

Nation-States and the challenges of regional integration in West Africa

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Résumé ou extrait : La 4e de couv. indique : "The positive role of ECOWAS and its military-security arm ECOMOG in bringing to an end the decade-long bloody civil war in Sierra Leone, restoring democratic governance and the rule of law, has brought to the fore the value, legitimacy and impact of regional integration and co-operation in West Africa. In simple terms, ECOWAS and ECOMOG are widely (though not universally) acclaimed as "saviours" and "heroes" in Sierra Leone. But despite this popular acclaim, no serious effort has been made by researchers, political actors, policy practitioners or regional leaders to engage, on a long-term basis, with how regional integration could be used as an engine of national and regional development, faced with the opportunities and challenges of contemporary globalisation; how to identify the critical everyday issues that affect the human and societal security of the local populace; or how to use the regional integration processes to find solutions to the myriad

problems faced on a daily basis by people of the sub-region. Infact, as Sierra Leone celebrates the 50th anniversary of political independence from British colonial rule, there is a noticeable absence of any focus on ECOWAS and West African integration and co-operation by the political leaders and academic community. The general lack of policy dialogue and critical engagement among researchers, political actors, policy practitioners and regional leaders has made it difficult, if not impossible, for rigorous evidence-based research to influence policy on the West African integration processes. Under the auspices of UNESCO's Management of Social Transformations (MOSn Programme, a series of multidisciplinary seminars took place in each of the fifteen ECOWAS states to foster dialogue between resear© chers and political, economic, and social decision-makers for a better understanding of the issues at stake. This book is the result of one such seminar, and of a series of separately commissioned papers by Sierra Leonean researchers from diverse disciplinary backgrounds."

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