are not clear cut, and sometimes overlap each other, but could broadly in turn be related to three types of political order. The first step is the founding of the RSC, a period characterized of a Hobbesian anarchic system, conflict transformation and a pattern of security interdependence shaped by fear of war and rivalry. The second step is characterized of a Lockean model of security regime, *ad hoc* conflict management shaped by fear of war and rivalry, but a regime where fears and expectations are restrained by an agreed set of rules of conduct. The third step is the new security architecture characterized of a process of domestic democratization and liberalization, consolidation of the RSC and a move towards a Kantian model of security community where states do not expect or prepare for the use of force in their relations with each other (cp. Bellamy 2004:6). The method applied in my analysis is to identify the causal chain and the causal mechanisms between the independent variables and the outcome of the dependent variable through an analysis on one hand of each step, and on the other hand the mechanisms that causes the transformation from one step to next step (cp. George&Bennett

2005:206). Thus, from a methodological point of view it is important to view the RSC not as a static entity, rather one that evolves over time depending on a combination of internal and external transformation, and as a result of a historical development.

The chapter is structured in four sections. The first analyses the West African state in terms of on one hand similarities in historical and cultural values, colonial heritage, and political and socio-economic development, and on the other hand differences related to military-political power. The following sections analyses in proper order the three evolutionary steps of the RSC, i.e. the founding decade, *ad hoc* conflict management and the new security architecture.

## 4.1 Weak State Dilemmas

The community of West African states embraces a diverse variety of countries. The purpose of this section is to identify similarities and differences, as well as specificities, which may have an influence on the distribution of power within the RSC, and the pattern of amity and enmity among the member states. Factors that in turn have an impact on the degree of security interdependence and the evolution of the RSC. In the following I will focus on one hand on similarities that mainly could be found in shared historical and cultural values, colonial heritage, and political and socio-economic development, and on the other hand on differences that are more related to *de jure* military-political power.

Strong historical and cultural ties formed by historic migration among the countries in the region, which could be dated back to pre-historical and pre-colonial time, e.g. Loma and Kpelle cultures in Upper Guinea Forest, Ghana Empire and Mali Empire, and Ashanti Kingdom and Benin Kingdom has successfully been used to promote the establishment of West African unity by influential African leaders such as the first President of Ghana Kwame Nkrumah, the first President of Guinea Sekou Touré and Leopold Senghor of Senegal and Yakubu Gowon of Nigeria (cp. Murithi 2005:24; cp. Obi 2009:120). Thus, one could say that historical and cultural values are strong components of the RSC (cp. Bah 2005:79). However, these factors are also dependent on geographical proximity that differentiates the region from its neighbours (cp. Buzan&Weaver 2003:53). Cultural affinity such as ‘your brother’s keeper’ was clearly used to justify the intervention in Liberia (Bah 2005:79) and in the promotion of the Moratorium on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) within the community when the notion of ‘shared frontiers’ was used to convince member states that the country’s land borders should not be seen as barriers but rather as peaceful space that merely separates them (Bah 2005:79). From this would follow that the existence of shared historical and cultural values could be factors contributing to the evolution of the RSC.

The majority of countries became independent states in early 1960s, with the exception of Ghana and Guinea that gained independence in 1957 and 1958. During the colonial period (1890s-1960s) the British controlled The Gambia, Sierra Leone, Ghana, and Nigeria, while France unified Senegal, Guinea, Mali,

Burkina Faso, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire and Niger into French West Africa. Portugal founded the colony of Guinea Bissau, while Germany claimed Togoland, but was forced to divide it between France and Britain following the First World War. Only Liberia has retained its independence, at the price of major territorial concessions. It had become an independent state already in 1847 as a settlement for freed slaves, dominated by Americo-Liberians, descendants of the first freed slaves that formed the political elite until the 1980s. The two dominant colonial masters, the United Kingdom (UK) and France have both made a remarkable colonial footprint concerning political, economic and social structures in the post-independent state. It includes such areas as language, educational and judicial systems, and economic and commercial ties. Especially France retained a strong presence in its former colonies and still the region is divided in Anglophone and Francophone West Africa, exemplified by a common currency for the Francophone countries, except for Guinea, linked to the French Franc and now to the Euro, and links to transnational corporations dominated by French or English interests. The two Portuguese colonies of Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde did not become independent states until 1974 and 1975 (CIA 2012:The World Factbook).

The post-independent state embarked on a process of democratization and liberalization. However, the new political elite inherited a bifurcated state and structural defects created by colonialism and indirect rule that was not reformed and therefore failed to bridge the gap between the rural and the urban (Mamdani 1996:296). Further on the post-colonial state was internationally recognized as independent states, however, lacked other essential capacities as sovereign states, among many things a government with control of its whole territory and borders. Under the overlay of the Cold War and the rivalry between the superpowers, most states, e.g. Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal and Sierra Leone turned into authoritarian one-party or military regimes characterized of patrimonial rule and weak state capacity (Bratton&van de Walle 1997:3). It is important to note that this was the *de facto* domestic political landscape in the 1970s and the point of departure for cooperation in the region and the founding period of the RSC.

Military coups and brutal conflicts have been an infectious disease endemic to West Africa. Since independence, many West African countries have been submerged under political instability, with notable civil wars in Nigeria, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea Bissau. Between 1963, when the first elected president of Togo was overthrown and 2000 West Africa experienced 27 military coups, and most recently one in Mali on 21 March 2012 when a military mutiny led to a spontaneous *coup d'état*. In Guinea Bissau no elected president has completed a term. Senegal stands out as never having had the military meddling in politics, and Côte d'Ivoire, although currently instable only in 1999. The pattern seems to be common; when domestic economic conditions become intolerable or security cannot be provided, and ministers grow fat on greed and corruption the military steps in and claim to be the safeguards of the people and to restore order (Ohene 2012). From this follows that the security sector itself has been a major source of insecurity in West Africa (Aning 2004:534). I would argue

that this phenomenon could be explained by the lack of democratic control of the security sector related to the weak state and the legitimacy of the state.

In the 1990s a wave of democratization spread to West Africa that could be understood from both a domestic perspective and in the context of global and regional changes. The end of the Cold War, the break-up of the Soviet Union and the collapse of communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe in the late 1980s had an overall influence on changes in the global and regional political landscape (Carothers 2002:5). It was followed by an uncompromising critique of single-party regimes, however, in the West African context followed by equally single-minded, prescriptive and explosive reforms (Mamdani 1996:300). Among the causes for the onset of the transition were international pressure for democratisation and domestic public grievance with governments that did not deliver public goods. These causes formed domestic opinions that in many cases resulted in popular protest (cp. Bratton&van de Walle 1997:144). Popular protest in one country often had a regional domino effect (Liviga 2009:7). Although, most West African countries went through a transition from one-party states to multi-party systems they continued to be dominated by one party with its origin in the one-party state, and former authoritarian rulers or their associates (Bratton&van de Walle 1997:196). Whereas the single-party system had been a way to contain social and political fragmentation in the inherited colonial state, many multi-party regimes tended towards a shallow democratization (Mamdani 1996:290). Attempts to reform the inherited bifurcated state, turned out to be not only superficial, but also explosive. These circumstances provided the ground for hybrid political systems, combining authoritarian and democratic elements that thereafter have continued to affect domestic transformation, and in some cases lead to state collapse, privatisation of security and warlordisation that characterised the *ad hoc* conflict management of the second phase of the evolution of the RSC.

In the 2000s democratic principles have taken hold in most member states. In terms of advancing political rights and civil liberties only Cape Verde, Ghana and Benin could be ranked as free, whereas most countries remain hybrid regimes or transitional democracies (Freedom House 2012). The tendency of domestic transformation is illustrated by reduced incidence of civil wars and military coups, with the exception of Niger and Mali, and repetitive democratic elections followed by peaceful alternation of power, e.g. in Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal and Sierra Leone (AED 2012). Côte d'Ivoire marks the exception from this tendency when the first post-conflict elections in 2010 resulted in post-election violence that almost turned the country back into civil war (ICG 2011a; ICG 2011b; ICG 2011c).

While political domestic transformation has led to increased political rights and civil liberties, socio-economic development in West African countries remain poor. The member states of the RSC are, with the exception of Cape Verde and Ghana, ranked in terms of human development and income per capita as being the less developed and poorest in the world (UNDP 2012; World Bank 2012). However, regionally there is a large divide between different layers of the population and the countries. Four countries, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria and

Senegal represents 72 percentages of the population and accounts for 86 percentages of the regions total GDP, and holds a remarkable higher income per capita than the other states in the region. Among these countries Ghana is one of the fastest growing economies in the world (World Bank 2012). However, one country, Nigeria sticks out as a giant among the states in the region.

Nigeria could be described as a regional hegemon that on its account of its population of 163 Million (out of 309 Million in the region), its geographical size, and relatively large economy that represents 65 percentages of the regions GDP has a significant influence on the distribution of power within the RSC. The country is among the world's top dozen largest oil producers and it is a large exporter of oil to the US (12 % of US oil), and possess gas reserves that could supply Western Europe for a decade (World Bank 2012). Nigerian military expenditures represent two thirds of total expenditures in the region and it holds an 85,000 strong army, and is the only state in the region that has a potent navy and air force within its armed forces (SIPRI 2012). Nigerian foreign policy and hegemonic aspirations are based on the fact that it is the country with the largest black population in the world and that one in every five African is Nigerian, has exhibited a missionary zeal, an enthusiasm that has claimed a special responsibility to protect and speak on behalf of black people (Adebajo 2010:414).

The paradox here is that Nigeria, with all its regional aspirations throughout the evolution of the RSC, has not been able to manage domestic political and socio-economic problems. It has been under military rule for most of its time after independence, and domestic politics remains to be dominated by patron-client networks and control over oil revenues, as oil accounts for the vast majority of federal incomes (Reno 1998:207; Lewis 2003:134-136; LeVan&Ukata 2011:1). Attempts to a transition to democracy have several times been broken by military interventions. The first multi-party election was held in 1993, but the election results were directly annulled by the military regime. A civilian caretaker governed briefly until General Sani Abacha took power. Abacha's dictatorial regime dissolved all democratic structures and banned political parties, governing through a predominantly military Provisional Ruling Council (PRC). After Abacha's demise legislative election was held in 1998; however, all participating political parties were affiliated with the government while the true opposition was prevented from participation. In the presidential election 1999 Olusegun Obasanjo, a former general, won the elections and under his rule the country begun a process of democratization (Freedom House 2010b). It is noticeable to mark that domestic political conditions have gone parallel to on one hand the Nigerian dominated military interventions by ECOWAS in Liberia and Sierra Leone in the early 1990s, and on the other hand the changes in Nigerian foreign policy in the late 1990s. It is noticeable to mark that the evolutionary steps of the RSC in many aspects could be linked to variations in Nigerian domestic politics, a matter to which I turn in the following sections.

## 4.2 Founding Decade

The founding period 1975-1990 should be interpreted in the context of the post-independent state, one-party regimes, the Cold War overlay, and most significant a pattern of security interdependence shaped by fear of war and rivalry. In this section I analyse the origin of the RSC, initial norms and rules of conduct and the establishment of key institutions.

### 4.2.1 Norms and Rules of Conduct

The regional cooperation in West Africa started out as a cooperative, economic and integration project by the signing of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) *Treaty of Lagos* (hereafter the Treaty) on 25 May 1975 (ECOWAS 2012a). The focus of the Treaty was mainly regional economic integration and did not provide for any security related provisions. After its inception the nexus between security and development, as well as its impact on security interdependence in the region became increasingly clear for leaders among the member states (Bah 2005:78). In 1977 Francophone West Africa, except Guinea, entered into a non-aggression pact, the *Accord de Non Agression et d'Assistance en Matiere de Defense* (ANAD). Consequently, ECOWAS established two protocols to deal with regional security. The first was the *Protocol of Non-aggression* (PNA) in 1978. Its main objective was to ensure an environment free from fear of attack or aggression by one state towards another. The second was the 1981 *Protocol of Mutual Assistance on Defense* (PMAD), in which members agreed that ‘... any armed threat or aggression directed against any member state shall constitute a threat or aggression against the community ...’ (ECOWAS 2012a). While the former provided essentially for peaceful resolutions of disputes between member states, the later detailed situations that would call for joint action on external aggression, as well as intervention in inter-state and intra-state conflicts. Thus, these protocols could be viewed as an early attempt to establish common norms and rules of conduct in an anarchic system being more motivated by logic of consequence rather than logic of appropriateness. It could be interpreted in two different ways. The first and broader interpretation is that the need for peace and security expressed in the early protocols hereafter has shaped the evolution of ECOWAS (Aning 2004:534). The second and narrow one is that with time the two protocols were found to be limited in scope and criticized for being mere aspirations that were never really implemented because of the lack of political will among the member states (Elowson&MacDermott 2010:23-24). The later interpretation would be relevant when analysing the second evolutionary step of the RSC in the following section. However, I would argue that the former interpretation and the early attempt to establish norms and rules of conduct, despite its shortcomings, could be seen as a forerunner to the development of norms and rules of conduct that would follow in the evolution of the RSC.

## 4.2.2 Key Institutions

The Treaty established the key institutions of the ECOWAS, i.e. the Authority of Heads of State and Government (hereafter the Authority); the Council of Ministers; the Secretariat headed by an Executive Secretary (later transformed into the Commission). The Authority is the supreme institution of ECOWAS responsible for the general direction and control of the organization that decides on general policies and guidelines (ECOWAS 2012b:Art.7). It consists of the member states' Heads of State and Government, scheduled to meet at least once a year with a chairmanship to be decided on a rotational principle. Decisions taken by the Authority are binding to the member states and institutions (ECOWAS 2012b:Art.9). The Council of Ministers is comprised of ministers from member states and is responsible for the functioning and development of the community. It is to make recommendations to the Authority, issue directives in the field of economic integration, and to approve work programs and budgets of the ECOWAS institutions. Regulations issued by the Council are binding to the institutions under its authority and member states if the Authority has delegated power to the Council (ECOWAS 2012b:Art.12). The Treaty, however, did not include any specific key institution under the Authority related to security mechanisms that later would expose the shortcomings of the Treaty and the security related protocols when civil wars broke out in the region.

## 4.2.3 Observations

From the discussion on the first evolutionary step of the RSC follows three key observations. The first is that the polarity or distribution of power within the RSC was formed on one hand by the overlay of the Cold War, and on the other hand by the rivalry between Anglophone and Francophone West Africa, partly driven by French interests in the region. The second observation is that amity and enmity among the member states in the RSC was linked to the weak state that cannot control its territory or border and the fear for inter-state rivalry and conflicts. The third observation is that the social construction of norms and rules of conduct focused on inter-state relations rather than intra-state conflict management and root causes of domestic conflict. Norms and rules of conduct were, however, not materialized in institutions related to security mechanisms. Despite its shortcomings, the founding phase recognized the need for increased regional security responsibility, and thus paved the way for the next phase when civil wars broke out in the region, a matter to which I turn next.

## 4.3 *Ad Hoc* Conflict Management

The 1990s could be considered as a crucial step in the evolution of the RSC. The phase should be interpreted in the context of the post-Cold War era and the removal of the superpower overlay followed by increased regional security

responsibility. The period is characterized of domestic transition to multi-party state, in some cases collapse of state, violent conflict and civil wars, and when it comes to the evolution of the RSC *ad hoc* conflict management. In this section I analyse the revised security framework, the collapse of state in some member countries and the military interventions that lay bare the weakness of the Treaty and early security protocols.

#### 4.3.1 Revised Treaty

The outbreak of violent conflict in the region and subsequent military interventions in the civil wars in Liberia (1990-1997 and again in 2003), Sierra Leone (1993-2000), Guinea Bissau (1998-1999) and Côte d'Ivoire (2003) represents a turning point in the RSC. When civil war broke out in Liberia in 1990 and a year later spread to Sierra Leone it stood clear that the conflicts were related to each other and had regional dimensions, although the root causes of conflict had its origins primarily in internal grievance and protests against incumbent corrupt and authoritarian regimes (Obi 2009:122-126). The conflicts that followed in Guinea Bissau and Côte d'Ivoire had both internal and external explanations; however, like the earlier conflicts they rather quickly got regional implications. The former resulting in spill-over effects to nearby Senegal and Guinea, and the later conflict related to the earlier conflicts in the Mano River Basin (Obi 2009:126-130). The regional nature of the conflicts was further complicated by the presence of natural resources, e.g. diamond, iron ore and timber that fueled the conflicts and sucked in international actors (Bah 2005:79). Thus, one could say that the inter-linked nature of the conflicts in the region reinforced the security interdependence among states in the region. However, there are two diverging versions on how to interpret this period. On one hand it could be interpreted as a case of successful regional conflict management and restoration of peace and security (Adebajo 2010:432), on the other hand it could be described as a 'heroic failure' orchestrated by authoritarian rulers to secure regime survival (Gberie 2003:148). My point of departure is that the military interventions in the 1990s and the lessons learned from that experience paved the way for the following evolution and the social construction of norms and rules of conduct, genuine institutionalization, and a new and strengthened peace and security framework that I will return to in the analysis of the third evolutionary step (cp. Obi 2009:120).

During this period The Treaty was revised in 1993 with the purpose on one hand to accelerate economic integration and enhance political cooperation, exemplified by the aims of the *Revised Treaty* (hereafter the Treaty) '... to promote co-operation and integration, leading to the establishment of an economic union in West Africa ...' (ECOWAS 2012b:Art.1), and on the other hand to give greater emphasis on peace and security, exemplified by the adherence to fundamental principles such as '... non-aggression between Member States ... maintenance of regional peace, stability and security through the promotion and strengthening of good neighbourliness ... peaceful settlement of disputes among

Member States, active co-operation between neighbouring countries and promotion of a peaceful environment as a prerequisite for economic development ...` (ECOWAS 2012b:Art.4). Thus, these principles together aimed at creating shared norms and rules of conduct in matters related to the security interdependence in the region that had not been a part of the original Treaty. With regard to regional security the Treaty highlights that `... Member States undertake to work to safeguard and consolidate relations conducive to the maintenance of peace, stability and security within the region ... to co-operate with the Community in establishing and strengthening appropriate mechanisms for the timely prevention and resolution of intra-State and inter-State conflicts ...` (ECOWAS 2012b:Art.58). Thus, the revised Treaty gives weight to the responsibility of both the Community and its member states to work together to ensure regional peace and security. Beside the emphasis on regional peace and security the principle of supra-nationality in the application of decisions is one major change to the original treaty, illustrated in the preamble to the Treaty that `... the integration of the Member States into a viable regional Community may demand the partial and gradual pooling of national sovereignties to the Community within the context of a collective political will ...` (ECOWAS 2012b:Preamble).

The Treaty confirmed the key institutions from the original Treaty, but also established the Community Parliament (ECOWAS 2012b:Art.13). The Parliament did not hold its first meeting until 200. It is noticeable to mark that the role of the Parliament was not specified in the Treaty itself, a circumstance that over time has continued to create antagonism between the Parliament and other key institutions, in particular, the Authority and the Secretariat (later the Commission). The Parliament consists of representatives from the member states selected by the national parliaments. There are 115 seats, which are divided between the member states depending on the sizes of the state. Hence, Nigeria has 35 seats, Ghana 8, Côte d'Ivoire 7, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, Niger and Senegal 6 and the rest five each (ECOWAS 2012f). The Community Court of Justice was decided on in 1991, confirmed in the Treaty but was not set up until 2001. It consists of seven judges selected and appointed by the Authority. Judgments of the Court are binding on ECOWAS, member states, institutions and corporate bodies (ECOWAS 2012b:Art.15). Although, the Treaty included security provisions it did not establish key institutions to deal specifically with peace and security. I would relate this shortcoming to the parallel engagement of ECOWAS in the conflicts in the Mano River Basin and that the process was blocked by the unequal distribution of power, i.e. the domination of Nigeria within the region and the enmity between Anglophone and Francophone West Africa.

#### 4.3.2 Military Interventions

After the outset of the conflict in Liberia it stood clear that the original Treaty and early security protocols would not provide enough mechanisms for collective action. Following a Nigerian initiative ECOWAS decided to set up a Standing

Mediation Committee (SMC) that in turn established ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) that was given the mandate to monitor and to effect a cease-fire in Liberia (Aning 2004:534). The action was defended on the basis to stop an unfolding humanitarian crisis and to stop the spread of the conflict to neighbouring states burdened by a steady stream of refugees and militias crossing the borders (Obi 2009:122). With the superpowers relaxing their grip on their former client states, following the end of the Cold War, I would argue that members of the RSC took on a central role in managing security in their own backyard. Thus, the decision, notwithstanding its shortcomings, to send an intervention force to Liberia and Sierra Leone, and later to Guinea Bissau and Côte d'Ivoire, should be seen in the light of a clear recognition of security concerns within the region (Gberie 2003:148-149; Bah 2005:79). In the following I will show how the *ad hoc* conflict management illustrates three features of the phase, related to both internal and external transformation that together had an influence on the evolution of the RSC from conflict transformation through regime security to security community (cp. Buzan&Weaver 2003:53).

The first characteristic was the fear among leaders that insurgency against incumbent regimes in one country would spread across borders and encourage similar movements in their own country and subsequent internal instability (cp. Obi 2009:122). I would link this fear to the dilemmas of the weak state and lack of political legitimacy of incumbent regimes. Thus, one could say that it was not concerns of regional security, rather concerns driven by regime security and elite interests that were important factors for intervention. A circumstance that could be illustrated by the Nigerian-led interventions in Liberia and Sierra Leone that were seen by the most important warring factions the National Patriotic Front for Liberia (NPFL) led by Charles Taylor and the Revolutionary United Front in Sierra Leone, rather as an interventionist force seeking to save the dictatorship of incumbent Presidents Samuel K. Doe and Joseph S. Momoh from collapse (cp. Obi 2009:123). Outside perception of the interventionist force was the fact that almost all leaders contributing troops were military men who had seized power in coups or in controversial circumstances (Gberie 2003:148). Thus, the interventions were seen by some as a serious attempt of regional peace-keeping, while by others as an ill-conceived and regional divisive action by autocratic leaders (Gberie 2003:149).

The second characteristic is how the pattern of amity inside on one hand Anglophone West Africa and on the other hand Francophone West Africa and the subsequent enmity between Anglophone and Francophone countries influenced conflict management and collective action of ECOWAS. African scholars (Adebajo 2008; Aning 2004; Obi 2009) agree that the decision to intervene in Liberia and the decision to extend the mandate of ECOMOG to include Sierra Leone was a Nigerian and Anglophone initiative taken by the SMC comprised of only The Gambia, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria and Togo. It was taken against the expressed will of the most important warring faction, NPFL, and without any cease-fire agreement or sanction by the UN. The intervention was not supported by Francophone West Africa, except nearby Guinea that was heavily affected by the conflicts in both Liberia and Sierra Leone (Gberie 2003:148). The pattern of

amity and enmity was further complicated by the fact that incumbent regimes in both Liberia and Sierra Leone were supported by Nigeria, Ghana and Guinea, while the rebellion in Liberia was backed by Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire. The later support partly driven by family ties between Charles Taylor and President Félix Houphouët-Boigny in Côte d'Ivoire and President Blaise Campoare in Burkina Faso, and the former by the personal friendship between incumbent President Doe in Liberia and Nigerias's military president General Ibrahim Babangida in Nigeria (Obi 2009:123). In the case of Sierra Leone in the late 1990s it was the friendship between President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah and General Sani Abacha in Nigeria, and President Lansana Conté in Guinea, and the fact that Charles Taylor kept up his support for rebel groups in both Sierra Leone and Guinea (Obi 2009:125). The interlinked wars in the Manor River Basin illustrated how an intricate network of political and business entrepreneurs can exacerbate conflicts by privatizing war (Adejumobi 2004:69). Thus, one could say that regional conflict management in the early 1990s and the establishment of ECOMOG were highly influenced by on one hand structural conditions of amity and enmity between Anglophone and Francophone West Africa, and on the other hand the influence of a few leaders linked together in a regional patron-client network.

In the cases of Guinea Bissau and Côte d'Ivoire the situation had partly changed due to the circumstance that ECOMOG, in particular, its hegemon Nigeria was already engaged and overstretched by the conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone, and therefore not interested in new commitments, which in turn offered room for new actors. In Guinea Bissau the intervention took place in the context of its shift in international relations from its traditional ties to Portugal to closer ties with France and neighbouring Francophone countries. The conflict was triggered by accusations that the Chief of the Armed Forces, General Ansumane Mane had been involved in the illegal supply of arms to rebels operating in Casamance in Southern Senegal (Obi 2009:126). Thus, Senegal had security concerns related to the activities of rebels across its borders with Guinea Bissau and The Gambia. After a military coup attempt the incumbent President Joao Vieira appealed for help from Senegal and Guinea according to bilateral defense pacts, and the day of the coup Senegalese troops were already in Bissau and the following day troops arrived from Guinea (Obi 2009:127). Like the interventions in Liberia and Sierra Leone, the intervention was undertaken without the blessing of the full ECOWAS authority or the UN. Amity and enmity among the participating countries was again characterized of close friendship among leaders and a fear that the conflict could spread to neighbouring countries. For Senegal it was important to support the incumbent regime and not let a regime friendly to the rebels in southern Senegal come into power. Guinea and President Conté was acting on the basis of 'friendship' with President Vieira and wanted to ensure that refugees from Guinea Bissau did not add the pressure on Guinea already burdened by large number of refugees from Liberia and Sierra Leone. In November 1998 ECOWAS urged Senegal and Guinea to withdraw their troops, which instead were replaced by ECOMOG peace-keepers from Benin, Mali, Niger, Togo and The Gambia with French support. In spite of ECOMOG's presence and the

support from external actors (France, Portugal and the US) fighting continued and in May 1999 General Mane successfully seized power. ECOMOG forces did not intervene and were shortly thereafter withdrawn (Obi 2009:128). Thus, my conclusion is that the shortcomings of the intervention in Guinea Bissau could partly be explained by the absence of the regional hegemon Nigeria and the lack of support from the whole authority of the RSC.

In the case of Côte d'Ivoire intervention took place in the context of on one hand rapid domestic deterioration of the economic situation and internal division along ethnic and religious lines, and on the other hand the aftermath of the interventions in nearby Liberia and Sierra Leone. The, in 2002, elected President Laurent Gbagbo was supported by France that actively intervened in the conflict with French troops in the country and by Burkina Faso, while veterans from the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone took part as mercenaries in rebel groups in the north and the west, believed to be supported by Charles Taylor (Obi 2009:128). After mediation by ECOWAS and France, followed by a peace accord in early 2003 ECOWAS took the decision to send a cease-fire monitoring mission made up of mainly Francophone countries (Senegal, Ghana, Niger, Togo and Benin) along with French troops. With France playing a key diplomatic and military role, as did the UK in the case of Sierra Leone, ECOWAS got support by a SC resolution establishing a UN observer mission in the country. Like in the case of Guinea Bissau, Nigeria again was absent from the ECOWAS mission, limiting itself only to a mediatory role. Instead the ECOWAS mission in Côte d'Ivoire, similar to Guinea Bissau was made possible through French and international support. In late 2003 the SC adopted a resolution, following the pattern from its engagement in Liberia and Sierra Leone, that established a UN peace-keeping hybrid mission in Côte d'Ivoire, transforming ECOWAS troops, merging UN forces and cooperation with the French forces (in Sierra Leone UK troops) into one coordinated operation. Followed by mediation by AU, based on ECOWAS request and UN support a peace agreement was reached in 2005 (Freedom House 2010a). Thus, I would argue that it was the international community and the UN comprehensive approach to the conflicts in the Mano River Basin, and the subsequent establishment of sustainable and coordinated missions in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire, that paved the way for a new turn in the evolution of the RSC.

The third characteristic is how the unequal distribution of power in the region affected the military interventions. The RSC was depending on one hand on Nigeria on grounds of its capacity and military-political power, and on the other hand on assistance from external actors with historical and/or strategic/economic interests in the region, *inter alia* France, a long-standing hegemonic rival of Nigeria in West Africa (Gberie 2003:148). Nigeria's role was large in the conflict management of the 1990s and without Nigeria there would probably have been no regional intervention in the civil wars in the Mano River Basin (Adebajo 2010:424). While the country had regional hegemonic aspirations, the interests of the leaders and military elite were important. Competing domestic pressure and changing priorities of various regimes had implications on its foreign policy, shifting between direct military interventionism to more mediatory and preventive

roles. Nigerian foreign policy and leadership aspirations, illustrated by the expression *Pax Nigeriana* (Adebajo 2010:420) could be interpreted from partly logic of consequence, and partly logic of appropriateness. Some explain Nigeria's regional aspirations, by its leaders images of themselves as great leaders, a desire to leave an indelible mark on Nigeria's history, and the aspirations of the Nigerian army to enhance its status and to prove its worth as a national and regional asset (Adebajo 2008:187). It could, however, as well be interpreted as a pure attempt to deflect attention from, and interrogations of, domestic human rights abuses (Adebajo 2010:423).

The unequal distribution of power in the region also created a fear of Nigerian dominance (Bah 2005:79). One could say that this fear to some extent pushed smaller countries in the region into the guardianship of external actors, as in the case of the interventions in Guinea Bissau and Côte d'Ivoire. Such fears resulted in a 'French-overlay' that was partly hindering the development of the security architecture in West Africa. France that had maintained strong economic interests and high military presences in the region after decolonisation became increasingly important in Guinea Bissau and Côte d'Ivoire. Nigeria's hegemonic role was manifested through the fact that it provided at least 80 percentages of troops in the two first interventions (12,000 out of 16,000 in Liberia and 12,000 out of 13,000 in Sierra Leone) and 90 percentages of the founding (Adebajo 2010:425-426). Despite its capabilities and stretched to its limit, Nigeria began to count its costs and decided to draw down its participation in ECOMOG. However, the ease out of operations could also be viewed in the light of transition to civilian rule and a shift in domestic policy following the democratic elections in 1999. Further on, the ECOMOG forces throughout its operations were plagued by poor preparations, limited resources and capacity in relation to its ambitious mandate (Obi 2009:128). In both the case of Liberia and Sierra Leone it was the combination of Nigerian drawdown and the general lack of capacity and resources that was one of the reasons for UN to take over the peace-keeping role. However, it also made it possible for the UK, France, and US to gain an influence on the outcome of the conflicts and post-conflict transformation. The lessons from re-hatting ECOMOG forces into UN peace-keepers are also relevant and show that 'African solutions to African problems' is partly in the need of international support. I would argue that it was the merged and hybrid missions that followed after the initial ECOMOG interventions that finally brought peace and security to the region. However, it was the initial regional response that played a crucial role in early conflict management that paved the way for the establishment of later successful UN missions. One could say that after ECOMOG had done the spadework UN peace-keeper in some respects came in to take credit.

### 4.3.3 Observations

From the analysis of the second evolutionary step of the RSC follows five observations. The first is the lesson learned that instability in one country in the region could not be contained in that state alone, thus, possessing a grave danger

to the security and stability of nearby states, and reinforcing the security interdependence in the region. In particular, the civil war in Liberia had a domino effect on its immediate neighbours through the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, hundreds of thousands of refugees and movement of combatants across borders. The second observation is the need to address root causes of conflict linked to the dilemmas of the weak state. The conflicts in West Africa bespeak on one hand the need for better links between security and development, and on the other hand good governance and democracy. The third observation is the gap between on one hand norms and rules of conduct and on the other hand institutional capacity and resources. ECOWAS capacity mirrored the capacity of its member states that hampered effective and sustainable conflict management. However, on one hand the community showed the ability to take timely action and responsibility for its on security when stability in the region was threatened, but on the other hand sustainable conflict management was made possible only through the assistances of external actors. The fourth observation is the unequal distribution of power and Nigeria's role as a regional hegemon and the notion of *Pax Nigeriana*. Its role was large in the conflict management of the 1990s and without Nigeria there would probably have been no regional intervention in the civil wars. While the country had regional aspirations, interests of its leaders and military elite were important. The lesson learned is that the unequal distribution of power needs to be addressed with more 'suitable' or 'stable' mechanisms in the security architecture. The fifth observation is the impact of external actors with historical and/or strategic/economic interests in the region. As Nigeria decided to ease out of operations the UK, France and UN came to play important roles as partners along ECOWAS in the interventions in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau and Côte d'Ivoire.

## 4.4 New Security Architecture

The third evolutionary step should be interpreted in the context of the experiences and lessons learned from on one hand the collapse of state in some member states, and on the other hand the *ad hoc* conflict management and military interventions in the previous phase. The contemporary period is characterized of domestic processes of democratization and liberalization, consolidation of the RSC, establishment of a new security architecture and a move towards a society of states and a security community in being where states do not expect or prepare for the use of force in their relations with each other (cp. Buzan&Weaver 2003:471).

### 4.4.1 New Norms and Rules of Conduct

The outbreak of violent conflicts in the region and ECOWAS subsequent interventions marked a turning point in the RSCs architecture. In this section I will show how contemporary West Africa is in the process of evolving from a security regime to a security community (cp. Bah 2005:82). I would argue that it

was the lessons learned from the inter-linked nature of the conflicts in the Mano River Basin and the following *ad hoc* conflict management that reinforced the security interdependence in the region, urging the social construction of norms and rules of conduct, and the establishment of genuine security institutions (cp. Suifon 2004:8). These factors, coupled with close cultural and historical ties, geographical proximity clearly qualifies the region as a security complex. Thus, the contemporary security framework is aimed at the institutionalization of conflict resolution mechanisms and a move away from the *ad hoc* approach of the 1990s (cp. Bah 2005:77). While the early security protocols and Treaty empowered signatory states to respond to different domestic and regional conflicts, the collapse of Liberia and Sierra Leone convinced West African leaders to work on creating a more permanent, stronger security framework designed to prevent future state failure (cp. Aning 2004:534). Parallel the UN issued *The Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa* (1998) that emphasized the need to develop and reinforce the capabilities of African states to undertake peace-keeping operations in states and to carry out forceful interventions in states with conflicts that create humanitarian catastrophes and normative collapse (UN 1998).

The security protocols and the Treaty could be seen as the first formal steps to the contemporary security framework from 1999 known as the *Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peace-keeping and Security* (hereafter the Mechanism) (ECOWAS 2012c). One could say that the Mechanism marks an important turning point in the evolution of the RSC (Berman&Sams 2002:49). It was created in the aftermath of the interventions in Liberia and Sierra Leone and represents the central legal, institutional and political statute and effectively replaces the security protocols and the Treaty. The Mechanism is an ambitious and comprehensive strategic framework which details different areas for collaboration, outlines the roles of institutions and organs concerned with peace and security, as well as gives security directives on how the mechanism is to be applied in different situations (ECOWAS 2012c; cp. Aning 2007:535; cp. Elowson&MacDermott 2010:24). The objectives of the Mechanism, are to ‘... prevent, manage and resolve internal and inter-State conflicts ... implement the relevant provisions of Article 58 of the Revised Treaty ... strengthen cooperation in the areas of conflict prevention, early-warning, peace-keeping operations, the control of cross-border crime, international terrorism and proliferation of small arms and anti-personnel mines ... maintain and consolidate peace, security and stability within the Community ...’ (ECOWAS 2012c:Art.3). Thus, it includes supra-national elements and a clear statement to materialize norms related to regional security and collective conflict management. The Mechanism also contains provisions to constitute and deploy a civilian and military force including peace enforcement operations (ECOWAS 2012c:Art.28; cp. Abass 2000:213; cp. Ismail 2008:25). It makes West Africa in many aspects the forerunner in advanced mechanisms for addressing regional peace and security in Africa and it has partly become a model on which much of the *African Peace and Security Architecture* (APSA) on the continental level was structured (AU 2000; AU 2002; Elowson&MacDermott 2010:27; Obi 2009:119; Utas&Jörgel 2007:31).

The realization of the need to deal with the root causes behind conflict gave rise to *The Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance* supplementary to the Mechanism (hereafter the Protocol) from 2001 that deals with root causes of conflict (ECOWAS 2012d), while the Mechanism itself can be seen as dealing with the more immediate causes. The ambition was to emphasize the preventive aspect of conflict, along conflict management and peace-building. It addresses constitutional issues, such as separation of powers and zero tolerance to unconstitutional changes of government, popular participation and decentralization of power, and democratic control of armed forces (ECOWAS 2012d:Art.1, Art.20). Further on, the Protocol details the conditions for democratic elections and election monitoring, and allows for the imposition of sanctions ‘... in the event that democracy is abruptly brought to an end by any means or where there is a massive violation of Human Rights in a Member state ECOWAS may impose sanctions on the State concerned ...’ (ECOWAS 2012d:Art.2-18, Art.45), illustrated by the suspension of Guinea after the military coup in 2008, sanctions on Niger in 2010 after an attempt of unconstitutional maintenance of power and sanctions on Mali after the military coup in 2012.

The Mechanism and the Protocol form the basis of the *ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework* (ECPF) from 2008 (ECOWAS 2012e). Since the two former documents do not go into detail on how to operationalize the implementation of the agreements the ECPF is an effort to move towards concrete action for the community, illustrated by ‘... the overall aim of the ECPF is to strengthen the human security architecture in West Africa ...’ (ECPF 2012e:Art.27). Experiences from previous phase has given rise to the need of including an emerging civil society as a key partner in the promotion of peace and security (Suifon 2004:10; Adejumobi 2004:76), illustrated by the vision to transform the region from ‘an ECOWAS of States into an ECOWAS of the Peoples’ (ECOWAS 2012e:Art.4). The ECPF is designed to play more attention to positive peace, i.e. the absence of structural and indirect violence (Galtung 1969:170) through a more comprehensive peace-building strategy, in post-conflict and non-conflict settings, where focus lies on conflict prevention, rather on conflict transformation (ECOWAS 2012e:Art.28; cp. Ismail 2008:31). The ECPF is comprised of 14 components: Early Warning; Preventive Diplomacy; Democracy and Political Governance; Human Rights and Rule of Law; Media; Natural Resource Governance; Cross Border Initiatives; Security Governance; ECOWAS Stand by Force (ESF); Humanitarian Assistance; and Peace and Education (ECOWAS 2012e:Art.42). Thus, the ECPF should be seen as overall security architecture for relevant actions undertaken by institutions within ECOWAS. I would argue that the ECPF goes further than the early security arrangements in addressing conflicts within member states. It recognizes the need to address root causes of domestic conflicts and the need to foster good governance and democracy. In dealing with intra-state conflicts the new mechanism challenge the sovereignty of the individual member state that was guarded in the earlier phases of the RSC. Further on, the evolution of the current regional framework could partly be linked to on one hand the development on the global level of the doctrine of Responsibility to Protect (R2P) (Bellamy 2011:197)

and on the other hand the model of democratic-liberal peace that promotes radical change through regime change, new constitutions and re-organization of post-conflict societies (MacGinty 2006:177).

#### 4.4.2 New Institutions

The Treaty established a Secretariat headed by an Executive Secretary. In 2007 the Secretariat was transformed into a Commission consisting of a president, a vice president and seven commissioners, each and every one responsible for a specific area. Within the body it is the Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS) that is responsible for security related issues (ECOWAS 2012g). Although, the capacity of the Commission is suffering from the restructuring from a Secretariat and lack of human resources it is acknowledged that the work of the first Commission has contributed to the progress of ECOWAS peace and security capabilities (Elowson&MacDermott 2010:20).

The Mechanism established new institutions to improve its capacity the work on peace and security. These include the Mediation and Security Committee (MSC) under which falls three organs: The Council of Elders, the ECOWAS Stand-by Force (ESF) and the Defense and Security Commission (DSC). The MSC is a rotational system comprising nine countries elected by the Authority for a two-year period, with no permanent seats (ECOWAS 2012c:Art.8). The three sub-organs are not permanent structures, rather functions which can be called on when need arises. The Council of Elders consists of eminent persons from various segments of society that can use their good office to play role of mediators, facilitators and conciliators (Ismail 2008:25). The ESF, intended for PSO is made up of military and civilian components, to be drawn from the member states. The DSC is a technical advisory body, which examines the way forward for the ESF, including administrative issues and logistical requirements for peace-keeping. It consists of the Committee of Chiefs of Defense Staff (advising on military issues) and the Committee of Chiefs of Security Service (advising on police issues) (ECOWAS 2012c:Art.18-22).

The Mechanism gives the Authority power to mandate the MSC to take action within the mandate of the Mechanism (ECOWAS 2012c:Art.7). This makes the MSC the most powerful institutional body under the Mechanism (cp. Abass 2000:215). Decisions taken by the MSC could be mediation intervention of the Council of Elders or by a member state leader/politician. Work within the new structure is done at the level of the Authority, ministers and ambassadors, which means that a decision in the committee is based on what the political leadership wants and can do (ECOWAS 2012c:Art.11-14). The ambition is to obtain consensus for the decisions, but the formal rules states that two thirds majority, six of its nine members, is needed for a decision to be taken (cp. Aning 2007:536).

Within the Community Parliament the Defense, Security and Integration Committee deals with conflict prevention, primarily concerning financing and oversight. An ECOWAS community levy – a community tax on 0.5 percent on goods from third countries – generates resources for financing regional

integration. The levy is administered by the Parliament (ECOWAS 2012a). A percentage of the levy is earmarked for peace and security activities, the Peace Fund. The fund is however not intended to cover financing of peace-keeping missions. However, the Parliament has no legislative powers, and no influence on procurement, policymaking and implementation. The limited role of the Parliament on peace and security has led to increasingly antagonism between the Authority and the MSC (Aning 2004:539). I would argue that the predominant pattern of executive dominance within the ECOWAS could be explained by the existence of such a pattern in member states constitutions and domestic lack of separation of power between different bodies of the state (Aning 2004:541).

The current evolutionary step has also resulted in further materialization of the RSC that could be illustrated by three features. The first feature is an emerging division of labour between on one hand member states and on the other hand between ECOWAS and the international community. The division between member states is aiming at harmonizing peace support operations within the RSC along the following lines: facilities in Côte d'Ivoire to handle tactical level training (temporarily relocated to Mali, Ecole pour le Maintien de la Pax, Bamako); facilities in Ghana (Kofi Annan Peacekeeping Training Centre, Accra) to handle operational training; facilities in Nigeria (National Defense College, Abuja) to handle strategic level training (Cilliers 2008:14). The purpose is to optimize the use of training infrastructure and resources, and to contribute towards standardization and interoperability among the security forces in the region. The inclusion of Francophone Côte d'Ivoire and Mali could be seen in the light of easing the linguistic tension that undermined previous efforts (Bah 2005:80). Thus, one could say that the new security architecture has successfully bridge the gap between Anglophone and Francophone West Africa (Melly 2008:16).

The division of labour between ECOWAS and the international community should be viewed in the context of the current international security agenda where Africa in the latest decade has come to be regarded as highly relevant in terms of security policy. African regions, including West Africa, are becoming important oil producers and global actors are increasingly coming to view parts of the continent from the angle of energy security (Kliengebiel 2005:36). Military aid and military training programs in partnership with ECOWAS and/or individual member states, illustrated by the British Military Assistance Training Team (BMATT), the French Reinforcement of African Peacekeeping Capacity Program (RECAMP) and the US African Contingency Operations Training Assistance (ACOTA), have become important mechanisms in the promotion of regional peace and security (Berman&Sams 2002:40). Beside these global actors the EU is a key donor to ECOWAS peace and security framework through the European Development Fund (EDF) (Elowson&MacDermott 2010:61). Recent decade has also seen an increase in Chinese military aid and cooperation with Africa, however, more linked to countries that are important suppliers of energy and raw materials, and not particularly West Africa where traditional links to Europe and the US still dominates (Shinn 2008:161).

The second feature is the lesson drawn from the previous phase that ECOWAS did not have sufficient capacity to predict outbreaks of conflict, i.e. an Early

Warning System (EWS) leading to early response. Therefore, the organization has set up a structure with four zonal headquarters aiming at detecting conflicts at an early stage throughout the region (ECOWAS 2012e:Art.44-47). Although, the EWS still suffers from constraints in institutional capacity and qualitative analysis it is generally seen as the most comprehensive and logically integrated system for conflict prevention and management on the continent (Cilliers 2005:12). It has resulted in a number of actions, often high-level political response or shuttle diplomacy, illustrated by mediation in intra-state conflicts, *inter alia* in Guinea 2008 to bring about an agreement between national stakeholders after the demise of President Conte followed by a *coup d'état*, in Togo 2009-2010 to secure that elections were properly carried out, in Niger 2009-2010 to restore dialogue between national stakeholders in response to the incumbent president's attempt to unconstitutional maintenance of power followed by a *coup d'état*, in Côte d'Ivoire 2010 when incumbent President Gbagbo refused to accept election results. However, the pattern of mediation has been characterized of *ad hoc* response rather than formalized interventions where former Heads of State have come to play an important role, rather than the Council of Elders.

The third feature of the current development is the establishment of national and regional PSO capabilities illustrated on one hand by participation in UN and/or AU missions, *inter alia* in Chad, Sudan and Somalia, and on the other hand the formation of the ESF. The ESF has succeeded ECOMOG with the aim to provide the organization with relevant PSO capability in order to implement relevant provisions of the Treaty and the Mechanism within the EPSF, as well as the continental commitments linked to the APSA (ECOWAS 2012e:Art.89-92). Compared to the *ad hoc* force generating processes in the previous phase the ESF will be comprised of 5,000 soldiers within pre-determined units from most member states. The ESF has set up a Force Headquarters and planning element in Abuja and designated a regional logistic base, with the support of the US, in Sierra Leone (Cilliers 2008:13). Unlike previous domination from more powerful member states like Nigeria, the new framework has been more inclusive. Units have in recent years undergone training required for certification. However, the original plan to be fully operational in 2010 has been postponed and external observers have noted that the implementation of the framework has been weak and that the readiness to deploy could be questioned (Elowson&MacDermott 2010:55).

Most recent development is related to the situation in Mali after Islamic militants have taken control of the northern part of the country followed by a *coup d'état* in March 2012. Already from the start ECOWAS condemned the overthrow of the democratically elected government, imposed sanctions and convinced the military junta to step down in favour of a transitional government. The Islamic insurgency is seen as a threat to regional peace and security and in September ECOWAS turned to the UN requesting the SC to authorize a military intervention. The request was followed by a resolution that initiated preparations followed by a resolution in December authorizing the deployment of an African-led mission in Mali under the provisions of Chapter VII of the UN Charter with the aim to restore government control of its territory, and to mobilize international financial,

technical, and logistical resources (UN 2012b; UN 2012c). ECOWAS is planning to send a 3,300-strong West African force supported by France and other Western powers (Melly 2012). So far 13 member states have pledged to contribute troops with the Malian army taking the lead. Unlike previous interventions Nigeria is only contributing around 700 soldiers providing mainly the logistic support of the force (Ross 2012). It is not clear if this number of troops will be reached or when the force will be able to deploy. However, ECOWAS has expressed its determination to play its full role in the process and the will to immediately initiate consultations with Mali, member states, the AU, the UN, and all other concerned partners, towards the expeditious and full implementation of the resolution (ECOWAS 2012h). Although, there are many challenges related to an intervention in Mali I would argue that the RSC has come a long way in providing for its own peace and security. On this occasion the organization is acting on the authority of its whole community and with the blessing of the international community. Further on, the previous Anglophone and Francophone divide has been overcome and the unequal distribution of power and fear for Nigerian domination has been replaced by more suitable and stable agreements.

#### 4.4.3 Observations

From the discussion in this section follows three observations linked to the third evolutionary step of the RSC. The first is the replacement of previous unequal distribution of power in the region with more suitable and stable arrangements. This is not to say that the role of the regional hegemon Nigeria is no longer important for the RSC, rather that the establishment of an inclusive authority that acts on behalf of the whole community has equalized the distribution of power, recently illustrated by its collective action in Mali. However, the RSC will continue to be highly dependent on the foreign policy of Nigeria. By paying two-thirds of the ECOWAS annual budget it earns the right to have its voice heard. The second observation is that earlier amity and enmity has been replaced by a neighbourliness involving all countries in the RSC, illustrated by the division of labour among member states and the establishment of a regional stand-by force. The third observation is the parallel development of shared norms and rules of conduct with materialization in institutions and security mechanisms. However, the capabilities of the RSC continues to mirror the capacity of its member states that in turn indicates the need for continued external support for the implementation of its new security architecture. I would argue that these factors together have contributed to a higher degree of security interdependence within the RSC and a move towards a security community or a society of states that goes beyond the earlier phase characterized of regime security.

## 5. Conclusion

The objective of this concluding chapter is threefold. The first is to bring together the theoretical and empirical findings of the study. The second purpose is to identify key mechanisms that have an implication on the evolution of the West African Regional Security Complex (RSC) and its role as a security provider. The third is to take a stand on how conclusions from this study could be generalized to regions among the world including suggestions on further studies on regions as security providers.

The point of departure for my study has been on one hand that contemporary threats to international peace and security are increasingly regional, arising within states rather than from a global or out-of-region origin and on the other hand that the regions among the world has become salient security providers. The epistemological and theoretical basis of the thesis rests on social constructivist concepts and theories on the evolution of RSCs. Following the traditions of the English School I depart from the realist position that the international system is anarchic and the sovereignty of states, but find it possible to establish common norms and rules of conduct within that system. Further on, the study reflects a larger and on-going debate in IR about on one hand the region as a distinct ontological level between the local and global levels and on the other hand the influence of international and regional institutions in the international system.

Methodologically the study faces one major challenge. That is the consideration whether the constructivist notion of ideal-types of a Weberian state and a Westphalian system can be understood as universalistic or just a pure Eurocentric phenomenon. The challenge I found is that the Weberian state and the Westphalian system were never really transferred to the African continent. The Western ideal-type of state that is the assumption of most IR theories does simply not exist. This is not to say that ideal-types of states cannot be applied in my study, however, it indicates that it has to be done with a high degree of context sensitivity and reflexivity. Therefore, I have chosen to interpret the state in West Africa as a hybrid copy of the ideal-type of the Weberian state, meaning that it is a state still in the process of state-formation.

I have found that the processes of securitisation and desecuritisation among the countries in West Africa are so interlinked that their security problems cannot reasonably be analysed or resolved apart from one another. Thus, the region qualifies as a RSC that distinguishes it from neighbouring regions. In my analysis of the RSC I have identified three evolutionary steps that have transformed it from a system of states characterized of initially, conflict transformation and a pattern of security interdependence shaped by fear of war and rivalry, through a security regime shaped by fear of war and rivalry, but a regime where fears and expectations are restrained by an agreed set of rules of conduct, to a society of

states or security community where states do not expect or prepare for the use of force in their relations, instead they settle their disputes in other ways.

The process of security interdependence in West Africa has been highly dependent on *de jure* alternations over time in three variables. The first is the shift in distribution of power or polarity; illustrated by the absolute dominance of the regional hegemon Nigeria in the early stages of evolution to a more equal distribution of power among member states in contemporary security arrangements, however, still dependent on Nigerian economic and military capacity. The second is changes in the pattern of enmity; illustrated by early national and elite interests of regime security and domestic security concerns, Anglophone and Francophone rivalry, succeeded by regional amity and shared concern of regional security. The third alternation is the penetration of external actors; illustrated by variations in the influence of global actors with historical and/or strategic/economic interests in the region, *inter alia* the UK, France and the US, characterized of early national interests, replaced by shared concern of regional security. The transformation could be identified by the increasingly social construction of ideational structures and the materialization in regional institutions and economic, social and political interaction among member states, illustrated by the *Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peace-keeping and Security* (the Mechanism), *The Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance* (the Protocol) and the *ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework* (ECPF) that together form the new security architecture of the RSC. My conclusion is that development of shared norms and concepts of conduct among member states in the region is a precondition for effective and well-working regional institutions, however, the materialization of norms and values will decide on the actual capabilities of the RSC.

The causal chain and causal mechanisms that cause the shift from one step to another step has been dependent on lessons learned and shared experiences in previous evolutionary step. Thus, the mechanisms behind the West African RSC of today and its security architecture is the result of a historical development dependent on the experiences from the inter-linked conflicts in the Mano River Basin that lay bare the weakness of early established norms and rules of conduct, and institutions. However, the transformation of the RSC and its role as a security provider has also been dependent on the foreign policy of the regional hegemon Nigeria and the interests of global actors. In short, my study shows that the interface between on one hand the local and regional levels, and one the other hand the regional and global levels conflate in the case of West Africa.

I have found three re-occurring characteristics that have continued to hamper the evolution of the RSC and its role as a security provider. The first is that the capabilities of the RSC mirrors the weak state capacity of its members resulting in a gap between agreed norms and rules of conduct, and institutional capacity and resources that restrict the possibilities to implement agreed policies. The second is that the principles of state sovereignty and search for consensus among member states has often blocked regional decision-making and collective conflict prevention and management. The third is the phenomenon of presidentialism and the prevailing pattern of executive dominance in member states and its

repercussions on regional decision-making that has led to unclear and conflicting separation of power between key organs on the regional level. Further evolution of the RSC, as envisaged in the new security architecture - the Mechanism, the Protocol and the EPSF - will therefore be dependent on a progressive development of its member states' capacities and resources, democratization and constitutional reforms both on the domestic and regional level, as well as a need for continued international support.

The result of my study confirms that the Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) holds when analysing the West African RSC, however, not reaffirming that the regional level represents a distinct ontological level of analysis, rather that it conflates with the local and global levels in the international system through on one hand the existence of a regional hegemon, and on the other hand penetration of global actors. Methodologically results from a single case research normally have limited possibilities to be generalized to other cases. However, I would argue that these results could be generalized to other regions with similar conditions, primarily on the African continent, *inter alia* East Africa and Southern Africa, and secondarily to other continents on a case by case basis. This is not to say that experiences from West Africa and the evolution of its security architecture could be transferred to other regions without taking into account the regional context. The results, *per se*, would probably not be applicable to regions including global actors or regions with pre-dominantly consolidated democracies. Therefore, I suggest that further case studies or comparative studies are carried out to investigate primarily how progress in the contemporary West African security architecture could be applied to less mature RSCs and secondarily security dynamics and interaction between RSCs and global actors. A matter of particular interest would be to study the emerging Chinese penetration into the African continent, partly challenging traditional linkages to former colonial powers. Further on, as mentioned in the introduction to the thesis, my study has been focused on physical security linked to territoriality and not the rise of new security threats such as organized criminality, drug and human trafficking, illicit exploitation of natural resources and terrorism that would be of relevance for further security studies.

# Executive Summary

## Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the region in its role as a regional security provider through a within-case study of West Africa. The point of departure for the study has been on one hand that contemporary security threats are increasingly regional, arising within states rather than from a global or out-of-region origin (Buzan&Weaver 2003), and on the other hand that regions among the world have become increasingly salient actors in the space between the domestic and global levels in international relations (Buzan 1991; Bellamy 2004). The concept of security is to be understood as the pursuit of freedom from threat (Buzan 1991:37). Thus, the thesis defines a security provider as an actor with ability to successfully reduce/remove a specific threat against a specific object. The focus of the study is on physical security; however, it takes into consideration societal security, i.e. the economic, societal and environmental sectors that relate to physical security through their impact on the threat and use of force.

The scientific problem of the study is not the growing regionalization, *per se*, rather the delimitation of the region as an autonomous ontological entity from on one hand the state and on the other hand the global level. Some argue that it is a distinct level (Buzan&Waever 2003), others that the levels, in particular, the regional and international levels conflate (Lake&Morgan 1997). In short, what is at the center of the paper is whether the region is a security actor that ontologically could be defined as an autonomous level of analysis or if it is an institution through which states on the regional level as well as the global level have decided to act. The research question of the thesis is: *What are the mechanisms behind the region as a security provider in the case of West Africa?*

## Theoretical Approach

The theoretical basis of the study rests on social constructivist concepts and theories on the evolution of the West African Regional Security Complex (RSC). Following the traditions of the English School I accept the realist position that the international system is anarchic and the sovereignty of states, but I find it possible to establish common norms and rules of conduct within that system. The theoretical framework departs from the Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) developed by Barry Buzan and Ole Waever (2003) and the concept of Security Communities (Bellamy 2004). A RSC is defined as 'a set of units whose major processes of securitisation, desecuritisation, or both are so interlinked that their security problems cannot reasonably be analyzed or resolved apart from one

another` (Buzan&Waever 2003:44). Security Communities could be understood as communities whose members renounce the use of force in their relations with one another in accordance with a heightened sense of `we-feeling` (Bellamy 2004:14). In order to qualify as an RSC the members must possess a certain degree of security interdependence sufficient both to establish them as a linked set and to differentiate them from the surrounding regions (Buzan&Waever 2003:47).

My hypothesis is that the degree of security interdependence that decides on the evolution of the RSC is dependent on, firstly the polarity or distribution of power within the RSC, secondly the social construction or pattern of amity and enmity between the members of the RSC, and thirdly the penetration of external actors or `outside` actors inside the RSC. These variables are throughout the study analysed in terms of ideational structures (e.g. identities, interests and norms) and material aspects (e.g. institutions, political/military interaction).

## Methodological Considerations

A case is a well-defined aspect of a historical episode selected for analysis, defined as `an instance of a class of events` that are investigated regarding the causes of similarities or differences among those instances (George&Bennett 2005:17). Regions among the world that has developed into RSCs represent a designated and integrated social phenomenon that easily could be defined historically and territorially as an instance of a class of events. From this follows that the thesis is a case of evolution of RSCs, delimited to the African context and West Africa. Case study research varies from theory-building, theory-development and theory-testing, however, my primary interest is to test and refine the RSCT by applying it to a particular region (cp. George&Bennett 2005:109). Thus, it is depth not breadth that counts in this study, and West Africa is chosen because it is revelatory and unusual among the approximately dozens (depending on how one cluster regions, sub-regions and super-regions) of RSCs (cp. Buzan&Weaver 2003). Compared to regions that represent more mature security complexes, e.g. Europe and North America, the West African region typically form a RSC in being, thus, suitable for theory testing and refining. The study will show that the West African RSC has developed an extensive security architecture for conflict prevention and management; however, its capacity to move from rhetoric to practice has been dependent on domestic conditions in member states, the regional hegemon Nigeria and global actors, *inter alia* former colonial powers, and the US and the UN. Thus, the choice of West Africa complies with the primary criterion of relevance for case selection to the research objectives of the study, and provides the kind of control and variation required by the research problem (cp. George&Bennett 2005:83).

## Focus on West Africa

The empirical part of the thesis analysis the West African RSC, firstly from the position of the weakness of the member states and secondly from three ideal-types of evolutionary steps in the process of securitisation and desecuritisation (cp. Buzan&Weaver 2003:53-54). The first step is the founding of the RSC, a period characterized of a Hobbesian anarchic system, conflict transformation and a pattern of security interdependence characterized by fear of war and rivalry. The second step is characterized of a Lockean model of security regime, *ad hoc* conflict management shaped by fear of war and rivalry, but a regime where fears and expectations are restrained by an agreed set of rules of conduct. The third step is the new security architecture characterized of a process of domestic democratization and liberalization, consolidation of the RSC and a move towards a Kantian model of security community where states do not expect or prepare for the use of force in their relations with each other (cp. Buzan&Weaver 2003:471). The method applied in my analysis is to identify the causal chain and the causal mechanisms through an analysis on one hand of each step, and on the other hand the mechanisms that causes the transformation from one step to next step (cp. George&Bennett 2005:206). Thus, from a methodological point of view it is important to view the RSC not as a static entity, rather one that evolves over time depending on a combination of internal and external transformation, and as a result of a historical process.

## Result

The main findings of the study are that the evolution of the West African RSC has been highly dependent on *de jure* changes over time in three variables. The first is the shift in distribution of power; illustrated by the extreme dominance of the regional hegemon Nigeria in the earlier stages of evolution to a more equal distribution of power among member states in contemporary security arrangements, however, still dependent on Nigerian economic and military capacity. The second is the change in the pattern of enmity; illustrated by early national and elite interests of regime security and domestic concerns, Anglophone and Francophone rivalry, succeeded by regional amity and concerns of regional security. The third is the alternation in penetration of external actors; illustrated particularly by the influence of actors with historical and/or strategic/economic interests in the region, *inter alia* the UK and France together with the US and the UN. The transformation could be identified by the social construction of ideational structures and the materialization in regional institutions, and economic, social and political interaction among member states.

In my analysis I found that the causal chain and causal mechanisms that cause the shift from one step to another step has been dependent on the lessons learned and shared experiences in previous evolutionary step. Thus, the mechanisms behind the West African RSC of today and its security architecture is the result of

a historical development, especially dependent on the experiences from the inter-linked conflicts in the Mano River Basin that lay bare the weakness of earlier norms and rules of conduct, and institutions of the RSC. However, the transformation of the RSC and its role as a security provider has also been dependent on the foreign policy of the regional hegemon Nigeria and the interests of global actors. In short, my study shows that the interface between on one hand the local and regional levels, and on the other hand the regional and global levels conflate in the case of West Africa.

In the study I found three re-occurring characteristics that have continued to hamper the processes of securitisation and desecuritisation, and the evolution of the West African RSC. The first is that the capabilities of the RSC mirrors the weak state capacity of its members resulting in a gap between agreed norms and rules of conduct, and institutional capacity and resources that restrict the possibilities to implement agreed policies. The second is that the principles of state sovereignty and search for consensus among member states has often blocked regional decision-making and collective conflict prevention and management. The third is the phenomenon of presidentialism and the prevailing pattern of executive dominance in member states and its repercussions on regional decision-making that has led to unclear and conflicting separation of power between key organs on the regional level. Further evolution of the region as a security provider, as envisaged in the ECOWAS Treaty and related protocols will therefore be dependent on a progressive development of its member states' capacity and resources, democratization and constitutional reforms both on the domestic and regional level.

The result of my study confirms that the RSCT holds in the analysis of the West African RSC. However, not reaffirming that the regional level represents a distinct ontological level of analysis, rather that it conflates with the local and global levels in the international system through on one hand the existence of a regional hegemon, and on the other hand the penetration of global actors. Methodologically results from a single case research have limited possibilities to be generalised to other cases. However, I would argue that the results could be generalized to other regions with similar conditions, primarily on the African continent, *inter alia* East Africa and Southern Africa, and secondarily to other continents on a case by case basis. This is not to say that experiences from West Africa and the evolution of its security architecture could be transferred to other regions without taking into account the regional context. Results would probably not be applicable to regions including global actors or regions with predominantly consolidated democracies and developed states. The study finishes with suggestions on further studies on regions as security providers.

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