

The Participation of SADC and ECOWAS in Military Operations: The Weight of National Interests in Decision-Making

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Abstract: Over the last decade, African regional organizations have gained considerable scope in peacekeeping and peace enforcement. Two sub-regional organizations in particular, ECOWAS and SADC, have gathered significant experience in military interventions in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau, Ivory Coast, Lesotho, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. This article assesses the decision-making processes of both organizations ahead of the interventions and concludes that African states participate in military interventions for reasons of national and personal interests rather than humanitarian reasons or out of a primary interest in preserving regional stability. The article draws from extensive fieldwork in four African countries.

Résumé: Durant la dernière décennie les organismes régionaux africains ont gagné un terrain considérable dans les domaines de la protection et du contrôle de la paix. Dans ce scénario, deux organisations départementales en particulier, ECOWAS et SADC ont acquis une expérience importante dans le domaine des interventions militaires (au Libéria, au Sierra Leone, en Guinée-Bissau, en Côte d'Ivoire, au Lesotho, et en République Démocratique du Congo). Cet article évalue la prise de décision des deux organisations en amont des interventions, et conclut que les états africains participent à des interventions militaires pour des raisons d'intérêt national et personnel plutôt que pour des raisons humanitaires ou dans un intérêt

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primordial de préserver la stabilité dans la région. Cet article se base sur une étude de terrain approfondie s'étendant sur quatre pays africains.

Over the last decade, several regional and subregional organizations (ROs and SROs), most notably in Africa, have taken responsibility for dispute settlement and peacekeeping.¹ This is a salient trend toward devolution and decentralization that was sparked in the 1990s by the weak financial condition of the United Nations and the poor record of its peacekeeping missions. With resources flowing in, African leaders have gradually built up a strong network of institutions with the constitutional mandate and the operational capacity to handle conflicts in the continent. Two institutions have stood out in particular: the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in West Africa and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in the south. In total these two subregional institutions have intervened militarily seven times in six countries. But why have they intervened? Although the literature that describes the interventions is extensive, we still lack systematic information on the reasons behind the interventions.² Is the decision-making process guided only by a righteous intention to prevent and resolve conflicts, or may one find unofficial triggers for the interventions? Are ECOWAS and SADC pursuing a logic of cooperation and information-sharing and ensuring transparency and accountability in the difficult decision to intervene, or are these organizations providing a cover for member states to advance their national security interests?

Theory

The reasons that international organizations intervene militarily in violent conflicts are associated with the classical international relations question of why states join international institutions in the first place. According to the realist tenet, international organizations are created and financed by great powers in order to spread their ideals and values and solidify their grasp on power. Mearsheimer (1994–95), for instance, argues that NATO “was essentially an American tool for managing power in the face of the Soviet threat” (14), and adds that “cooperation among states has its limits, mainly because it is constrained by the dominating logic of security competition, which no amount of cooperation can eliminate” (9). This position is generally refuted by constructivists and proponents of liberal institutionalism, who emphasize that political institutions (meaning both political organizations and stable and recurring patterns of behavior) influence actors’ behavior by shaping their “values, norms, interests, identities and beliefs” (March & Olsen 1989:17). For instance, Solingen notes that “US power hardly explains... [the] emergence and evolution [of regional organizations], or why they were able to ‘anchor’, ‘tame’, or co-opt would-be hegemon (China in the ARF [ASEAN Regional Forum], Egypt in the [Arab] League)”

(2008:290). Proponents of liberal institutionalism in particular (e.g., Keohane 1989; Simmons & Martin 2002) point out that institutions provide several benefits, namely the promotion of transparency and monitoring, the provision of information about one another's preferences, intentions, and behaviors, the establishment of liabilities, the shaping of collective identity and compliance, the lowering of transaction costs, and the avoidance of negative outcomes from interdependence. This school does not refute the idea that states have their own interests, but it claims that states advance their interests by creating institutions to manage growing interdependence and allow for collective action. Indeed, in a seminal article, Abbott and Snidal (1998) show that international organizations allow states to centralize their collective activities through supportive administrative apparatus and independent organizations that act with a degree of autonomy within defined spheres.

Based on these postulates, how should the military interventions by ECOWAS and SADC be regarded? Are the participating states in an intervention merely interested in using the institutions to manage and project national or individual power—as realists would advocate—or do the interventions manage conflict, promote order, and allow for policy coordination, as liberal institutionalism would suggest?

Analytical Framework and Methodology

This study focuses on the military interventions carried out by ECOWAS in Liberia (1990–1998 and 2003), Sierra Leone (1997–2000), Guinea Bissau (1998–1999), and Côte D'Ivoire (2003–2004); and by SADC in Lesotho (1998) and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) (1998). I define “intervention” as a particular military action with the purpose of affecting the management of a civil or international conflict, be it physically or structurally violent, carried out by a regional or subregional organization (Tavares & Schulz 2006:236). For each intervention I analyze, first, what types of interests were involved in the decision to intervene. In order to test the realist postulate, the article assesses the *individual* (linked to the political and economic agenda of some leaders), *national* (associated to the internal dynamics of a country), and *regional* interests (specific to a region but with the capacity to affect the national agenda of states) that were at stake. I also often distinguish between immediate interests and the consequential gains; the first might inform the decision to intervene, whereas the latter can be defined as dividends provided by the military operation itself which were disregarded or disvalued during the formulation of the decision to intervene. Second, in order to test the liberal institutionalist hypothesis, the article assesses the role and the weight of the institutional apparatus of ECOWAS and SADC in each decision to intervene. Were these institutions able to curb the reductive national interests of some states and create a platform for transparent and accountable decision-making? Did they serve

as arenas for reaching political compromise?

Although the literature does provide some enunciations of the reasons behind the interventions, these have tended to be insufficient, sparsely analyzed, or presented only as background material or secondary interest. In addition, the descriptions of the interventions have been self-contained, and we still lack a comparative analysis based on empirical work. The article is hence divided into two parts. First, it presents a detailed analysis of the decision-making process that led to each intervention. Second, it compares the interventions of the two organizations and highlights the areas of common ground.

From a methodological point of view, this article derives from semi-structured interviews conducted in 2007 and 2008 in Ethiopia, Djibouti, Zimbabwe, and South Africa with policy-makers (attached to governmental departments or to regional organizations), journalists, scholars, and policy advisers. In total, forty-nine persons from twenty different African countries were interviewed. The data collection was standardized, and most interviews were recorded (when they were not, expanded notes were made soon after the event). The article provides excerpts of the interviews for quality control, and it makes an effort to falsify initial assumptions by comparing the data provided by the different interviewees. Finally, in order to avoid over- or understatement and to assure the credibility of the information, the comments of many of the interviewees are supplemented by an extensive and thorough review of the literature on the particular topic.

Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

Liberia I (1990–1997)

In 1990, one year after the outbreak of the civil war that pitted the rebel leader Charles Taylor (National Patriotic Front of Liberia—NPFL) against governmental forces led by President Samuel Doe, ECOWAS deployed a mission with the mandate to conduct military operations for the purpose of monitoring the ceasefire and restoring law and order to create the necessary conditions for free and fair elections.³ Officially the intervention was triggered by the outbreak of the Liberian civil war and the dramatic humanitarian situation. However, the military wing of ECOWAS—the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group, or ECOMOG—soon encountered the knotty situation of handling a violent warring faction with only a traditional peacekeeping mandate. For that reason, not long after its deployment, ECOMOG shifted from being a peacekeeper to performing peace enforcement tasks. The ECOWAS intervention in Liberia was the second military intervention by an African regional organization.⁴ Despite the obvious legal constraints (see Adibe 1997; Bundu 2001), the intervention became a paradigmatic example of the extension of national interests by means of collective action. Overall, the intervention was directed by Nige-

ria, which contributed 90 percent of the funds (roughly US\$2 billion) and 80 percent of the ECOMOG troops. And in practice, ECOWAS intervention in Liberia was a perfect laboratory sample of how a regional agency can be engineered to project national interests.

The Nigerian government was concerned with the “domino effect,” fearing that insurgency in Liberia could spark a wave of insurgencies in the region (Col. A. T. Jibrin, personal communication, December 7, 2007; see also Söderbaum 2003; Francis, 2006). The defeat of the Liberian army by civilian insurgents would potentially have undermined the political standing of the military in the entire region, and in the initial stages of the intervention this element was stressed by Nigerian President Ibrahim Babangida in his speeches to his military commanders.⁵ The wildfire advance of the rebellions by Taylor in Liberia and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in Sierra Leone, and the lack of effective resistance by the armed forces of both countries, likely intensified these fears. More ominously still, the presence of known dissidents from other West African states in Taylor’s army also suggested that Taylor (and his Libyan sponsors) had a wider regional design. From the Nigerian perspective, once Liberia and Sierra Leone fell, other West African states would follow. Abuja was also concerned with the humanitarian situation in the country and primarily with the safety of its citizens residing in Liberia. In July 1990 Taylor’s NPLF had killed up to one thousand Nigerians inside the Nigerian embassy compound, and therefore Nigeria (and also other ECOWAS members) was keen on intervening to stop the bloodshed.⁶

According to a number of researchers, the Liberian intervention also served as a way for Nigeria to protect itself as a regional hegemonic power.⁷ As Adebajo and Landsberg indicate, “Nigeria’s military brass hats were determined, at all costs, to make a success of their historical role as the protective ‘big brother’ with special responsibilities in their subregion” (2005:190). Indeed, the intervention suited General Sani Abacha’s military government. Nigeria needed—and still needs—to be seen as a powerful player and a positive force for regional stability” (ICG 2002). Colonel Ahmed Tijani Jibrin, Nigeria’s representative in the AU’s Military Committee, points out that “there is a difference between attributes and ascriptions: Nigeria has the attributes of an hegemonic power, whereas others in the region merely ascribe themselves to that role” (personal communication, December 7, 2007). And in practice, as Francis (2006) points out, Nigeria’s regional hegemony presupposes containing Francophone influence in the region.

This hegemonic role undermines, to a large extent, the capacity of ECOWAS to serve as a regional order-inducing organization. Far from embodying the tenets of liberal institutionalism in this intervention, ECOWAS was not able to reduce uncertainty or enhance transparency about goals and practices. Indeed, the decision to intervene was far from consensual; Côte D’Ivoire and Burkina Faso, ECOWAS Francophone countries,

took the unprecedented step of supporting the rebels whom ECOWAS was fighting against. Claims that the NPFL enjoyed access into Liberia through Côte d'Ivoire and that Ivoirian-based commercial interests benefited from NPFL mineral and timber concessions have been fairly well substantiated, and according to Alfred Nhema (personal communication, Sept. 20, 2007), Burkina Faso lent several hundred soldiers to Taylor in the early period of the war (see also Aning 1994; Obi 2009). These self-interested actions by member states disrupted the official objective of preserving regional stability.

Hence the decision to intervene was based primarily on national interests. (Adding to the motivations listed, the Nigerian military, according to Söderbaum [2003] also wanted to define, and be regarded as, champion of democracy and human rights.) Under the brutal regime of General Abacha, ECOMOG served as a bargaining tool to ward off the threat of international sanctions by implicitly threatening to withdraw Nigerian troops from Liberia and Sierra Leone. Thus for Abacha the intervention was an opportunity to divert international pressure from Nigeria's mounting socioeconomic problems and its human rights situation (see ICG 2002; Adibe 1997). It should be recalled that Nigerian governments had in the past taken a militant stance against radical subaltern military coups in the region. Thus in 1979, when Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings overthrew a regime of senior military officers in Ghana and executed several of them for corruption, the government of General Olusgun Obasanjo put pressure on the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) by cutting off oil supplies. When Doe staged his coup a year later, the Nigerian government, now under civilian control, again took a militant stance, barring Doe from attending the OAU Heads of State meeting in Lagos and coordinating the move to deny him succession as chairman of the OAU. When Babangida came to power, however, relations with Doe improved. But the earlier pattern was repeated when Rawlings staged his second coup in 1981. The actions of these Nigerian governments can be ascribed to political and ideological considerations (the desire of the ascendant Nigerian bourgeoisie to act as a conservative bulwark of stability in the region), as well as to specific institutional factors (the anxiety of its military faction to avoid a repetition of the traumatic uprising of their own ranks in July 1966). As the literature demonstrates (e.g., Hansen, Mitchell, & Nemeth 2008), the lack of democratic credentials of the member states of an international organization undermines its ability to serve as an effective conflict negotiator.

Additionally, in a country such as Nigeria, where the military exerts formidable power and inspires a considerable amount of ambivalence, the Liberian intervention was a way to keep the military out of the country and grant its members enough financial resources to keep them content. According to Chris Ayangafac (personal communication, September 18, 2007), several high-ranking military officials who eventually led ECOMOG were considered potential coup-stagers. In fact, despite Nigeria's claims of

having spent about US\$2 billion on the intervention in Liberia, there is substantial evidence that millions of dollars were diverted into the pockets of military officials, disguised as part of the costs of the intervention.

Another indication that the intervention was an extension of domestic dynamics is the fact that Abuja had various trade and economic interests in the region that were on the verge of being jeopardized by the instability provoked by the Liberian civil war. Nigeria was interested in the development of ECOWAS as a regional free trade area and eventually as a regional economic community in the context of the overall long-term economic integration strategy of the Abuja Treaty (1990) establishing the African Economic Community (AEC). As a regional economic powerhouse, Nigeria could gain economically from the expansion of West African trade and market integration in a revitalized ECOWAS. But this objective would require peace and stability. In addition, Nigeria had an important agreement to exploit the Bong iron mine in Liberia to supply the Ajaokuta iron mine, which would have been endangered with Doe's removal. During the Liberian war, timber and minerals were transported across the frontlines between rival forces, earning ECOMOG the anecdotal synonym of "Every Car or Moving Object Gone" (ICG 2002:17–18).

However, some accounts suggest that it was Ghana, rather than Nigeria, that encouraged the idea of intervention, with a plan to mount an operation into Monrovia to extricate Ghanaian refugees trapped in the embassy there. As it transpired, the adoption of the idea of a monitoring force following the Banjul peace agreement made such a unilateral intervention unnecessary. In addition to the humanitarian issue, Ghana was concerned by the fact that Taylor's men included known Ghanaian dissidents such as a Major Suleiman who had been implicated in earlier armed attacks on the regime from outside the country. While Ghana would form a firm partnership with Nigeria in ECOMOG, the goals of the two powers were hence not identical in every respect. Senegal, for its part, was encouraged to take part in the ECOMOG by the U.S., which was not willing to intervene directly (see Mortimer 1996) (and also wanted to prevent the mission from being regarded as a purely Nigerian intervention). Gambia, furthermore, decided to intervene because it believed that some of the people responsible for the unsuccessful Gambian coup of 1981 had joined NPFL. It also wanted to punish Libya (a supporter of NPFL) for having sponsored the 1981 coup and Burkina Faso for sheltering Gambian dissidents.

Besides national factors there were also regional dimensions to the intervention. In current global politics, where the regionalization of conflicts is a tangible feature, West Africa is a clear prototype of this trend. According to Col. A. T. Jibrin (personal communication, Dec. 7, 2007), there was a general concern from countries in the region that the humanitarian situation in Liberia could escalate and reach more dramatic regional proportions.⁸ As Agbu (2006:22) points out, "it could be argued . . . that the humanitarian imperative and concerns about the war's destabilising effect

on their own countries as well as regional peace and security prompted several other ECOWAS member states to consider intervention.”⁹ The regional political instability card was even played “officially” by Nigeria. In October 1990 President Ibrahim Babangida declared that “our critics tend to ignore the appalling human catastrophe which the Liberian crisis has created for us in this sub-region. . . . We are in Liberia because events in that country have led to the massive destruction of property and the massacre by all the parties of thousands of innocent civilians” (quoted in Draman & Carment 2003:4). The regional dimension of the humanitarian situation affected the internal dynamic of each country. Additionally, since the majority of regimes in West Africa were of questionable legitimacy and had dubious democratic credentials, the rally of ECOWAS leaders, under the umbrella of regional collective security, was an attempt to discourage guerrilla warfare and protect the survival of their regimes.

Finally, in the context of African conflicts and in conjunction with national and regional ingredients, personal ties and ambitions tend to mold political decisions. In the case of the Liberian civil war, Nigerian President Ibrahim Babangida was a personal friend of Samuel Doe and, in fact, Doe had appealed personally to Babangida to intervene to save the regime. Ero (2005) argues that “President Ibrahim Babangida was seen by some as Doe’s sub-regional god-father”; Doe even named a highway and the Graduate School of International Relations at the University of Liberia after Babangida. On the opposite side, the Ivorian leader Félix Houphouët-Boigny had never forgiven Doe for ordering the execution of his predecessor, Benedict Tolbert, whose son Adolphus was married to his adopted daughter, Daisy Delafosse. Sierra Leone, for its part, favored the intervention because “Joseph Momoh and Ibrahim Babangida have a close relationship that was first established while they were both attending the Nigerian Defence Academy at Kaduna. Sierra Leone had received economic assistance from Babangida and Momoh’s support for Doe was seen as a repayment of this assistance” (Ero 2005).

This mission, which provided a fertile ground for national and personal interests, dealt a major blow to the credibility of ECOWAS. Like Mearsheimer’s claims about American participation at NATO, it could also be said that the intervention was mostly a Nigerian tool for managing power in the face of a threat to its interests.

Guinea Bissau (1998–1999)

The civil war in Guinea-Bissau was triggered by an attempted coup against the government of President João Bernardo Vieira led by Brigadier-General Ansumane Mané, who had been dismissed by Vieira from command of the armed forces on charges of selling weapons to the Casamance rebels of southern Senegal.¹⁰ The army rebellion also may have originated in part in the government’s inability to properly pay its soldiers. Upon Vieira’s

request, Senegal (with about 2,000 troops) and Guinea (with about 400 troops) intervened militarily in support of the president. The intervention was justified on the basis of bilateral defense pacts and was undertaken without the initial blessing of the full ECOWAS Authority. As Adebajo (2002) points out, however, the legality of these pacts might be questioned, as their purpose was to defend against externally instigated threats rather than to maintain internal security.

Vieira and Mané signed a peace agreement on November 2, 1998, in Abuja. After intense negotiations involving the leaders of Gambia and Nigeria, the two sides agreed to an arrangement that called for new elections in March 1999 and the replacement of Senegalese and Guinea-Conakry troops by a regional peacekeeping force. The terms of the peace deal established an interim government of national unity featuring supporters of President Vieira and of the rebel faction. The new ten-person government was to have led the country until elections scheduled for later in 1999. After the Senegalese and Guinea-Conakry troops left, ECOWAS deployed 712 troops (from Benin, Gambia, Togo, and Niger) in order to guarantee security on the border with Senegal and to monitor the Abuja agreement. In May 1999, Mané's forces struck out against the government troops, capturing Bissau and forcing Vieira to flee to a foreign embassy for safety. The poor military capability of ECOWAS was not able to prevent the coup.

Similarly to ECOWAS's intervention in Liberia, national interests in Guinea-Bissau informed much of the reasons for the intervention. According to Chris Ayangafac (personal communication, Sept. 18, 2007), Senegal believed that Mané was sending weapons to the secessionist Casamance region of Senegal (see Francis 2006; Rudebeck 2001). The Diola people of the Casamance region have strong cultural ties with the Fulupos of northern Guinea-Bissau. Hence the interest of Senegal's President Abdou Diouf in saving the Vieira government stemmed primarily from a desire to prevent a government friendly to the Casamance rebels from ruling Bissau. Also, after the start of the intervention, Senegalese forces began a campaign against Casamance forces based in northern Guinea-Bissau.

The key to Guinea-Conakry's intervention was the need to avoid a further destabilizing flow of refugees from Guinea-Bissau into Guinea-Conakry, which was already hosting a half million refugees from the conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone (see Adibe 2002; Obi 2009). Furthermore, the relations between Guinea-Bissau and Guinea-Conakry had always been tight; the latter had served as a harbor for the Guinea-Bissau independence militants waging an armed conflict against the colonial power Portugal (Chris Ayangafac, personal communication, Sept. 18, 2007). In addition, regional factors offer some explanation of why ECOWAS intervened in Guinea Bissau. At the outbreak of the conflict it became increasingly clear that "the sub-region could not afford another major conflict in the Mano River Union. This was indeed a challenge for ECOWAS, for Nigeria and those who wanted to see the Liberia peace process succeed" (Agbu

2006:51). Similar to the situation in Liberia, the regionalization of the conflict affected each state negatively.

Finally, according to Adebajo (2002), personal ties shaped the decision to intervene here as well. The presidents of Senegal and Guinea were close to Vieira. Senegalese President Diouf had often collected Vieira in Bissau in his presidential jet on the way to regional summits, and President Conté of Guinea wanted to maintain close personal relations with leaders in West Africa in light of his animosity toward President Taylor of Liberia.

In the context of all these interests, what was the institutional weight of ECOWAS? Besides providing a legal basis for the intervention, did the organization have any impact on how the mission was deployed? Did it increase opportunities for cooperation in difficult times or offer a salient solution? The answer is no. Despite having a strong institutional capacity, ECOWAS proved to be so porous that it was easy for interested states to usurp its decision-making apparatus. Nigeria, for instance, was against the ECOWAS intervention in Guinea-Bissau, mostly because the previous Liberia intervention had become a controversial domestic political issue. There were also some reservations in some quarters of the Nigerian military establishment about lending support to Vieira, who was accused of not having shown support for ECOMOG operations in either Liberia or Sierra Leone. Nigeria, hence, used its absence as a bargaining chip or as an instrument to castigate the behavior of other member states. Self-interested actions caused the intervention to fail.

Sierra Leone (1997–2000)

The civil war in Sierra Leone erupted in March 1991 when rebels from the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), led by Foday Sankoh, invaded diamond-rich southeastern Sierra Leone (Kailahun District) from Liberia. Control of Sierra Leone's diamond industry was a primary cause of the war. Although endowed with abundant natural resources, Sierra Leone was ranked as the poorest country in the world in the 1990s. With the breakdown of all state structures, wide corridors of Sierra Leonean society were opened up to the trafficking of arms and ammunition. In 1992 a group of young military officers led by Valentine Strasser launched a military coup that sent President Joseph Momoh into exile and established the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) as the ruling authority in Sierra Leone. However, the NPRC proved to be nearly as ineffectual as the Momoh government in repelling the RUF. In 1996 Ahmad Tejan Kabbah rose to power through democratic elections, but in May 1997 Major Johnny Paul Koromah overthrew President Kabbah and invited the RUF to join the government. After ten months in office, the junta was ousted by the Nigerian-led ECOMOG forces, and the democratically elected government of President Kabbah was reinstated in March 1998.¹¹

What were the triggers behind this intervention? Without democratic

credentials and legitimacy, why would General Abacha defend democracy in Sierra Leone that was denied in his own country? One reason was the bilateral defense agreement signed between both countries in March 1997. But perhaps a more compelling reason is that Sierra Leone's civil war and crisis provided the opportunity for the Nigerian military leader to rehabilitate his battered international image and to establish his domestic democratic credentials; the Sierra Leone prodemocracy adventure was a ploy to strengthen his international credibility and silence his critics, in particular after the relatively successful political settlement of the Liberian civil war in 1997 (see Francis 2006). Isolated by the United States, the European Union, and the Commonwealth, Abacha needed to bolster his country's image and his own. According to Adebajo (2002), he was attempting to demonstrate his regime's indispensability to peacekeeping in a region of the world that the superpowers were not interested in being pulled into, and they were therefore thankful for Nigeria's sacrifices. The intervention was thereby a major public relations campaign.

Furthermore, and in tone similar to that of the interventions in Liberia, Nigeria aspired to accentuate its Africanist policy and its role as hegemonic power. Since the country's national interests are intertwined with the interests of its neighbors, and also since the seismic waves of the conflict would inevitably hit Nigeria hard in terms of refugee flux and economic recession, Gen. Abacha decided to intervene (Col. A. T. Jibrin, personal communication, Dec. 7, 2007). In the words of General One Mohammed, ECOMOG's Nigerian chief of staff in Sierra Leone, "we had to put out the fire in order to stop it from extending to our own houses" (quoted in Adebajo 2002:92).¹²

And where did ECOWAS stand? At an ECOWAS extraordinary summit in Lomé in December 1997, some ECOWAS members, led by Senegal, showed their anxiety over what they perceived as Nigeria's unilateral actions and emphasized that ECOMOG troops had been deployed in Sierra Leone to enforce an embargo and not to employ force against the junta. The Nigerian intervention also sparked a furious reaction from Blaise Compaoré, the leader of Burkina Faso, who questioned Nigeria's agenda, asking "just what might be the intention of those who have employed force for the restoration of President Kabbah?" (quoted in Mortimer 2000:199). Once again, then, an ECOWAS intervention led to major frictions between Anglophone and Francophone countries. In line with the assumptions of liberal institutionalism, the intervention did provide information about each other's preferences. But instead of being a condition for enhanced cooperation, it served as a way to consolidate old fault lines.

Liberia 2 (2003)

In 1997 the former rebel leader Charles Taylor was elected to the presidency of Liberia and installed an autocratic and fairly dysfunctional govern-

ment that ignited a new rebellion in 1999. The rebel group—the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD)—was backed by the government of neighboring Guinea. Combined with the president's well-known explicit support for a political role to be granted to Sierra Leone's RUF, he was linked to rumors that Liberia's government was actively involved in the supply of arms to the RUF, as well as the purchase of blood diamonds from Sierra Leone. The civil conflict intensified in mid-2003, and the fighting moved into Monrovia. As the power of the government shrank, and with increasing international and American pressure for him to resign, President Taylor accepted an offer of asylum from Nigeria. His resignation in August 2003 paved the way for the deployment by ECOWAS of what became a 3,600-strong peacekeeping mission in Liberia (ECOMIL). The force was hastily assembled and airlifted into Liberia to prevent the rebels from overrunning Monrovia and committing revenge-inspired war crimes. On August 18 leaders from the Liberian government, the rebels, political parties, and civil society signed a comprehensive peace agreement that laid the framework for a two-year National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL) headed by Gyude Bryant, a businessman. The U.N. took over security in Liberia in October 2003, subsuming ECOMIL into the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), a force that grew to its present size of nearly fifteen thousand.

A striking feature of ECOMIL—and a characteristic that distinguished it from the other interventions—was the politically articulated and fairly consensual way in which the deployment occurred. Unlike previous ECOWAS missions, this one was guided by diplomatic tactics, and there were no major factions. However, it is also significant that both Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso—the staunch opponents of ECOMOG, with close links to Libya and Taylor in the 1990s—were not inclined to oppose the intervention this time around (see Aboagye & Bah 2004). Even if the relative harmony among the participants in the mission could have been a sign of the maturity of ECOWAS and its new capacity to organize collective will, in practice it was connected more to the lack of opportunity of neighboring countries to use the intervention to explore their national interests.

With no major interests at stake, why did ECOWAS decide to intervene? The main reason was the unprecedented pressure applied by the international community—mainly the United States. Indeed, ahead of the intervention the U.S. sent a twenty-member military team to assess how best to bring stability to the country, a subtle way to force an ECOWAS intervention. And the intervention itself ended up being deployed with military and financial support (US\$30 million) from the United States.

In addition, even in this context Nigeria took advantage of the opportunity to solidify its hegemonic role, although this time Nigeria's intervention did not spark any major antagonism from its ECOWAS partners. As Gen. Festus Okonkwo, the Force Commander of ECOMIL, noted,

the public appreciation of Nigeria and Nigerian troops is very high because everybody has realized that without Nigeria coming here it would have been difficult for anybody to come in to help. Even the United States made it clear that they would not come in here until the African troops had deployed first on the ground. The Nigerian government decided to take the lead and once we came the US decided to come in too. (Quoted in *Vanguard* 2001)

Côte d'Ivoire (2003–2004)

Côte d'Ivoire was ruled by President Félix Houphouët-Boigny from independence until 1993. Contrary to his policy of careful ethnic balancing, the subsequent governments and presidents played upon ethnic, regional, and religious differences and used these as a way to access power, effectively marginalizing both the Muslim north and the immigrant community. In 1999 the first coup in the country's history was staged, reflecting the breakdown of state authority and loss of political stability. The main protagonist, General Robert Guei, nevertheless agreed to hold elections in late 2000, which he subsequently lost to Laurent Gbagbo. All of these factors made for a climate of distrust and political uncertainty, and on September 19, 2002, tensions exploded as mutinous northern soldiers launched a rebellion. In January 2003 the parties signed a compromise at Linas-Marcoussis with the objective of ending the violence. President Gbagbo was to retain power, and opponents were invited into a government of reconciliation. ECOWAS deployed a fifteen-thousand-strong military force, headed by Senegal, to facilitate the implementation of the agreement. On February 27, 2004, the U.N. Security Council passed a resolution authorizing a full peacekeeping operation for Côte d'Ivoire and mandating nearly seven thousand U.N. troops to monitor and help implement the peace agreement. As a result, the ECOWAS forces were subsumed under the U.N. mandate.

A mix of regional and national variables explains the reasons for the intervention. The ECOWAS executive secretary, in justifying the intervention of ECOMOG, warned that the conflict had serious regional consequences and could potentially "engulf other countries in the sub-region . . . and threaten the peace and security of the entire sub-region" (quoted in Francis, 2006:170). There was, indeed, a clear fear of a possible spillover of the Ivoirian crisis as 125,000 Ivoirian refugees entered Liberia, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, and Burkina Faso (Col. A. T. Jibrin, personal communication, Dec. 7, 2007; Lasana & Prosper 2004). As one of the reasons for the conflict was the systematic marginalization of citizens of foreign descent, namely people of Burkinabé origin, neighboring countries feared a massive migration of refugees. Another regional factor, according to the U.N. Office for West Africa (UNOWA 2004), was the importance of migrants in Côte d'Ivoire as a source of income for neighboring countries, and any disruption of the economic fabric in the country would inevitably lead to

a decrease of international transfers of capital. In addition, Côte d'Ivoire is the main economic power of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), and conflict in the country therefore affected trade in the whole subregion. Senegal (which at that time chaired ECOWAS) also had serious national security concerns because of the proximity of the conflict (see Francis 2006).

But more than any other intervention by ECOWAS, the involvement in Côte d'Ivoire was driven by strong extraregional influences—namely those originating from France (ICG 2003). France did not want to be seen as acting unilaterally in Côte d'Ivoire, nor did it want to be left by itself in a hostile political environment. Paris organized peace talks with the aim of involving ECOWAS, and it was actively present behind the scene at the Accra meeting. Once again, therefore, ECOWAS's autonomous decision-making was compromised.

Southern African Development Community (SADC)

Lesotho (1998)

In September 1998 South African troops entered Lesotho to prevent mutinous soldiers of the Royal Lesotho Defence Force (RLDF) from staging a military coup. The contingent was part of an SADC Combined Task Force, although the military and logistical coordination of the mission was carried out primarily by South Africa and to a lesser extent by Botswana. SADC was absent from military strategies on the ground (Anonymous, Botswana Embassy, Ethiopia, personal communication, Sept. 25, 2007).

In the official discourse, "Operation Bolease" was a reaction to the unfolding internal political problems in Lesotho as a result of failed negotiations between the country's political forces and the subsequent mutiny by part of the Lesotho Defence Force (see Ghebremeskel 2002:19; Selinyane 2006:60). South Africa justified the legality of the intervention on the following grounds: it had taken place under the SADC auspices; it flowed from an SADC decision not to permit coups d'état and other unconstitutional changes in Southern Africa; and it was based on a 1994 agreement that South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Botswana would be guarantors of stability in Lesotho (Nathan 2002). Indeed, South African officials claimed that "Botswana, Zimbabwe and South Africa were mandated to act on behalf of SADC to restore the democratically elected government. After intensive negotiations and the threat of military intervention by SADC forces, the democratically elected government was restored to power and the soldiers returned to their barracks" (Pahad 1998).

Despite these claims by South African officials, some scholars note that the intervention appears to have been inconsistent with the SADC Treaty and could not even be called an "SADC mission." In this view, SADC had no role in legitimating this intervention because proposals relevant to coups

had not been ratified by the SADC Summit (Likoti 2007). Although the “actorness” of the intervention is a contentious issue, SADC itself stands by the idea that the incursion “by South African and Botswanan military forces” was made “under the aegis of the Southern African Development Community.”¹³ Based on the official view, SADC increased opportunities for cooperation, facilitated issue-linkages, and reduced uncertainty—as liberal institutionalism would expect.

Yet because of the way in which the intervention was authorized, structured, and deployed, it has been marred with overall criticism. Critics point out that it was a South African operation aimed at entrenching the rule of the governing Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) party. The only authoritative SADC pronouncement on the situation had been the 1998 SADC Summit’s expression of concern “at the civil disturbances and loss of life following the recent elections in Lesotho,” and of praise for the “mediation initiative led by the South African Government, which resulted in the setting up of a SADC Committee of Experts to investigate the validity or otherwise of allegations that the elections were fraudulent.”¹⁴ It is hard to imagine how this was translated into an SADC mandate for a peace operation that resembled a military invasion.¹⁵

Underneath these reasons, other more strategic national interests were apparent. First, South Africa was very concerned about the future of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP), an ongoing water supply project with a small hydropower component developed in partnership with the government of Lesotho. Comprising several large dams and tunnels throughout Lesotho and South Africa, it is Africa’s largest water transfer scheme.¹⁶ The purpose of the project is to provide Lesotho with a source of income in exchange for the provision of water to central South Africa’s Gauteng province (including Johannesburg and Pretoria) where the majority of the country’s industrial and mining activity occurs, as well as to generate hydroelectric power for Lesotho.

According to many researchers, the primary trigger for the intervention was thus to assure the continuity of LHWP and to safeguard the water supply to Gauteng.¹⁷ This explains why South African forces rushed to the Katse Dam and entered into fighting with the Lesotho military. Whereas the SADF column that passed by Ladybrand to intervene in the capital, Maseru, was poorly equipped, the operation in the Katse Dam was conducted by an elite paratroop force airlifted from Bloemfontein and supplied with high-tech and heavy equipment (namely phosphorus bombs) (Chris Maroleng, personal communication, Nov. 7, 2007).¹⁸ The members of South Africa’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Botswana’s army who were interviewed did not admit that protecting the LHWP was a major objective. However, when confronted with data on the design of the operation, they said that the intervention in the Katse Dam had been carried out simply to avoid the major catastrophe that would have resulted if it had been blasted and the villages nearby had been flooded with water. In any military operation, they said, all

possibilities had to be accounted for (Zabantu Ngcobo, personal communication, Nov. 7, 2007; Gen. Fisher, personal communication, Nov. 9, 2007). After the intervention, Pretoria reopened talks for the next phase of LHWP, and the agreement for commencement of “phase B” of the project was concluded. Thus, realist rather than liberal principles informed the decision of South Africa to intervene through SADC. As Lekoti puts it, the intervention is an example of “realist interests, centring on water as the major imperative” (2007:260). Although official South African National Defence Force statements stressed that this was a combined military task force, consisting of Botswana and South African military forces, the Botswana forces arrived in Lesotho only after South African forces had already been engaged in combat operations against the Royal Lesotho Defence Force.

Second, there was a possibility of the conflict’s degenerating into outright civil war and spilling over into South Africa, especially in the context of the impending general election of 1999.¹⁹ The Lesotho army was operating as a defense force, but according to Gen. Louis Fisher, then Botswana’s chief of Defence Forces, the forces were acting in a “disobliging” manner that was leading Lesotho to “political paralysis (personal communication, Nov. 9, 2007). Memories of the events of 1994, when the country was trapped in political tension that resulted in the assassination of Deputy Prime Minister Selometsi Baholo, led Prime Minister Bethuel Mosisili to request a prompt intervention. According to Gen. Fisher, “ultimately SADC intervention was aimed at neutralizing the defense forces” (personal communication, Nov. 9, 2007), and South Africa, as a result, was concerned with the ominous prospect of the massive overflow of illegal migrants and political refugees through its own borders (Gen. Paulino José Macaríngue, personal communication, Nov. 2, 2007). It thus acted to prevent an implosion of land-locked Lesotho and to stave off an influx of refugees and arms to its own country. Some authors (e.g., Matlosa 2001) have also contended that South Africa was concerned with the intensification of cross-border trafficking of small arms and narcotics.

Finally, South Africa was acting as the main regional power; according to a number of informants, the intervention in Lesotho was intended to reinforce and reaffirm South Africa as the first among a region of unequals.²⁰ As noted by Selinyane (2006:79) in his analysis of the Lesotho crisis, “South Africa is unequivocally committed to creating peace and stability on the continent. Such a project can only materialize under the leadership of a hegemonic state that not only stands ready to enforce it, including through deployment of force, but also ploughs in its resources to back up this ideal.”

Botswana, a member (along with South Africa and Zimbabwe) of the SADC Taskforce mandated to monitor Lesotho politics in the 1990s, was led to intervene in 1998 by what seems to have been a genuine interest in stopping Lesotho from falling into political chaos. Gaborone was also aware that the implosion of the country would generate a spillover of refugees and cause unnecessary turmoil (Gen. Louis Fisher, personal commu-

nication, Nov. 9, 2007). Indications exist, however, that it was in fact South Africa that persuaded Botswana to intervene, as a military intervention conducted solely by South Africa could have been considered an invasion (John Makumbe, personal communication, Oct. 29, 2007). Moreover, the operation in Lesotho was the first military intervention by the postapartheid defense forces of South Africa. The support of Botswana, South Africa realized, could make up for any operational limitations (Gen. Paulino José Macaringue, personal communication, Nov. 2, 2007).

Reports on the ground describe Botswana's presence as more appreciated than that of South Africa—a regional hegemon with a history of racial segregation. The fact that Botswana and Lesotho have similar language patterns may have played a role (Anonymous, Botswana Embassy, Ethiopia, personal communication, Sept. 25, 2007).

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) (1998)

The military intervention in the DRC by Angola, Namibia, and Zimbabwe has also been widely discussed, and views differ as to the properness of the action. The participating countries argued that they were acting on the basis of collective self-defense to protect the regime of Laurent Kabila. However, the fact that only some members of SADC participated has sparked controversy that reflects the intense internal rivalry in SADC. The intervention by only three member states was facilitated by the fact that until 2002 the SADC Organ for Defence, Politics and Security—the decision-making body on security issues established in 1994—had more independence from the rest of SADC institutions than it has now. The military intervention was only retroactively recognized by SADC and did not have the approval of the U.N. Security Council.

Although the literature highlights the fact that the intervention was driven by Zimbabwe's economic interests (e.g., exploitation of mining resources, a variable that certainly played an important role), many of those interviewed for this study suggested that this was, in fact, a consequential gain and not an immediate trigger for the intervention, which was connected to larger geostrategic interests.²¹ In 1998 Uganda and Rwanda, in an exercise of pure realpolitik, supported Laurent Kabila's rise to power as part of an effort to extend their areas of influence in the DRC.²² President Mugabe was conscious that Rwanda, Uganda, and Burundi were attempting to partition Zaire (as it was then called) into spheres of security influence. Presidents Kagame of Rwanda and Museveni of Uganda were seduced by the idea of creating a large Tutsi sphere of influence, which would extend over the DRC (Chris Maroleng, personal communication, Nov. 7, 2007; Robert Muyanga, personal communication, May 7, 2008). As expected, the deployment of Ugandan and Rwandan forces in support of rebel factions, and in particular the Western support for the allies fighting in the DRC, became a concern for Mugabe. These developments were interpreted not

only as imperialist tendencies and territorial aggression, but also as acts that were disrespectful to Mugabe, who had been the leading player in Southern Africa (Chris Maroleng, personal communication, Nov. 7, 2007). The growing affinity between Kabila and Mugabe, however, was associated with Kabila's gradual separation from Kigali and Kampala (Gen. Paulino José Macaríngue, personal communication Nov. 2, 2007; Robert Muyanga, personal communication, May 7, 2008). Once installed in power, the new president of the DRC attempted to forge new ties with strong neighbors that would aid him in both consolidating his sovereignty and extending his political options. Zimbabwe intervened in the DRC with approximately ten thousand troops and spent on average US\$3 million per month, a total of US\$36 million in a year, which accelerated the country's economic deterioration (UNSC 2001:28). Mugabe believed, however, that this was a necessary price to pay, as Uganda and Rwanda's control of the DRC would have been detrimental to Zimbabwe. Moreover, the regime that deposed American-supported Mobutu was likely to adopt anti-American policies and to be more aligned with Zimbabwe (John Makumbe, personal communication, Oct. 29, 2007).

Once the intervention was ongoing, several other gains resulted. First and most important, the exploitation of the war economy of the DRC has led to substantial economic benefits for the Zimbabwean ruling authorities and military elites. Several researchers and informants said that at a time when the country was facing the first repercussions of the economic crisis, the intervention was regarded as an effective way to ensure a steady flux of economic revenues.²³ The most comprehensive publication on the economic exploitation of the war is the "Report of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth in the Democratic Republic of the Congo" (UNSC 2001), produced by a "Panel of Experts" established by the U.N. Security Council in 2000. According to the report and to interviews in Southern Africa (including Zimbabwe), Zimbabwe became economically involved in the DRC in three ways.

First, Zimbabwe adopted a policy of indirect financing of the war through direct payment by some Congolese entities, mainly companies. For instance, it signed a contract with Gécamines (La Générale des Carrières et des Mines), a state-owned mining company, whereby 37.5 percent of the company's profits were earmarked to finance the expenses of the Zimbabwean army (see Prunier 2006:110). Moreover, the ailing Zimbabwean Electricity Supply Authority (ZESA) signed a key deal to double its import of electricity below market prices from the Inga Dam in Bas-Congo (ICG 2000:62). Zimbabwe was also given a long-term concession of a half million hectares of good-quality fallow farmland in Katanga. Many other deals were ongoing, such as an arrangement concerning the supply of foodstuffs to the Congolese army, for which Zimbabwean General Zvinavashe's company is said to have been tasked with the transport (John Makumbe, personal communication, Oct. 29, 2007). But Kabila was not only paying Zimba-

bwe through the provision of lucrative contracts. In the Kasai region, for instance, Kabila gave mining concessions directly to the Zimbabwe Defence Forces (ZDF) as barter payment for its military support.²⁴

Second, Zimbabwe wanted to protect lucrative contracts that had been signed before the intervention. For instance, in early 1998 the Zimbabwe Defence Industries (ZDI) had received US\$140 million that it wished to preserve.

Finally, Zimbabweans were given financial incentives in the form of business opportunities in the mining sector. Zimbabwean companies received mining concessions, used their influence with the DRC government to develop business partnerships with private companies and parastatals, and received preferential treatment for their businesses (UNSC 2001). For example, in late 1998 a private company, Operation Sovereign Legitimacy (OSLEG)—whose shareholders included Army Chief General Vitalis Zvinavashe and former Defence Permanent Secretary Job Whabira—entered into a partnership with President Kabila's company, Générale de commerce d'import/export du Congo (COMIEX), to form COSLEG Ltd., through which Zimbabwe (ZANU-PF) has been able to exploit and market minerals, timber, and other resources of the DRC. In this way Zimbabwe has acquired two of the richest state-owned mining concessions—the Kimberlite Deposits in Tshibua and the alluvial deposits in the Senga Senga River (John Makumbe, personal communication, Oct. 29, 2007). Laurent Kabila consented to the exploitation of resources because he had no capacity to exercise full control on the ground in a context of war (John Makumbe, personal communication, Oct. 29, 2007). On a personal level, the financial arrangement between Mugabe and Kabila and the links between Joseph Kabila (Kabila's son) and Leo Mugabe (Robert Mugabe nephew) have also been recounted in the literature (see Compagnon 2001; Berghezan & Nkundabagenzi 1999).

Beyond the geostrategic interests that prompted Zimbabwe to intervene, there were other important factors. Given the domestic political and economic difficulties in Zimbabwe, the intervention was also a ploy to appease the army. Even though Mugabe and the ruling ZANU-PF counted, to a large extent, on the army's solidarity, the armed forces were not unaffected by the severe consequences of the crisis. Once mighty in the continent, the Zimbabwean army was facing serious difficulties (desertions, deteriorating equipment, unpaid and under-resourced soldiers). The profitable intervention, therefore, was a way for Mugabe to ensure the army's allegiance and to eliminate the potential threat that an antagonistic army could pose (see Maclean 2002; Francis 2006).

Moreover, many people say that Mugabe realized that the intervention was a way to outmaneuver Mandela as political leader of southern Africa and to challenge South Africa as the leading regional economy.²⁵ Since Zimbabwe's independence in 1980, Mugabe had diligently endeavored to attain regional leadership. In the 1980s the implicit norm was to accord

regional leadership of the Frontline States to the oldest ruling leader, and with the resignation of Tanzania's Julius Nyerere in 1985 and Eduardo dos Santos's hesitation to assume that role in a context of ongoing civil war, Mugabe was keen to embrace the leading role (Gen. Paulino José Macaringué, personal communication, Nov. 2, 2007).²⁶ In the early 1990s, however, Mandela's release from prison and his immediate rise to political stardom overshadowed Mugabe's position. Only with bold moves (such as the intervention in the DRC and, arguably, with the taking over of white farms in the late 1990s) could Mugabe reclaim his seat in the front row of the African game. With this goal in mind, he also wished to convey the message that sovereignty was a cardinal principle of international relations and that any attempt to meddle with the domestic issues of a country (such as Rwanda and Uganda in the DRC) would be strongly opposed. He is fully aware that national sovereignty is a necessary defense to bulletproof his authoritarian regime (John Makumbe, personal communication, Oct. 29, 2007).

Finally, according to Nathan (2002), Zimbabwe had a desire to assert its role within the SADC and rally domestic support for its leaders in a context of falling standards of living and "gross mismanagement of the economy, unchecked public expenditure, corruption and one-party rule."

Namibia and Angola had their own agendas in the conflict. Namibia, together with the DRC, Angola, and Zimbabwe, had signed the "Luanda Mutual Defence Pact" in 1998 requiring that the signatories intervene in case one of them was attacked. But it seems clear that the central reason for Namibia's intervention was to show political solidarity with Angola. In 1966 the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) began its armed struggle to liberate Namibia, in part from bases abroad. After Angola became independent in 1975, SWAPO established bases in the southern part of that country. The DRC intervention, therefore, was a way to reciprocate past favors.²⁷ Additionally, the Namibian government had security concerns in its Caprivi region, in particular the effects of the Angolan civil war on the Caprivi separatists (see Francis 2006; Söderbaum 2003; Oosthuizen 2006).

For its part Angola's ruling MPLA, a traditional supporter of Mugabe's ZANU-PF, had serious security concerns. It saw its intervention in the DRC as an opportunity to pursue its war with Jonas Savimbi, and regarded the deployment in the DRC as a second military front in the war against UNITA.²⁸ The goal was to stop the rebel group from exporting diamonds in exchange for logistical support. Several researchers claimed that the Angola leaders also wanted to block supply routes, protect government oil installations crucial to the economy and war, and maintain a regime in the DRC amenable to the interests of their country.²⁹ The ruling MPLA was particularly interested in controlling the borders with both the DRC and Congo-Brazzaville. It was clear to Luanda that the rebel leader Savimbi received military support from the U.S. through supply lines from both the DRC and Congo-Brazzaville whose leaders, Mobutu and Lissouba, were U.S. allies (Gen. Paulino José Macaringué, personal communication,

Nov. 2, 2007). Angola was also concerned about the deployment of troops by both Rwanda and Uganda in the Bas-Congo region, the backyard of Angola, without its approval. Moreover, Angola wanted to protect strategic points such as the Inga Dam, which provides energy to Angola, Matadi port, and Kamina airbase (Ibbo Mandaza, personal communication, Oct. 25, 2007), and it was also determined to cut UNITA's supply line in the DRC and protect the Cabinda enclave. In short, Angola might not have been Kabila's strongest supporter initially, but it did not want to see him replaced by Jean-Pierre Bemba, the leader of the Movement for the Liberation of Congo, who was a Mobutist with close ties to UNITA (Gen. Paulino José Macaringué, personal communication, Nov. 2, 2007).³⁰

From an economic point of view, Angola was also interested in securing the contracts that Sonangol, an Angolan oil company controlled by the presidency, had in the DRC, although given its vast natural resources, Angola did not profit particularly from the exploitation of the DRC's resources (Gen. Paulino José Macaringué, personal communication, Nov. 2, 2007; Chris Maroleng, personal communication, Nov. 7, 2007). The "Panel of Experts" of the U.N. Security Council (UNSC 2001) even noted that, "according to very reliable sources, joint ventures proposed to these two countries [Angola and Namibia] were a sign of gratitude rather than an incentive for their support and they never pressed for it."

Finally, the DRC conflict also showed clearly how national and personal interests become intertwined. Beyond the contracts signed by Mugabe and members of his family with Laurent Kabila, lucrative contracts were signed between family members of Namibian President Nujoma and Kabila (Berghazan & Nkundabagenzi 1999). Moreover, the elites in Angola, Zimbabwe, and the DRC were linked strongly by personal, economic, and military ties.³¹ The empathy that exists between dos Santos and Mugabe is epitomized by the prompt support lent to dos Santos by Mugabe in 1988 when South African and Cuban troops withdrew from Angola and Mugabe assured a steady flow of military equipment to fill the void (Gen. Paulino José Macaringué, personal communication, Nov. 2, 2007). The personal ties between Mugabe and Laurent and Joseph Kabila are equally pronounced. The personal guard of Joseph Kabila (who succeeded his father in 2001) includes a half-battalion of the Zimbabwean army (Anonymous, United Kingdom Embassy, Zimbabwe, Oct. 24, 2007).

And what was the institutional weight of SADC? When the war broke out the SADC chairperson, Mandela, espoused the need for dialogue and a negotiated settlement to the conflict. On the other hand, the appointed chairperson of the SADC Organ, Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe, had been the first to defend Laurent Kabila's regime with military forces. Angola and Namibia soon followed suit. The involvement of the three SADC states was endorsed at a meeting of SADC defense ministers in Harare on August 18, 1998. In the wake of this meeting, Mugabe claimed that the fourteen countries belonging to SADC had come to a "unanimous" decision to help

Kabila. Mandela publicly reprimanded Mugabe for his inflammatory talk and called upon SADC countries to work, rather, toward a peaceful settlement. An emergency summit of SADC leaders was convened on August 23, 1998, in Pretoria. The leaders present decided to confirm their recognition of the legitimacy of the government of the DRC and to call for an immediate cease-fire, to be followed by political dialogue on a peaceful settlement to the crisis. What followed, instead, was a brutal military intervention. As with the intervention in Lesotho, SADC did not manage to become what liberal institutionalism claims that institutions are: a forum to reduce uncertainty, monitor compliance, and detect defections.

Conclusion

In the decision-making process leading up to a military deployment, decisions are more often taken in the national capitals than in the headquarters of regional organizations. This study has demonstrated that in the majority of cases, national and individual interests, rather than any institutional principle, served as the basis for the interventions. Five aspects are worth reiterating.

First, fieldwork confirms the realist postulate that ECOWAS's and SADC's decisions to intervene were sparked primarily by national interests. In all interventions assessed, the participating countries aimed at promoting their national agendas. In the political field, countries were interested in displaying or enhancing their status as meaningful players in the broader community. Nigeria and South Africa achieved this goal by pursuing regional hegemonic strategies. Often, however, the main national political trigger was connected to ethnic relations and blood ties. Given the inconsistency of African borders, conflicts affecting communities in one country often spill over to the same ethnic community in the other side of the border—the context, for example, of Senegal's intervention in Guinea Bissau. The spillover, however, is not connected only to ethnic lines but also to regional migratory factors. Nigeria (in Liberia), Senegal (in Côte d'Ivoire), Guinea Conakry (in Guinea Bissau), and South Africa (in Lesotho) justified their interventions partly in terms of the need to curb the regional refugee flux or the diffusion of small arms. Besides these political issues, economic interests also came into play, since armed conflicts lead to the disruption of markets and a decrease in profits. Nigeria's role in Liberia, for example, might be explained partially by economic factors. In the end, then, most interventions were examples of *realpolitik*.

Second, the likelihood of military intervention on the part of ECOWAS and SADC was increased by the national interests of the subregional hegemonic power. As we saw, both South Africa and Nigeria have capitalized on their membership in SADC and ECOWAS, respectively, to extract national dividends. As one AU decision-maker pointed out, "if there [are] no national interests involved it is difficult for an RO or SRO to intervene"

(Naison Ngoma, personal communication, Sept. 24, 2007).³² Moreover, given the financial and military challenges of deploying a military force, it would be difficult for a subregion to act effectively with no support from a subregional great power (Chris Ayangafac, personal communication, Sept. 18, 2007). This was evident in Guinea Bissau.

Third, the decisions of African leaders were often based on a personalization of politics and on relationships between heads of state—based either in empathy or animosity. It would be difficult to understand Angola and Zimbabwe's military deployment in the DRC without considering the personal bond between Eduardo dos Santos and Robert Mugabe. The same holds for the good relations between President Babangida and Samuel Doe of Liberia or President Diouf of Senegal and Joao Vieira of Guinea Bissau. In addition to these personal factors, some leaders have also decided to intervene in order to boost their own personal image abroad. Nigerian President Abacha's role in Sierra Leone is a case in point.

Fourth, contrary to the analysis of liberal institutionalism, the decisions to intervene were not based on goals of information-sharing or the maintenance of order. The interventions in the DRC and Lesotho have highlighted the fact that there is a great deal of confusion about what may or may not be legitimately accomplished in the realm of conflict resolution under the auspices of SADC. And there is even greater confusion about when SADC members are acting in concert and when one or two member states act unilaterally and then claim to be acting on behalf of SADC. The same can be said about ECOWAS. The study has shown that no intervention (with the possible exception of the 2003 Liberia action) was based on the greatest possible measure of regional consensus. In fact, the capacity of ECOWAS to provide opportunities for cooperation and to reduce uncertainty in an increasingly complex world has been discredited.

Fifth, the article demonstrates that it is wise to approach with some skepticism the new tendency to delegate responsibilities in conflict management to regional organizations. Hence, this article falls in line with the critical voices of regional conflict management. Diehl, for instance, has pointed out that "regional organizations[,]... especially the UN[,] have some notable disadvantages vis-à-vis global efforts... at conflict management... [They] are ill-designed to conduct enforcement and peacekeeping operations or facilitate judicial solutions to conflicts" (2003:74). In contrast to the fervent apologists of regionalism, the comparative analysis of the article has brought to light some of the shortcomings of these organizations and highlighted the need to remediate some of the limitations of the global-regional security cooperation.

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Notes

1. A regional organization has the operational focus on a region and its membership equates totally or near totally with the region, with no external membership. A subregional organization has the operational focus on a subregion within a "parent region." Its membership equates totally or near totally with

the subregion, with no external membership. On the roles of ROs and SROs see Diehl and Lepgold (2003); Pugh and Sidhu (2003); Graham and Felício (2006); Tavares (2009).

2. For good general studies of the military interventions of ECOWAS and SADC, see Adebajo (2002); Agbu (2006); Prunier (2006); Berghezan and Nkundabagenzi (1999).
3. The NPFL had strong ties with Libya. After being removed for embezzlement by the government of Samuel Doe, Taylor eventually recruited 200 rebels who were sent to Libya for guerilla training at a military base near Trípoli. Taylor and his men received training on how to assemble, disassemble, and fire an AK-47. Some were trained in the use of surface-to-air missiles. The NPFL was funded by Libya to overthrow the Doe regime (see ABC News 2011). Gadhafi's support for a range of West African rebels was believed to be aimed at undermining pro-United States government forces as well as spreading his own influence. Excellent overviews of this intervention are provided by Adebajo (2002, 2004) and Adebajo and Landsburg (2005).
4. The first military mission was deployed by the Organization of African Unity in Chad in 1981.
5. During the operation in Liberia (1990–1997), Nigeria was ruled by Ibrahim Babangida (1985–1993), Ernest Shonekan (1993), and Sani Abacha (1993–1998).
6. One of the best overall discussions of the intervention is provided by Hutchful (1999). See also Ero (2005); Draman and Carment (2003).
7. Chris Ayangafac (Sept. 18, 2007); Alfred Nhema (Sept. 20, 2007). For an articulate discussion on the extension of Nigeria's hegemonic power, see Souaré (2006). Also see Draman and Carment (2003); Adebajo (2002); Bundu (2001); Adibe (1997).
8. On the regionalization of conflicts, see Kanet (1998); Sriram and Nielsen (2004); Tavares (2008); Lake and Morgan (1997); Francis (2006).
9. For more about the threats posed by the humanitarian crisis in Liberia, see Draman and Carment (2003); Kihunah (2005); Aboagye and Bah (2005); Adebajo (2004).
10. In January 1998, following the seizure in Guinea-Bissau of a cache of weapons, a number of officers of the armed forces were arrested on charges of supplying arms to the Casamance separatists. In early February the Minister of Defense announced the dismissal of the Chief of Staff of the armed forces, Brigadier-General Ansumane Mané, on the grounds of dereliction of duty in view of the fact that the weapons impounded in the previous month had been taken from a military depot of the Guinea-Bissau armed forces.

The Casamance conflict is a low-level civil war that has been waged between the government of Senegal and the Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance (MFDC) since 1990 over the question of independence for the Casamance region.

11. Nearly 12,000 of ECOMOG's 13,000 troops came from Nigeria. Ghana and Guinea contributed approximately 600 troops and Mali about 500.
12. More than a half million Sierra Leonean refugees spilled over into neighboring Guinea and Liberia as a result of the civil war.
13. See SADC's Web site: <http://www.sadc>. In the field of international relations, the term *actorness* refers to the identity of those responsible for a particular

action.

14. Final Communiqué of the 1998 SADC Summit.
15. See Malan (1998) for a good overview of the intervention.
16. In Lesotho, it involves the rivers Malibamatso, Matsoku, Senqunyane, and Senqu. In South Africa, it involves the Vaal River.
17. Chris Ayangafac (Sept. 18, 2007); John Makumbe (Oct. 29, 2007); Jan Olsson (Oct. 29, 2007); Kurt Shillinger (Nov. 1, 2007) Gen. Paulino José Macaríngue (Nov. 2, 2007); Len Le Roux (Nov. 5, 2007); Chris Maroleng (Nov. 7, 2007). See also Söderbaum (2003); Baregu and Landsberg (2003); Oosthuizen (2006); Matlosa (2001); Adebajo and Landsberg (2005); Likoti (2007); Schoeman and Muller (2009).
18. In Maseru, the raid targeted the Makoanyane and Ratjomose barracks and the Palace grounds.
19. This danger was mentioned by Chris Ayangafac (Sept. 18, 2007); Kurt Shillinger (Nov. 1, 2007); Gen. Paulino José Macaríngue (Nov. 2, 2007); and Zabantu Ngcobo (Nov. 7, 2007). See also Matlosa (2001); Selinyane (2006).
20. Chris Ayangafac (Sept. 18, 2007); Alfred Nhema (Sept. 20, 2007); Anonymous, Botswana Embassy, Ethiopia (Sept. 25, 2007). See also Vale (2003).
21. Ibbo Mandaza (Oct. 25, 2007); Gen. Paulino José Macaríngue (Nov. 2, 2007); Chris Maroleng (Nov. 7, 2007). Rupiya (2002) also takes this position. Taking the position in favor of economic motives, however, are Prunier (2006) and Ngoma (2005). One of the rebels fighting Kabika—the Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie (RCD)—also issued a statement on September 10, 1998, in which they contended that Zimbabwe's decision to intervene in the DRC was based on the "fear of Zimbabwean investors that their money already invested in Congo could be lost" (quoted in Mandaza 1999:35).
22. The subservience of Kabila to the interests of Rwanda and Uganda could be illustrated, for example, by the nomination of Gen. James Kabarebe as chief of the general staff of the new Congolese Army. General Kabarebe is a Rwanda national and, currently, chief of staff of Rwanda's defense forces.
23. Anonymous, Botswana Embassy, Ethiopia (Sept. 25, 2007); M. Diallo Bino (Oct. 8, 2007); Anonymous, United Kingdom Embassy, Zimbabwe (Oct. 24, 2007); John Makumbe (Oct. 29, 2007); Jan Olsson (Oct. 29, 2007); Tom Wheeler (Nov. 1, 2007); Kurt Shillinger (Nov. 1, 2007); Anonymous, French Embassy, South America (Nov. 6, 2007); Chris Maroleng (Nov. 7, 2007); Col. A. T. Jibrin (Dec. 7, 2007). See also Nathan (2002).
24. Chris Ayangafac (Sept. 18, 2007); Anonymous (Botswana Embassy, Ethiopia, Sept. 25, 2007); Anonymous (United Kingdom Embassy, Zimbabwe, Oct. 24, 2007). See also Francis (2006); Compagnon (2001).
25. The following commented on the Mugabe–Mandela competition: Ibbo Mandaza (Oct. 25, 2007); Anonymous, European Commission Delegation to Zimbabwe (Oct. 29, 2007); Tom Wheeler (Nov. 1, 2007); Gen. Paulino José Macaríngue (Nov. 2, 2007); Anonymous, French Embassy in South America (Nov. 6, 2007); Chris Maroleng (Nov. 7, 2007); see also ISS (2004); Breytenbach et al. (1999). On Mugabe's wish to challenge South Africa as the leading economy, see Berghezán and Nkundabagenzi (1999); Compagnon (2001).
26. Frontline States (FLS) was an organization established to achieve black majority rule in South Africa. It no longer exists. Former members included Angola,

- Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.
27. This was a point of view expressed by Anonymous, United Kingdom Embassy, Zimbabwe (Oct. 24, 2007); John Makumbe (Oct. 29, 2007); Gen. Paulino José Macaríngue (Nov. 2, 2007); and Chris Maroleng (Nov. 7, 2007). See also Oosthuizen (2006).
 28. The strong political affinity between Zimbabwe and Angola could be illustrated by the current presence of Angolan military advisers in President Mugabe's decision-making structures.
 29. M. Diallo Bino (Oct. 8, 2007); John Makumbe (Oct. 29, 2007); Jan Olsson (Oct. 29, 2007); Kurt Shillinger (Nov. 1, 2007); Chris Maroleng (Nov. 7, 2007). See also Mandaza (1999); Oosthuizen (2006); Turner (2002).
 30. See also Francis (2006); Turner (2002); ICG (2000).
 31. Laurent Kabila's entourage, for instance, included (1) Joseph Kabila (Laurent Kabila's son), who was chief of defense forces of the DRC and had been trained in the Angolan defense forces; (2) General Celestin Kifwa, brother-in-law of Laurent-Kabila, the inspector general of the police, and a former general in the Angolan Army; (3) Commandant Jean-Claude Kifwa, son of General Celestin Kifwa and Kabila's nephew and second in command to Brigadier General Nawesh, the head of the Forces d'Intervention de la Capitale (FIC); (4) Brigadier General Jean Yav Nawesh, Kabila's brother-in-law, a former general in the Angolan Army and head of the army brigade based in Kinshasa that merged the troops of the capital's 7th Military Region with the Presidential Guard (Groupe Special de Sécurité Présidentielle or GSSP); and (5) Pierre Victor Mpoyo, minister of state without portfolio, former minister of petroleum, a close friend to Angolan President Eduardo Dos Santos, former financier of the AFDL, and connected by business ties with the Mugabe regime (see ICG 2000).
 32. Along the same lines the director of the AU Peace and Security Department pointed out that "national interests play a role in the regional game and we have to know how to articulate them" (Geofrey Mugumya, personal communication, Sept. 25, 2007).