

People and Society in the Economic Community of West African States, with a Special Focus on Cabo Verde

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Abstract

Africa has been immeasurably featured in scholarly works as a continent of migration. Research on the migration of Africans as well as the broader discourse on migration and mobility has been at the center of African Studies for a long time. This is because Africa is one of the continents in which there is a great deal of mobility, particularly at the internal and regional levels; yet, there are many complaints that many African countries stand in opposition to the migration of people from other African countries into their countries. This paper examines the movement of people within the region of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), with a special focus on Cabo Verde. Thus, the major research question probed in the paper is as follows: Do ECOWAS member countries stand in opposition to the migration of people from other member states? The corollary question to this is the following: Why do ECOWAS member countries stand in opposition to the migration of people from other member states? In order to answer these questions, this paper employs the Functionalist and Neo-functionalist Theories on regional integration, qualitative methodology and the explanatory case study design to test the hypothesis that H₁: The member states of the ECOWAS stand in opposition to one another on the free movement of people in the region. The attendant null hypothesis is that H₀: The member states of the ECOWAS do not stand in opposition to one another on the free movement of people in the region. The substantive findings delineated after the systematic analysis of the available data reveal that the mobility of people in the ECOWAS region is strictly conditioned or facilitated by the borders of each state premised on the set of political and legal frameworks of each member country.

Introduction

The management of migration is one of the most complex challenges for African states. Migration is closely related to the policy process and with the state, especially when the latter seeks to shape or better manage the migration process through policies, and particularly regarding deletion practices (i.e. immigrant admission policies and promotion policies for tolerance practices in the host society) as well as to the representation of people by civil society in the region (Riccio 2001). This management is placed in a different context in the region where ECOWAS member countries have agreed to promote the free movement of persons in order to remove barriers to economic growth.

This paper's main objective is therefore to understand how member states stand in relation to the free movement of persons in the ECOWAS region, with a special focus on Cabo Verde that has demonstrated weaknesses in the management of immigration due to placing its political interests more to Europe. An example is the recent decision of the Cabo Verdean government on the exemption of visas for the countries of the European Union and the United Kingdom, which has led to discussions within the ECOWAS Parliament and, of course, the question that has been raised concerning the political interests and will of Cabo Verde to regional integration.

Consequently, this paper raises the following major research question: Do ECOWAS member countries stand in opposition to the migration of people from other member states? The question that accompanies this is the following: Why do ECOWAS member countries stand in opposition to the migration of people from other member states? To explore these questions, this paper employs the Functionalist and Neo-functionalist Theories on regional integration, qualitative methodology and the explanatory case study design to test the hypothesis that H_1 : The member states of the ECOWAS stand in opposition to one another on the free movement of people in the region. The attendant null hypothesis is that H_0 : The member states of the ECOWAS do not stand in opposition to one another on the free movement of people in the region.

The approach utilized in this paper therefore forces us to employ macro and micro level analytical approaches to empirically examine the topic under investigation. At the macro level, the movement of people within the ECOWAS region is better understood as a phenomenon of African regional integration. At the micro level, the case of Cabo Verde allows us to highlight how a state within the ECOWAS adopts positions that influence the mobility of people within the region and which naturally can limit the participation of civil society in the process of regional integration.

Literature Review

Migration or mobility in Africa dates back to centuries ago, since the trade caravans, the slave routes, etc. Today, migration has taken new forms. This literature review, which follows an exploratory approach, discusses a sample of the works on movement of persons within Africa and the ECOWAS region, and pays particular attention to the case of Cabo Verde.

According to the African Union (AU), it is estimated that over 50 million in a universe of 150 million migrants in the world are Africans. Also, the estimation of the International Labor Organization (ILO) is that the number of migrant workers in Africa constitutes one-fifth of the world's total and that, probably, by 2025, one in ten Africans may live and work out of his/her country of origin (AU 2008).

Migration on the continent in large scale is between neighboring countries that usually suffer the shock of the strong migratory pressures linked essentially to conflict and natural disasters experienced by almost the entire continent and welcoming many migrant workers (FIDH 2007). Africa South of the Sahara has seen an increased mobility of people internally (FIDH 2007). Due to the aggravation of poverty and problems linked to the living conditions of the people of the continent, a significant proportion of them choose to migrate.

One of the most visible forms of migration in Africa is linked to the labor issue. According to the AU (2008), in 2003, the average rate of unemployment in Africa South of the Sahara was 10.9%, and 63% of the total unemployed population belonged to the bottom layer. The employment problem in Africa is multidimensional and mirrored in the levels of unemployment, underemployment, informal work, and insecurity that are exorbitant (Canto 2016). Therefore, the dynamics of migration in Africa has significant peculiarities that require explanations and forces an analyst to consider their differences that prevent him/her to effectively impose theoretical explanations derived from other migratory contexts and, similarly, conflate the units of analysis of this phenomenon (Bilger and Kraler 2005).

Migration is a spatial phenomenon that shapes the spaces in different forms of social arrangements. States often sign international treaties or join international organizations that help them in solving problems and finding solutions emanating from migration challenges (Canto 2016).

The African continent has a number of regional organizations that are charged with facilitating the free movement of people within the member states of each region. These regional organizations include the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern (COMESA), the East African Community (EAC), and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) (Omeje 2014).

There is a relative consensus from the perspective on the development of the African continent based on a systematic form in regional integration. It is understood that the ECOWAS is one avenue to effectively boost subsidies for the development of the continent to establish better living conditions of the people (Afadzinu 2015; Owusu 2013; Bilger and Kraler 2005).

The ECOWAS is an example that even having a community bound by regional sharing of political and economic principles, the specific interests of each member country influence positively or negatively the free movement of people in the region and, consequently, the process of regional integration. The interests of the member states and the advantages that are garnered from this relationship by each state overlap significantly with their placements and maintenance of community economic relations. In short, the cooperation among the states happens not exclusively due to the desire to be integrated into the region (Bangura and Sinclair 2012).

Consequently, one can say that the discussions on the issue of regional integration in the ECOWAS region are largely around economic issues and sustainable policies, often informed by the holistic perspective of functionalism. The discourse is more about the logic of the cost versus benefit of the interests of each state and, thus, less about the socio-cultural issues that recognize, and in fact contribute, to the ability of civil society, especially non-governmental organizations as well as social movements, to contribute as actors in the decision-making arenas of regional relations. Thus, this paper in a small way seeks to fill this void.

Theoretical Framework, Research Methodology and Design

As stated earlier, the theoretical framework that guides this paper is based on the Functionalist and Neo-functionalist Theories on regional integration. The focus of this reflection falls on the discussion of the *people* and *civil society* in the region. In this paper, the concept of *people* refers to all the citizens of the member states that constitute the ECOWAS. *Civil society* is a complex concept and 'polysemic' in the African context because of the indeterminacy of the numerous components of what is meant by *society*. However, in this paper, the concept of *civil society* includes all the ordinary citizens of the ECOWAS: that is, it refers to all social relations or social forces formed in organizations and institutions outside the state structures (Kaplan 1994). This definition of civil society is considered as an essential element in the interests, the concerns and the dignity of the people in the region, as well as the initiatives of non-governmental organizations (Kaplan 1994).

The discussion of these concepts in this paper, as aforementioned, is supported by the Functionalist and Neo-functionalist Theories. The Functionalist Theory, from a globalized perspective, assumes that economic interdependence and common economic interests exist because there is the need for the creation of international rules and institutions (Mitrany 1966 and 1975; Bangura and Lamin 2016).

Based on this perspective, the establishment of the ECOWAS hinged upon ‘two fundamental ideas: (1) several countries linked by geography and (2) a certain degree of interdependence or a geographic area that is not the state (ECOWAS) but has characteristics like a state’s economic policy, promoting the public good, and sovereignty’ (Tolentino 2011:19).

The Functionalist Theory brings up the idea that an integration process begins due to a specific problem that is shared among states of the same region and having positive results in its resolution. The tendency would be to strengthen cooperation and expand it to other areas of conflict. This is what Neo-functionalism calls ‘spill over’. The Neo-functionalist Theory has as one of its principal founders Ernst Haas. He suggests the concept of ‘spill over’ to explain the process of integrating that part of a specific core that will extend a region’s scope of practice (Bangura and Lamin 2016). This perspective can be analyzed in the context of the region’s own motivation that led to the creation of the ECOWAS: that is, the community that had initially aimed to promote economic cooperation with a common market in the region to increase competition and negotiation power on the international market widened its purposes to other areas such as social security and political governance, among other sectors (Afadzinu 2015).

This paper is further grounded by the use of qualitative methodology systematically supported by the document analysis approach, which is essential and necessary to compile data and analyze the factors that lead states to integrate into the ECOWAS community and to understand the mechanisms influencing placement or facilitating the free movement of persons. Bangura and McCandless define qualitative methodology as a scientific approach that is utilized to emphasize words in the analysis of a phenomenon (2007:163).

The qualitative research design employed for this study, as stated earlier, is the explanatory case study design. According to Yin (2014), this design is used to answer ‘Why?’ or ‘How?’ questions. In this way, the analysis in this paper focuses on people and civil society in an organized fashion, as well as on the state as an indispensable actor in the ECOWAS region (Bangura and Sinclair 2012).

The principal technique used for collecting the necessary primary and secondary data was the analysis of documents, books, journals, publications in newspapers, videos, and a documentary on the debate between experts and members of ECOWAS on regional integration which took place in Cabo Verde. The factors that shaped the choice of this technique are the availability of diverse materials and time constraints.

Data Analysis

The ECOWAS was founded officially on 28 May 1975 composed of 14 West African countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea Conakry, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. Cabo Verde came to be a part of the regional economic community a year later in 1976, bringing the total to 15 member states. The main goal of the regional economic community is the following:

To promote cooperation and development in all fields of economic activity, particularly in the fields of industry, transport, telecommunications, energy, agriculture, natural resources, commerce, monetary and financial issues and in the field of social and cultural affairs with the aim of raising the standard of living of their peoples, increase and maintain economic stability, strengthening relations between their members and contribute to the progress and development of the African continent (Law No. 2/81, Art. 2:2).

The limitations that unfortunately still exist within the member states, which are particularly linked to the reinforcement of legal mechanisms and infrastructures, continue to constitute obstacles to the achievement of the objectives of the agreements. This is because there is still a failure of the ECOWAS agreement to establish a customs union and a common market through the abolition of obstacles to the free movement of goods, people, services, and capital due to the fragility of its institutional and legal structures (Salami 2011; Owusu 2013:28; Iapadre et al. 2013).

The reason why Cabo Verde was chosen as the focal point for this explanatory case study in this region is because it is an insular and archipelagic country with a small territorial dimension which stokes fear into the Cabo Verdean government concerning the movement of people in its state. In addition, it is the only country in the region that has a special partnership with the European Union and has recently adopted a policy of visa exemption for Europeans, which has sparked some debate around this announced decision due to inconsistencies in the discourses that have so far been (re)produced to, in a way, a condition on the entry of people into the ECOWAS region. Thus, the rest of the analysis in this section is organized into thematic subsections that address how a state's positioning (in this case, Cabo Verde) in relation to the protocol on the free movement of persons conditions the people and initiatives of civil society, culminating into an inconsistent process of regional integration.

Legal and Political Framework: Treaties and Protocols on the Free Movement of People

This subsection reflects on the position of states or the mechanisms that might ‘escape’ the assumptions set out in protocols and/or treaties. The ECOWAS adopted in 1979 a protocol on the free movement of persons that confers the status of community citizenship to all the individual member states in order to abolish all obstacles to freedom of movement and residency within the community. The protocol stipulated for the citizens of the ECOWAS region to move within member countries and allowing them to work and engage in legal commercial and industrial activities (Law No. 2/81, Art. 27).

The community, in fact, won new dynamics with the established agreement to the free movement of citizens of the countries of ECOWAS, as well as the free movement of goods and services within the region. However, the results are still paltry, particularly in terms of increasing commercial or industrial activities among member countries due to a set of constraints directly linked to the protocol of the free movement of people and the participation of civil society. The limitations are associated with the failure to establish social security and political infrastructures strengthened by air and sea connections to allow people to move spontaneously and engage in social initiatives that would yield actual results in the process of regional integration.

The universal model of the need for institutionalization of a regional commission ends caught up in the interests of political and economic cooperation whereby policy measures usually come from the top down. However, the path or route that African regional economic communities take exposes the vital need for greater mobility or movement of people and the engagement of the corporate initiatives in this process. So, if a regional community wants healthier integration with economic growth, then members must work on improving living conditions and social development. It is therefore necessary to consider the cultural aspects of the communities of the region. These cultural aspects should not be produced only by companies that are a part of this process, but also by the people who are also a part of the region.

Non-governmental actors, the people, and civil society are vital to the states. In fact, the state is born within civil society and in the context of a country’s ‘PivotTable’: that is, the practices of persons are incorporated into social and national interests that give meaning to the state, which in turn empowers the state in the regional community to which it belongs. This is why regional integration in the ECOWAS region should be understood in a multidimensional perspective that encompasses not only economic aspects, but also political, social and cultural rights, extrapolating the goal of creating free trade regimes and security pacts, as well as the ideals of political purposes in an interest relationship (Duarte 2015).

In fact, civil society and the people of the region play a role, if not a decisive one, in regional integration and in the consequent sharing of sovereignty among the member states. Social initiatives, particularly those launched by non-governmental organizations, generate economic and political spillovers that bring continuity to the integration process.

Although Africa South of the Sahara has a greater contingent of people in mobility, ECOWAS being a relatively young regional economic community faces many difficulties in its desired integration goal (Canto 2016). Thus, in the extension of social interactions—political, cultural, commercial, and religious, among others—the people and civil society deserve absolute priority in activities at the national, regional and international levels (Iapadre et al. 2013).

Destination Preferences of the People from States Members of ECOWAS: Implications on the National Context of the Receiving Country

Intraregional migration has been central to economic growth and livelihoods in the ECOWAS region. However, while recognizing the indispensable role of migration and mobility of people in the development of the region, policies are still not able to address the various challenges to ensure that intraregional migration in West Africa produces positive results for people and for civil society. Although the member states have agreed to equal treatment of migrant workers as citizens of the member states, still the mobility of persons intending to reside in some member states is perceived to constitute threats to the national interests of those states.

In this subsection, an analysis is provided on how the preferential choices of people for certain countries are addressed vis-à-vis the political, social and cultural position of a receiving state. People who leave preferentially for a country are influenced by several factors, such as proximity to the country, historical relations, political and economic stability of the country, family networks, the language issues, and bilateral agreements between countries, among others. The destinations of migrants have been mainly the countries with which they share political, historical and cultural ties (Teye et al. 2015).

In Côte d'Ivoire, for instance, about 55.8 percent of ECOWAS migrants come from Burkina Faso and 63.2 percent of those living in Cabo Verde come from Guinea-Bissau (Awumbila et al. 2014; Teye et al. 2015). The people who chose to migrate to these countries were influenced mainly by the historical reasons shared between the countries. Likewise, migration between Benin and Nigeria is also influenced by proximity and historical ties (Awumbila et al. 2014; Teye et al. 2015). No less important, official language also explains why migrants from Ghana are going to Nigeria and vice versa. The numbers of immigrants grow in these countries often due to the family networks that are established there that allow other family members or friends to emigrate under the conditions that have already been developed (Awumbila et al. 2014; Teye et al. 2015).

As these preferences lead to very large numbers of people flowing into some countries, these countries begin to feel some threat regarding economic self-sufficiency, particularly employment and housing. Often, the reluctance of ECOWAS member states is encouraged by their own nationals who feel threatened by the considerable influx of immigrants (Rocha 2009; Canto 2016).

In general, the restriction measures that member states implement are mostly linked to employment issues. These measures range from border controls to the expulsion of immigrants. In any case, people who migrate within their region are discriminated against and seen as a threat. For example, 'in early 1979, Togolese farmers were expelled from Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire. The largest case of mass expulsion of undocumented aliens took place in Nigeria in 1983 and 1985' (Adepoju 2005; Teye et al. 2015:116). Moreover, immigrants are affected by restrictions that prevent them from having the same privileges as citizens. The following is an example:

Foreigners in Ghana and Togo, including those from ECOWAS member states, cannot work in sensitive security services. In Mali, foreigners cannot hold any employment in the public service. Again, in Ghana, by law (Section 18 of the Ghana Investment Promotion Centre Act, act 478 of 1994), certain enterprises are wholly reserved for Ghanaian nationals (Teye et al. 2015:115).

These sets of restrictions on the free movement of persons and greater exchange with ECOWAS civil society therefore undermine the more general regional principles and objectives defined in the protocol on free movement which stipulates that ECOWAS citizens wishing to engage in activities shall be subject to the same laws as nationals of the member state of destination.

All this is due to the fact that the protocol in ECOWAS' Article 4 allows the member states in their national legal frameworks to adopt a mechanism to refuse and/or place a condition on the entry into their territory of citizens of the community considered inadmissible. We will now look at the case of Cabo Verde for specificities on the issue.

Cabo Verde as a Case Study

Reflecting on people and civil society in ECOWAS is very important for this discussion. This is because the significant economic and political gains that can come from free movement are often the result of civil society initiatives and the mobility of people within the region.

However, in addition to the legislative mechanisms set up within a country or regional organization's political framework, it is also necessary to examine how the laws themselves passively allow states to establish legal mechanisms at the internal level to condition a policy—in this case, the free movement of persons within ECOWAS. This legislative loophole relates to Article 4 of Part II of the Protocol on Freedom of Movement, reiterating that 'Member States shall reserve the right to refuse admission into their territory to any Community' (Protocol A/P.1/5/79:3). Accordingly, each state has the space to create laws and regulations to determine a category of inadmissible immigrants in its territory and, thus, to condition the entry of the people of ECOWAS (Furtado 2016).

In this sense, the specific case of Cabo Verde is discussed in terms of some mechanisms inside and outside the legislative framework that condition the entry of citizens of the region. The idea is to demonstrate that the position of the regional states of being committed to the interests of the ECOWAS and at the same time independent of them to defend national interests, facilitated by the legal terms, hamper the process of regional integration in the context of the free movement of persons (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2005).

Several studies (Rocha 2009; Gomes 2010; Canto, 2016) have shown that the people of the ECOWAS region are treated differently by Cabo Verdean authorities compared to other foreigners/European immigrants, and when they arrive at the border they undergo several bureaucratic tests with often exaggerated demands. They are therefore persons who, while having the right to free movement, previously based on the assumption that cooperation between member states around migration could promote the transfer of skills, knowledge, and resources, are left out of the integration process (Teye et al. 2015).

In Cabo Verde, migrants are often intimidated and forced to make unofficial payments to enter the country. This practice was revealed during a television show aired in Cabo Verde as follows:

African migrants believe that the ECOWAS protocol is not being better applied. The perception of immigrants is that they are not benefiting from the facilities set out in the protocol on freedom of movement, particularly about the refusal to enter the border, the means of subsistence required and the delay in the design of documents for regularization (Advisor to the President of the Republic for Legal Affairs, Cabo Verde Television 2012).¹

The restrictions imposed by the state of Cabo Verde vis-à-vis the protocol of free movement of persons to the country are not recent. The preceding report shows how the free movement protocol is in fact violated by the restrictions that a state imposes within the national political framework according to its interests which is undermining the process of regional integration. The following is another example:

A woman from Guinea-Bissau was arrested for two days at the airport because she was confronted with paying a thousand euros if she wanted to enter the country. A situation that involved his brother who addressed the director of the Foreigners and Borders Directorate (DEF) and even having fulfilled all the requirements that allowed his sister's entry, had to declare to the police that he could pay the amount. To prove that he had the amount to make the payment would have to have his banking stratum, which would imply his immediate displacement to a bank. Given that it was a Friday and it was approaching 3:00 p.m., if the brother had not arrived in time to have the stratum and deliver it to the authorities at the border, the sister would run the risk to remain trapped.²

The positions of restrictions that Cabo Verde has taken against West African immigrants are essentially underpinned by the political discourses of the country's inability to welcome the people of the region. However, this issue has taken on new dimensions in the context of the recent takeover of the government's political decision on visa exemptions for Europeans and the United Kingdom supported by the speeches of greater tourist attraction and greater flexibility of foreign direct investment. This is because in addition to tourism as the main sector of Cabo Verde's economic growth, with a direct effect of 20.04% on GDP growth, Europeans are the main investors in the country (Instituto Nacional de Estatística 2016).

Nonetheless, this measure also has caused internal discussions with positions against and in support of the measure by political analysts and major political figures like ex-combatants and former ruler Pedro Verona Pires, drawing attention to the fact that the country 'cannot have a foot on each side and focus your attention on regional integration' (*A Nação* April 10, 2017). In this way, the current President of the Republic of Cabo Verde drew attention to how the news is communicated to civil society, stating 'that any action be taken in politics and out of politics, if there is effective communication, it can emerge as something inappropriate, inappropriate or even meaningless' (*Inforpress* April 19, 2017). In addition, he advances the notion that 'decisions can be taken unilaterally, but normally, they say that in politics there is no free lunch' (*Inforpress* April 19, 2017).

Mentor José Maria Neves, Professor at the University Cabo Verde and the owner of the 'José Maria Neves Foundation for Governance', was himself a member of a previous government of Cabo Verde who managed to establish a special partnership with the European Union. Former Prime Minister José Maria Neves rebuked the government's unilateral decision, characterizing it as 'an absurd measure that doesn't make any sense, therefore, stressing that neither the Europeans, eventually caught by surprise, will understand this measure' (*Expresso das Ilhas* April 12, 2017). In a stronger tone, former Prime Minister of Cabo Verde and President of the Chamber of tourism António Gualberto do Rosário, who previously had positioned himself in favor of the policy, backed down and stated the following:

I was an advocate of the abolition of visas for citizens of the Schengen area, but after reading the statements by the Ambassador of the Union on the subject, I'm not. I defended the abolition of visas because they sold me a fish: reciprocity. That is, what was going to happen in three stages: first, the unilateral abolition by Cabo Verde; the second, a programmed of technical and financial assistance, guaranteed by the European Union, to securing our borders; the third, the abolition of visas for the Europe of Schengen area, the Cabo Verdean citizens. And I sold this fish to a lot of people. All my apologies (*A Semana* 07 may, 2017).

These positions against, in some form shared by a good part of civil society, are due to the unilateral nature of the decision by the government of Cabo Verde and no reciprocity by the European Union, which Cabo Verdeans decry as a violation of the principle of political reciprocity in the constitution of their country (Law Constitutional n° 1/VII/2010, Art. ° 11).

In one of the informal conversations with an agent concerning the treatment of foreigners at border posts, he even admitted that there exists a differentiation of treatment of Africans compared to Europeans, mostly based on prejudice. The following is an example of a discourse on the issue translated verbatim from Portuguese:

We had a case recent with a sailor European. We depart of the principle that by if deal with a European this had money for pay the visa. However, to the stamp the visa in your passport the sailor claimed not have money even for pay the visa. In the end but finished by enter in the country (Agente1, Achada Santo António 2017).³

The preceding excerpt demonstrates that the general perception of agents at the border about the people of the ECOWAS is loaded with prejudices, giving them a treatment that is different compared to that given to Europeans. This is in light of the fact that citizens originating from countries that are members of the cedeao agreement, in light of article 3.º of the decree and regulation n°11/99,⁴ have a maximum of 90 days to stay in the country with the following requirements of entry: an international certificate of vaccination that is valid, a return ticket that is confirmed, the means of economic sufficiency while in the country, a stay beyond the term limit carries a fine of ten thousand escudoss, the citizens of the ECOWAS member states have with them a thousand euros for their maintenance while in the country (Furtado 2016). Despite these requirements, some ECOWAS citizens have suffered torture by some agents who accuse them of belonging to 'organized mafias' and use several 'tricks' to extract 'rent of money' from them (Furtado 2016:110). What follows is an excerpt from a conversation with an agent on the topic translated verbatim from Portuguese:

That the people from of the ECOWAS meet all the requirements, many agents try do several questions for see if the citizen is the lie or not. It everything, begin the ask documents as the booking of hotel for see if not was fake and question about the thousand euros that should present in the entry, in the sense of detect if not was rented. Each time that if proves the veracity of the documents, the distrust increases (Agente1 da DEF, Achada Santo António 2017).

Refusals of entry tend to increase each year. The data show that ‘in 2006, there were 250; in 2007, this number increased to 665 (approximately 2.5 times more); this number increased to 759 in 2008 (grew 5%); in 2008, the refusals at the airport represented circa 97% (733 cases); in the airport of the salt were circa 3% (26 cases)’ (Furtado 2016:112). These mechanisms used to control the entry of people from other ECOWAS member states into Cabo Verde have been harshly criticized in the ECOWAS Parliament.⁵

After the seminar in Cabo Verde about regional integration, the president of the parliament of the ECOWAS during an opening ceremony held in Dakar expressed discontent with the case of Cabo Verde, reiterating that ‘in our corridors, there are many bureaucracies. The state members do not respect the provisions of the protocol and of the treaty. Today, we will not be in this point if there are not many violations’.⁶ The president emphasized the point by calling for the respect of reciprocity among the member states and gave the example of the Senegalese in Cabo Verde as follows:

But they have the right of access for three months with their identity cards of the ECOWAS, with their passports, and they have the right of establishment and the right to search for work in these countries. But today, this is not the case. There are some that are married there for ten years and cannot even return to Senegal because we demand their documents, in the entry points they are required to pay 1,000 euros, and they are required to have a return ticket, they are sometimes arrested for three or four days because they do not have the return ticket or for not having the 1,000 euros. This is unacceptable and I said this to the authorities in Cabo Verde (President of the Parliament of the ECOWAS Moustapha Cissé Lô 2017).⁷

In fact, in practice, a considerable number of factors hamper the implementation of the protocol on the free movement of persons, as exemplified by some control criteria on the entry of citizens from the member countries of ECOWAS that have been mentioned above. Therefore, an island country like Cabo Verde where natural resources are insignificant and depends to a large extent on aid from Europe, even though the Functionalist Theory and a holistic view argues for the country to be integrated into the ECOWAS community in order to share common interests, dissonance among national interests can emerge as some groups clamor for national sovereignty.

Given the preceding findings, it only makes sense that the alternative hypothesis tested in this study be accepted—i.e. H_1 : The member states of the ECOWAS stand in opposition to one another on the free movement of people in the region. Consequently, the attendant null hypothesis should be rejected—i.e. H_0 : The member states of the ECOWAS do not stand in opposition to one another on the free movement of people in the region.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study on people and society in the ECOWAS region has made it possible to conclude that, notwithstanding the efforts of the ECOWAS to integrate the initiatives outside the framework of the political operations in the process of regional integration, to have the desired integration there is need for a greater inclusion of civil society in the process, as well as a greater flexibility by the member states in the negotiation of the protocol on the free movement of people in the region. The difficulty faced by member states in managing their actions in safeguarding national sovereignty in the context of regional interest calls for a better inclusion of the people and civil society in this process.

The mere fact that there is a protocol on the free movement of persons does not give civil society the right to engage in this process the way it would prefer nor does it authorize people to move when and where and migrate. This is because the national political frameworks of the member state are different, which leads them to position themselves differently to meet the challenges of the free movement of people.

Thus, we begin with the recommendation of strengthening internal monitoring mechanisms with the capacity to oversee the actions of states and encourage them to comply with agreements and protocols on the free movement of persons in the region. Regional integration necessarily involves greater interaction between civil society and people as essential actors for the consolidation of this process.

Also, we call for the adjustment the synergies of the main actors/institutions in solving the main challenges for integration. This requires that the ECOWAS be really focused on identifying the main barriers to integration, and naturalness its flexibility in including actors/institutions, such as private companies, non-governmental organizations, and civil society.

In addition, we recommend the enlistment of greater involvement of member states in the objectives of regional integration. The development of the regional integration process requires a more effective participation of member states, particularly in decision arenas. Therefore, the success of the implementation of political measures and the non-overlapping of the legal framework depend significantly on the engagement of the states in this process.

Endnotes

¹Analysis of the Cabo Verde Television interview on a workshop titled "Rights and Duties of Immigrants" promoted by the Presidency of the Republic in 2012, as part of the commemorations of the twentieth anniversary of the Constitution of the Republic and in commemoration of the day of the immigrant. Retrieved from 18/05/2017, of: http://www.rtc.cv/tcv/index.php?paginas=13&id_cod=22546

²Report obtained through an informal conversation between the actors and a former ambassador of Cabo Verde to the African Union (Cidade da Praia, 2017).

³This report resulted from a spontaneous conversation with one of the DEF agents. This will be treated by agente1 to guarantee the confidentiality of the information. Therefore, interviews were not made for this work only informal conversations that arose spontaneously and that was thought to be useful with substance important for the reflections.

⁴Article 3 of Regulatory Decree No. 11/99 of 9 August provides for the abolition of visas for “every citizen of the community who wishes to be in a Member State (ECOWAS) for a maximum period of 90 days”.

⁵Note taken from the seminar on Regional Integration and Development in ECOWAS. Trade liberalization, the functioning of the protocol on the free movement of persons and goods in the Member States, monetary cooperation, political cooperation, peace and security and relations with the European Union are some of the issues under discussion (Cidade da Praia, Assembleia Nacional, 2017).

⁶Original text published in French by: http://senwww.sencms.com/news/Diplomatie/cisse-lo-laquo-le-calvaire-des-senegalai_n_215116.html Consulted from 19/05/2017.

⁷Original text published in French by: http://senwww.sencms.com/news/Diplomatie/cisse-lo-laquo-le-calvaire-des-senegalai_n_215116.html Consulted from 19/05/2017.

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