Chapter 18
Breaking the Incubus? The Tripartite Free Trade Agreements and the Prospects of Developmental Integration in Africa

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Introduction

Since gaining political independence from the late 1950s, political leaders have recognized the imperative of cooperation through the integration of institutions, policies and strategies as a means of achieving development. Leading post-independent political leaders like Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, Nnamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria, Modibo Keita of Mali, among others, emphasized the necessity of unity and integration to the search for development on the continent. This perspective is informed by the logic of shared experience of oppression, brutality and exploitation which Africans have suffered in their relations with former colonial masters such as Germany, France, Britain, Belgium and Portugal. The expectation that the political and economic integration of the continent can lead to development was informed by the historical trajectories of the continent, the collective struggle to end official colonialism and the continuing unequal power relations between Africa and the former colonizers. Historically, scholars have argued that Africans related among themselves before the forceful and artificial bifurcation of the continent at the Berlin Conference of 1884/1885. For instance, Zeleza (1993) argues that precolonial African kingdoms and societies developed strong networks of trade relations and routes through which they traded with one another. At the political level, Nkrumah's famous aphorism that the independence of Ghana would mean nothing without the independence of other African countries reinforced the high level of collaboration that existed among African countries in the struggle to decolonize the continent.

Scholars like Ndlovu-Gatshenie (2013) and Ki-Zerbo (2005) show how Pan Africanism provided the rallying point for anti-colonial struggles until the last vestige of colonial control was upended in apartheid South Africa in 1994. Paradoxically,

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O. Akanle, J.O. Adésìnà (eds.), *The Development of Africa*, Social Indicators Research Series 71, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-66242-8_18

the high hope for freedom and liberation that informed the anti-colonial struggles has been conflated with emancipation in the sense that the political freedom was not backed up by economic power or freedom for Africans. As Mazrui (1999) argues, the economic challenges faced by the majority of African countries after independence undermined Kwame Nkrumah's euphoria of 'seek ye first the political kingdom and all other things shall be added to it'. Indeed, in what will pass for the continuity of colonial economic structures in which African countries are trapped in an unequally designed international division of labor, the composition and direction of trade and investment on the continent remain tied to the former colonial masters. To elaborate, five decades after gaining political independence, imports and exports in Africa have been geared toward satisfying the markets of the developed countries both in terms of exporting raw materials and importing manufactured products.

The overall result of this unequal exchange has been a disarticulated economic structure whose health and vitality are determined by what happens in the developed economies. These challenges have been worsened by the weakening capacity of the state, which the neoliberal globalization processes fostered in Africa from the 1980s (Ajulu 2010). To be sure, the state in Africa was not designed with any inherent capacity to foster development. Rather, by its violent, statist, autocratic and dependent nature, it was created by the colonialists as an institution of extraction, exploitation and domination (Ake 1980). The purpose of the colonial state was in synchronization with the logic and philosophy of colonialism as a system of exploitation of the periphery by the metropoles. An irrefutable justification of this logic was the manner in which the colonialists organized the economy of the colonies in ways that ensured that the latter are designed to permanently export raw materials to the former. At the political level, the use of force to force people into wage labor and pay colonial tax, the perfection of divide and rule were other clear manifestations of the anti-developmental objectives of the colonialists (Mamdani 1996). Although the formal colonial structure of governance appeared to have ended with independence, the neocolonial state continues to manifest all the features of the logic of colonialism (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013; Amin 2002; Gana 1985; Ake 1985). This peculiar nature of the state in Africa has affected its capacity to formulate and implement development strategies that have bearing on the aspirations of the majority of the citizens for a better life. Paradoxically, with very few exceptions, postcolonial African leaders have continued in the trajectory of the colonialists of using the state as a means of personal accumulation. Scholars such as Taylor (2014), Ake (1996) and Shivji (1980) argue that the postcolonial elites in Africa lack hegemony, coherence, imagination and ideology of development. Although there are a few instances such as in Tanzania under former President Julius Nyerere, and Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana and Thomas Sankara of Burkina Faso, where deliberate efforts were made to pursue an indigenous developmental approach, many leaders on the continent only see politics as a means of survival.

The failure of leadership at the national level and the continued revolutionary pressures from below necessitate the search for alternative or complementary governance architecture for development in Africa. Other than the ideational and political considerations that informed efforts at regional integration, the need to foster economic agglomeration through the creation of market access, as well as security concerns, have been critical factors.

Major continental development agendas such as the Lagos Plan of Action and Final Act of Lagos of 1980, the Abuja Treaty of 1991 and the New Partnership for African Development, 2001 all had regional integration as major planks on which development processes should rest. However, owing to a combination of several factors such as the paradox of narrow nationalism and pan-Africanism, which fuel divisions among African political elites on the best approach and sequence of integration, overlapping membership of regional economic communities (RECs), bondage of boundaries, preoccupation with the European integration theoretical approach and active efforts by Western powers to undermine the best efforts, regional integration has not taken root, neither has it delivered on its potentials for development in Africa (Oloruntoba 2016a; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013; Draper 2013; Adedji 2012; Gibb 2009). The implications of the above is that even though there are huge informal trade volumes across the various regions of the continent, formal intra-Africa trade remains a paltry 13% and remains the lowest among other regions in the world (UNECA 2013). As the multilateral governance architecture for the conduct of international trade continues to falter and regional trade agreements proliferate, African leaders have continued to increase the tempo of either negotiating new trade agreements or concluding new ones. The African Union has also continued to support initiatives toward reaching the goal of a Continental Free Trade Area and an eventual African Economic Community by 2017 and 2028, respectively.

One of the ongoing processes of regional integration in Africa is the RECs on the continent, namely, the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the East African Community (EAC). In June 2015, these RECs signed an agreement to form a TFTA, geared to fostering higher intra-Africa trade. With a population of about 632 million people, gross domestic product of about $1.2 trillion and a large land mass four times the size of Europe, the TFTA holds a huge but challenging potential for economic development on the continent. Based on the review of extant literature, this chapter employs the theory of development cooperation at the regional level to analyze the new dimension in regional integration in terms of the prospects, challenges and the implications for full integration in Africa.

Given the sheer scope of the agreement, I examine the extent to which the TFTA can have a spillover effect on other processes toward integration in Africa. Beyond the creation of market access, this chapter also interrogates the development potentials of the new agreements. After this introduction, the next section examines the conceptual underpinnings and contending theories of regional integration, with special focus on Africa. This is followed by past and previous integration efforts as well as the challenges that have affected their optimal performance in fostering closer trade and investment relations across the various regions of the continent. The penultimate section examines the TFTA in terms of its prospects and challenges for integration while the last section concludes the chapter.

Regional Integration: Concept and Theories

Regional integration connotes various meanings depending on the spatial consideration and the disciplinary context of usage. The divergences in the meaning and usage of regionalism or integration pose both epistemological and ontological problems for the concept. Thus among geographers and urban planners, it could be viewed from the perspectives of unifying processes in levels of government within a national border such as provincial and regional governments. Among scholars of political science, economics and international relations, regionalism includes both the integration of institutions and governance processes among geographically contiguous countries and non-contiguous countries that seek cooperation on issues of trade, security and development (Oloruntoba 2016b; Vayrynen 2003; Lee 2003; Mansfield and Milner 1997). Lee (2003, 1) explains regionalism as an arrangement that "encompasses efforts by a group of nations to enhance their economic, political, social or cultural interaction".

Efforts geared towards these objectives can take the form of regional cooperation, market integration, development integration and regional integration. To a certain degree, the ontological foundation for regional integration varies between the old and new regionalism. While the former was essentially informed by security considerations, especially in Europe, the latter considers economic cooperation as imperative for both security and development. In this connection, Harrison (2006, 23) notes that "the new regionalism has undoubtedly emerged with an overt economic focus, drawn out through its close links with institutional economics, economic sociology and evolutionary political economy." Nye (1987) provides a more nuanced conceptualization of regionalism, when he argues that integration groups too many disparate phenomena to be helpful. In order to ensure its conceptual clarity, he recommends that regionalism should be broken down into various dimensions such as economic integration (the formation of a transnational economy), social integration (the formation of a transitional society), and political integration (the formation of a transnational political system) (Nye 1987).

Regionalization has been distinguished from regionalism to mean "an activist element and denotes the empirical process which be defined as a process of change from relative heterogeneity and lack of cooperation towards increased cooperation, integration, convergence, coherence and identity in a variety of fields such as culture, security, economic development and politics, within a given geographical space" (Schulz et al. 2001, 5). What this distinction implies is that regionalization appears to be embracing and encompassing than regionalism. The differences also relate to the scope of the two concepts which have been located within the broad theoretical constructs developed by scholars from various fields. While regionalism may refer to the process of integration, regionalization relates to the outcome.

Apart from the conventional idea of integration in which contiguous states pool institutions and remove barriers to trade, integration has increasingly been defined by the formation of integration agreements by non-contiguous states as a way of creating market access and facilitating non-people factors of production. In this regard, the formation of free trade areas between developed economic blocs such as the European Union and African countries as well as between United States of America and Asian countries is an example of regional integration. Previous engagements with the study of regionalism and regional integration were focused on the role of state actors. These studies also focused on the establishment of institutions in the process of fostering both horizontal and vertical relationships among sovereign states. These early theories were based on the European experience of regional integration. According to Schulz et al. (2001, 7) "theories of regional integration can be grouped into three sets, namely: neorealism; functionalism and institutionalism; and regional economic integration." Realist theory views the interstate relations essentially within the prism of power and interests in which strong states have their way at the expense of weaker ones. Realist and neorealist scholars like Mongenthau (1948) and Buzan (1986) underscore the importance of security and the role of state in using power to project and protect its interests in the comity of nations. As Buzan (1986 cited in Schulz et al. 2001, 8) argues:

> A group of weak states forming a security regime because they realised that such an arrangement would strengthen the domestic legitimacy of their regimes, whereas pursuing conflicts among themselves was likely to exacerbate divisions within their fragile domestic structures

This theory underpins the formation of security alliances like the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Organization of America States, among others. Functionalist theorists like David Mitrany emphasize the importance of functional cooperation among states on a sectoral basis in such a way that will minimize costs while ensuring equitability in sharing of benefits among member states in the integrative arrangement. Such cooperation will also lead to avoidance of conflict in the distribution of benefits while leading to gains and economies of scale within given sectors of the economies of the countries involved (Mitrany 1966). Development integration theory differs from market integration in that it sees integration as a means of fostering socioeconomic development with the active involvement of the state. Such involvement will result in the redistribution of income and benefits to those who are previously excluded (Lee 2003). Regional integration theory has also been developed to explain regionalism. It differs from market integration in that

> … while formal institutions are necessary to oversee the linear progression of the various phases of integration, regional integration does not necessarily require formal institutional structures, nor is there necessarily a linear progressions of integration. In the case of the latter, integration is assessed by the amount of economic, political. Social and cultural interaction transpires between member states. It does not require all member states to share these activities simultaneously (Haarlov 1997 cited in Lee 2003, 4–5).

Notwithstanding, changes in the process of integration across the world, especially the involvement of civil society actors have spurred new thinking on the multidimensionality of integration. In particular, the New Regionalism Approach (NRA) transcends the traditional state-centric approach to the understanding of integration processes to incorporate the civil society and other informal networks of interactions across regions. It also goes beyond trade integration to incorporate other forms of integration, including cultural interactions, cross-border cartels and criminal networks as parts of the features of regional integration, which dominant literature appears to have neglected. The NRA has been complemented by Networked Political Economy, Private Authority and Regional Identity approaches to the understanding of the emerging dynamics of regional integration and global governance. These approaches were developed by scholars like Cutler et al. (1999),[1] Nye and Donahue (2000),[2] and Lake (2010)[3] to help our understanding of the roles of non-state actors such as civil society, intergovernmental organizations and corporate organizations, as legitimate agents and actors in global governance. Private authority is often referred to as 'governance,' that is, the exercise of authority by an actor over some limited community or issue that often involves multiple authorities (states, civil society, international NGOs, etc.), horizontal networks, and voluntary rules[4] (Iheduru 2012).In the case of West Africa, for instance, Iheduru provides empirical evidence that supports the theoretical standpoint of Networked Political Economy by showing how indigenous African banks are indirectly promoting the pan-Africanist ideal of an integrated continent through the establishment of banks in countries within the sub-region outside the countries of origin. Apart from state actors, these financial institutions exercise some kind of authority and promote regional integration on the continent.

These new approaches to the explanation of integration flows outside the structures of the state could provide deeper illumination of the trajectories of regional integration, especially in Africa where the grand ambition of integration which was promoted by some early post-independence leaders like Kwame Nkrumah has suffered a setback through a combination of domestic and external factors. The debilitating effects of these factors have been exacerbated by the dependent nature of the state and the ethnocentric base of many of the post-independent political leaders whose claim to a pan-Africanist ideal is at best suspect (Ki-zerbo 2005). Lacking in capacity to deliver public good to the majority of their starving citizens, ensconced as peripheral entities within an unequal global division of labor, these political elites have taken refuge in populist nationalistic politics under which they persistently castigate other Africans as undesirable elements who steal local jobs and opportunities that belong to the locals (Nyamnjoh 2006). Recent research has shown that despite the seeming lack of knowledge about the processes of integration at the institutional level, Africans who are not within the elite bracket express interest in

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[1] This relates to work on the private authority of the state.

[2] The work of these authors highlights the importance of non-state actors in the process of building regional integration. This is very important as this adds a new dimension to the study.

[3] Beyond the general narrative that global governance is essentially the preserve of state actors, this work shows that non-state actors play very important roles in the global governance. This perspective provides insight to the role of private institutions in global governance.

[4] This work also shows that private companies can function to achieve political ideologies of the state actors, in this case, the regional expansion of Banks in West Africa are framed within the political ideology of pan-Africanism https://www.tralac.org/images/Resources/Tripartite_FTA/Third_Tripartite_Summit_Communique_10062015.pdf [Accessed 22 September 2016].

an integrated continent (Oloruntoba, Gumede and Kamga, Mokoena, forthcoming). The research shows that regardless of the official obstructions, cross-border flows continue across the various artificial borders created by the colonialists. Non-economic forms of integration have also increased in the form of inter-state marriages and the diffusion of music, dress, food and entertainment across the continent.

Regional Integration: History and Contexts

Integration processes in Africa date back to the pre-colonial times, when European imperial powers, especially Britain and France, forcibly stuck together previously autonomous nations and kingdoms. As Adedeji (2012, 87) argues,

> … almost all the fifty four African states and territories are the product of some form of integration brought about by European colonial rule. Nigeria for instance, was an integrative arrangement championed by British Governor Lord Lugard, who in 1914 amalgamated the protectorate of Northern and Southern Nigeria into a single political entity. Similar and even more grand forms of integration were adopted by the French colonial government which 'grouped its twelve territories into two federations—the French West Africa Federation (Afrique Occidentale Francaise, AOF) and the French Equatorial Africa (Afrique Equatoriale Francaise, AEF).

In Southern and Central Africa, the colonial settler governments also formed the federation of central Africa as well as Rhodesia and Nyasaland (Oloruntoba 2016b). There is no doubt that these groupings facilitated easier administration and cheaper costs for the colonialists. However, regardless of the political and economic potentials that the groupings had for socioeconomic development of post-independent Africa, the colonialists, on the eve of their departures, dissolved these integration arrangements by returning the arbitrary borders drawn at the 1884/1885 conference in Berlin. As Ki-Zerbo (2005) argues, the artificial borders have led to wars, conflicts and crisis since independence.

Post-independent African leaders have not lacked initiatives towards regional integration. In the 1960s, British West African countries planned various integrative schemes including the aborted federations of Senegambia. In 1960s, West African leaders such as Eyadema of Togo and Yakubu Gowon of Nigeria also worked with other leaders in the sub-region to establish Economic Community of West African States in 1975 (Oloruntoba 2016b). Before this, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa had mobilized African leaders towards forming integration arrangements that could give African countries a basis for achieving greater volumes of trade and greater voice at the multilateral level of negotiations. Thus, in the 1980s, African leaders met in Lagos to adopt the Lagos Plan of Action and the Final Acts of Lagos, with regional integration and self-reliance as key strategies for the socioeconomic development of the continent. As Adedeji further notes, the Lagos Plan of Action specifically called on African leaders to establish their own RECs (2012, 96).

The Lagos Plan of Action of 1980 was followed by the Abuja Treaty of 1991 which established the African Economic Community (AEC) was to be achieved by building on the regional economic communities. In order to achieve this objective, eight RECs were recognized by the leaders. These included the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA, 19 states), the Economic Community of Central and Eastern African States (ECCAS, 11 states), the Southern African Development Community (SADC, 15 states), the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD, 24 states), the Economic Community of West African States, ECOWAS, 15 states), the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD, seven states), the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) and the East African Community (EAC). The formation of the African Union in 2002 and the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) also consider regional integration as necessary for achieving socioeconomic development on the continent.

These initiatives were part of the processes of seeking to transform the continent from its parlous conditions into a more relevant actor in the international community. Given the peculiar conditions of the continent in terms of underdevelopment and the micro nature of the state after independence, regional integration was considered to be a strategic approach to addressing these challenges and bringing about development. Adedeji (2012, 98) puts it in proper perspective thus:

> It will be clear … that the experiences to which Africa was subjected by Europe—particularly the continent's partition, and the century of colonialism; the persistence and pervasiveness of separatism and irredentism that made it easy for colonialism to exists and thrive as well as to divide and dominate Africa and deepen its Balkanization; the pervasive underdevelopment of Africa; and the emergence of large number of miniscule states, many of which are also landlocked—all rendered regionalism in Africa a strategic tool for survival, revival and transformation

What emerged from the preceding session is that regional integration has been on the agenda of African leaders since independence. However, the lofty objectives, which it was meant to achieve, have not been achieved. Several scholars such as Oloruntoba (2016a), Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013), Asante (1995) Draper (2013) and Adedeji (2012) among others have argued that the failure of regional integration initiatives in Africa is informed by a plethora of both domestic and external factors. These factors can be further categorized as economic and political. The economic factors include the disarticulated economic structures (defined by small and underdeveloped markets), lack of agglomeration, low level of cross-continental infrastructure, overlapping membership (with one country belonging to at least two RECs) over-emphasis on raw material export and external orientation of economic activities. The political factors are both internal and external. The former include lack of genuine commitment to regional integration by political leaders due to the consideration for narrow nationalism and appeal to populist sentiments (Prah 1999).

This singular factor has been responsible for the failure to implement most of the protocols and treaties that have been agreed upon at various summits on boosting regional integration on the continent. The political differences that have existed since the early 1960s when the political leaders were divided into three groups, namely, the Casablanca, Monrovia and Brazzaville, on the basis of the speed and sequence of unification of Africa are also borne out of the lack of genuine commitment to the integration and unity of the continent. Paradoxically, this half-hearted commitment continues today as many of the countries not only fail to ratify or implement agreed treaties, but are in arrears on the payment of annual dues to both the African Union, which superintends the continental integration, and the RECs (Asante 1995; Nabudere 2001). Lack of contributions from member countries has resulted in a situation in which donors are responsible for over 50% of the budget of both the African Union Commission and some RECs, with the result that the interests of such donors receive priority on trade and other matters.

The low capacity of the RECs, in which mostly junior political officers are posted to represent member countries, further shows that while there is so much talk about regional integration, the commitment at the state level has continued to be an issue. Perhaps this lackluster approach is largely responsible for the ease with which the external powers, especially France, have continued to exercise the practice of divide and rule on the continent. More than half a century after gaining political independence, the Francophone countries appear to be more inclined to relating with France on economic and political issues than with their African counterparts. Although the European Union would appear to be helping and facilitating regional integration on the continent, the actual operations of this very influential economic bloc appear to be further fragmenting the continent. For example, even though it was one of the stated intentions of the EU that negotiations of the economic partnership agreements will be done on a regional basis as a means of promoting regional integration in Africa, the actual negotiation process has only led to further bifurcation of the continent as bilateral EPA negotiations eventually replaced regional EPA negotiations in quick succession (see Meyn 2012). Given the above mentioned challenges, meeting the goals of an African Economic Community and Common Market of Africa by 2017 and 2028, respectively, appears to be unlikely. It is in the context of the contradictions of expectations and realities that the signing of the TFTA by three of the largest RECs in June 2015 merits a close interrogation.

Tripartite Free Trade Agreements: A New Hope on the Horizon?

The signing of the TFTA by the three regional economic groupings in June 2015 could represent a new dimension in the integration agenda of Africa. Indeed, viewed within the broader integration objectives of the African Union, the TFTA could be a building block for establishing the long-expected Continental Free Trade Area by 2017 and the common market by 2020 (Erasmus and Harzenberg 2012). The decision to form the TFTA under the Cape to Cairo initiative was taken at the Kampala Tripartite Summit of October 2008 by the Heads of State and Government. In 2011, the leaders of the three RECs also met and signed a declaration launching negotiations for the establishment if the COMESA-EAC-SADC Free Trade Area. The 2011

Summit made a declaration which emphasized that member states had "adopted a developmental approach to the Tripartite integration process that will be anchored on three pillars namely, market integration based on the Tripartite Free Trade Area; infrastructure Development to enhance connectivity and reduce costs of doing business as well as Industrial Development to address the productive capacity constraints" (Erasmus and Harzenberg 2012, 3).

As stated above, the TFTA was adopted by the Heads of State and Government or their authorized representatives during the Tripartite Summit on 10 June 2015 at Sharm El Sheikh in Egypt. Article 3 of the Tripartite Agreement states its general objectives to include the following:

1. To promote the rapid social economic development of the people of the region through job and wealth creation and the elimination of poverty, hunger and disease, through building skills, innovativeness and hard and soft infrastructures and through improving the locations of factors of production for sustainable generation of local, regional and foreign investment and trade opportunities
2. To create a larger single internal market with free movement of goods and services and business persons and eventually to establish a customs union and a common market
3. To mitigate the problem of multiple membership and expedite the regional and continental integration process
4. To build a strong people-based Tripartite Community, and
5. To promote close cooperation in all sectors of economic and social activities (Tralac 2015).

Although there are other specific objectives of the Tripartite Community, which deal with issues of tariff removal, rules of origin, market access and so on, my analysis is limited to the above general objectives in terms of the possible prospects and challenges of using the TFTA as a springboard for fostering continental integration on the continent. To start with, out of the 26 member states, 24 have ratified the declaration (the only exceptions being Eritrea and Libya), while 17 have signed. It is significant that most of the countries that have signed cut across the three regional economic communities. The general objectives of the TFTA are central to the realization of the African Economic Community as well as the common market as envisaged by the Abuja Treaty of 1991 and the Constitutive Act of African Union of 2002. For instance, the issue of infrastructure is critical to fostering integration on the continent. Lack of good transportation networks in terms of rail, air and road has hindered the ease with which goods and services flow across the continent.

Recognition of the importance of infrastructure and a general commitment to funding can help to accelerate the pace of integration in Africa. Creation of markets, which is the second objective of the TFTA, also strikes at the heart of one of the challenges of integration. Scholars like Draper (2013) and Collier and Venables (2008) have argued that the small markets in African countries are disincentives to vertical integration. They argue that African countries should rather continue to trade with the West as the latter has wider and deeper markets. The argument that the market in Africa is small flows from official statistics which mask the huge volume of trade that takes place at the informal sector. Thus, a commitment by political leaders and in this case the private sector[5] to integrate a market that consists of over 600 million people could be a step in the right direction towards harnessing the over 1 billion market that the whole continent has grown to become. Rather than the external orientation of exports and imports which have defined the structure of trade in Africa since colonial times, this new agenda to create an internal market could yet change the direction of trade and the impacts that trade could have on the overall economic development of the participating countries.

The three other objectives, which deal with addressing overlapping membership, building a strong people-based Tripartite Community and fostering sectoral cooperation both in the economic and social spheres, are critical to successful integration of the continent. Their uniqueness is in their departure from the previous integration arrangements which were only concerned with removal of tariffs on imports (UNECA 2012). By promoting people to people integration and mainstreaming the social with the economic, the TFTA may be leading the way to the ideals of pan-Africanism on which the eventual renaissance and transformation of Africa tenuously hangs (see Prah 2006, 2001; Ki-zerbo 2005; Nkrumah 1963).

While these objectives and the well-targeted actions hold strong potential and give cause for optimism, greater challenges lie ahead on the actual implementation of the agreements. Apart from the need to ensure continuous political commitment, the huge requirements in terms of funding, especially infrastructure; concern over transfer of sovereign control of exchange rate and trade policy, complementarity of institutions, adjudicatory and enforcement capacity of regional courts, building institutional capacity, harmonizing monetary systems, rule of origin and managing the disparity in the cost and benefits among member states are capable of stifling the possibilities of fully implementing the agreements. As Erasmus and Hartzenberg (2012, 5) caution, "the establishment of the T-FTA will have to accommodate separate legal and institutional arrangements (including secretariats and regional courts) as well as national designs for domesticating and implementing existing legal instruments on regional trade." Also in view of the overt declaration that the T-TFTA has industrialization as one of its key components, how the member states carry out the harmonization of the various industrial policies to a regional one will be a task that must be given due consideration.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the travails and the prospects of regional integration in Africa within the context of the TFTA. I argue that regional integration arrangements in Africa predate political independence as the colonialists formed various

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[5] The private sector from the three Regional Economic Communities met in Rwanda in February 2016 to express the view and recommendations on how the Tripartite Agreements can be of benefit to them.

integration schemes as means of reducing the cost governance. The chapter also showed that, among others, lack of political commitment among African leaders has contributed to the delay in achieving integration not only because of the refusal of many of them ratify agreements but also because they willingly become tools in the hands of neo-imperial forces that are bent on keeping Africa divided. Despite the challenges, it is heartening that regional integration has remained on the agenda since independence. In what UNECA (2013) would refer to as new momentum in this process, the African Union Commission has put in place various initiatives which are geared towards achieving an African Economic Community and a Common Market by 2017 and 2028 respectively.

Among the ongoing processes is the TFTA, which involves the formation of a Free Trade Area and eventual common market among three RECs, namely, COMESA, SADC and EAC. Given the general and the specific objectives of the TFTA, there are high prospects that it may be able to break the incubus of failed integration arrangements in Africa. Although the challenges remain huge, the involvement of the private sector and civil society organizations can bridge the gap in the previous integration Schemes. I also argue that the inclusion of a social element in the TFTA may well be the key to making it different from past integrative processes on the continent. Beyond market access, which has been the preoccupation of previous regional integration efforts, a commitment to industrialization and developmental regionalism under the TFTA could help in ensuring a successful integrative outcome. Lastly, the sustenance of the current political commitment, effective communication of the benefits of integration to the various segments of the society, large financial outlay (which can come from the private sector and multilateral financial institutions) and the alignment of institutions are key requirements for the success of regional integration in Africa. In other words, if the TFTA is to succeed, the above-mentioned recommendations should be taken seriously by all the stakeholders in Africa's development.

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