

Because of, not in spite of: conflicts and regional integration in Africa

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CODESRIA

Plan

- Thoughts on regional integration
- Reflections on conflicts in Africa
- The toll of conflicts on integration
- The potential contributions of conflicts to integration
- Insights from refugee situations

On Regional Integration

- Regional integration as a continuum involving many possible facets
- Beyond teleology: seesaw over time
- Avoid 'centrisms:' beyond The Model
- A distributive conflict approach to integration

Some Thoughts on Conflicts in Africa

- Violent and non-violent conflicts over beliefs/values, interests, strategies, etc.
- The preponderance of intra-state conflicts
- Changing nature of violent conflicts:
 - Ideologically informed ----→ ideologically fuzzy
 - Broad goals ----→ particularistic goals
 - Structured parties ----→ amorphous bands
 - Disciplined ----→ undisciplined
 - Away from respect for the rules of war

Some Costs of Conflicts

- Creating and/or heightening animosities
 - Mutual subversion through intra-state wars
- Making credible commitment difficult
- Heightening the costs of integration
 - Cost of information, bargaining, implementation and enforcement

Potential Positive Contributions I

- Conquest as ultimate instruments of integration in history
- The prevention of destructive conflicts as motivation for integration
- Wars as critical junctures for integration/subversion of quasi-sovereignty rents collectors

Potential positive Contributions II

- Making linked fate obvious
- The geography of wars suggest alternative modes of organization
- Modes of dealing with conflicts as platforms for integration
 - State level
 - Societal level

Making integration work for peace: Lessons from refugee situations

- Preponderance of grassroots initiative
- Glimpses of the horizontal/egalitarian society
- Demonstration of cultural dexterity and resourcefulness
- Dazzling openness to new things
- Future as ultimate source of meaning

The options

- Voluntary *enlistment* into beneficial regional bodies and networks
- Forced *conscription* into bodies and networks that may not be beneficial
- Violent conflicts can help us enlist instead of getting conscripted!