

Borders and Borderlands as Linchpins for Regional Integration in Africa: Lessons of the European Experience*

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Résumé: L'Afrique ne peut valablement relever le défi de l'Europe 1992 que si elle s'attaque directement au problème des frontières des Etats-nations actuels. Les frontières et les territoires frontaliers sont encore considérés comme des zones de tension malgré l'existence d'activités, d'intérêts et de ressources humaines et matérielles communs. Pour que l'intégration économique réussisse il est nécessaire que les frontières cessent d'être considérées comme des remparts mais plutôt comme des ponts. D'après la nouvelle approche appelée "micro-diplomatie sous-nationale", une coopération officielle est possible entre les autorités locales. Cette stratégie qui est fondée sur les réalités historiques et géographiques d'un territoire sous-national donné (réseaux de rapports informels gérés par des protocoles de coopération) prouve que les efforts pour l'intégration économique internationale impliquant les communautés frontalières valent la peine d'être faits. Elle permet un contrôle et une gestion plus faciles et éventuellement des niveaux d'agrégation au plan continental et sous-continental. L'ancienne idéologie d'amour-propre national doit être remplacée par une autre doctrine fondée sur des rapports fonctionnels et de soutien mutuel entre les gouvernements et les peuples de part et d'autre des frontières sans qu'ils ne perdent leur souveraineté nationale.

*Europe and its separate states must not only ensure, each at its level, that internal regions are coordinated, but also work towards co-operation with external regions, that is with regions outside European state system. The policy of cross-border co-operation has no sense if it is limited merely to countries within the European Community which have already begun to integrate. It must be extended to other countries, too, whether or not they belong to the E.E.C., whether or not they belong to the Council of Europe... (J.M. Quitin, *European Co-operation in Frontier Regions*, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 1973, p. 41).*

There is perhaps no other single theme that has dominated public debate about Africa's future than the implications of "Europe 1992" for the con-

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continent. The perception of the Single European Act coming to full effect in that year has been especially sharpened by the outbreak of the democratic revolutions in Communist Europe in November 1989, leading to the virtually irreversible process, not only of the evolution of "a Greater Europe" but also of the termination of the Cold War and the systematic dismantling of obstructionist ideological borders between the West and the East.

However, as easily illustrated by the extremely illuminating two-day high-powered international seminar on "European Community After 1992: Consequences for Africa", held in Lagos from the 14th to the 15th June 1990 under the auspices of Nigeria's Ministry of External Affairs, the debates have focussed more on matters of effect than those of fundamental cause. While a great deal has been said and written on the urgency of regional integration on the model of the EEC, far less than desirable attention has been paid to the more critical casual factor of the nation-state territorial structure and the border problematics.

Europe 1992 is "Europe Without Frontiers". Africa cannot respond effectively to the challenges without having to directly confront the question of the borders of the nation-states, which have given rise to the need for regional integration in the first instance. There has to be a concerted effort at converting those borders from their prevailing postures as ramparts into a new veritable function as bridges. Africa's searchlight for lessons in the European historical experience must transcend the EEC to embrace a firm grasp of knowledge about the extremely important complimentary role of the Council of Europe with particular reference to the handling of the strictly territorial and border dimensions of the evolution of the European Community.

The purpose of this paper is to draw attention to an international economic integration strategy which, while still being ignored by policy makers and planners in Africa, has in recent decades gained in importance and achievements in Europe and is currently being actively recommended for the adoption of governments in North America¹. Rather than keeping rigidly to the approach whereby development is always initiated from the top, usually through the operation of usual type sovereignty-preconditioned multinational inter-governmental organizations, the new strategy is in the effective utilization of micro- or grassroot-level initiatives and their policy potentials; it operates within the framework of the more limited inter-governmental organizations in which local or provincial authorities along

1 See, e.g., Niles Hansen, "European Transboundary Cooperation and Its Relevance to the United States - Mexico Border", *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, 49(3) 1983, 336 - 343. This article provides the bulk of the information on European transborder transactions for our paper.

international boundaries play key roles as agents of international cooperation. In this new context, the unit of action is not whole continents or their main subregions, as in the case of the more familiar-type multilateral inter-governmental organizations; it is, instead, the border² regions or borderlands defined characteristically as the "sub-national areas whose economic and social life is directly and significantly affected by proximity to an international boundary³."

While each of such "sub-national areas" may be planned and developed within contexts of individual nation-states, observable geographic, demographic, cultural, economic and historical links and interpenetrations with the "sub-national areas" on the other side of the given international boundary make the national less realistic and less desirable than the international transboundary approach to planning. This imperative for local planning across an international boundary has given rise to the use of a new policy instrument and tool of analysis in international relations referred to, for want of a better term, as "sub-national micro-diplomacy"⁴. The use of this mode has allowed for formalized cooperation among local authorities, based on pre-existing network of informal relations between communities across the binational boundaries and covered directly or indirectly by provisions of co-operative treaties between nation-states along the specific borders.

There are obvious advantages which the use of "sub-national micro-diplomacy" has over the alternative of the more established macro-level diplomacy. Apart from addressing itself to the issue of borders and their functions, so basic to all discussions of international cooperation, the new strategy makes for relatively easier demonstration of relevance of international economic integration efforts to the geographical and historical realities on the ground. Indeed, as has been noted, transboundary economic cooperation at inter-governmental level normally results from the formalization of

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- 2 'Border', 'Boundaries' and 'Frontiers' are contested concepts; but for the purpose of this paper, 'the three' will be taken as synonyms and used to refer to the *Line* of demarcation between any two sovereign states. 'Border regions', 'Borderlands' and 'Frontier zones' will be the reference to the sub-national areas on both sides of the binational line of demarcation.
 - 3 Niles Hansen, *The Border Economy: Regional Development in the Southwest*, University of Texas Press, Austin, 1981, p. 19.
 - 4 For a systematic use of this concept, see Ivo D. Duckacels, "International Competence of Sub-national Governments: Borderlands and Beyond" in O.J. Martinez (ed.) *Across Boundaries: Transborder Interaction in Comparative Perspective*, El Paso: Western Texas Press, 1986 11 - 30; and also his *The Territorial Dimension of Politics Within, Among and Across Nations* (Colorado: Westview Press, 1986 and Ivo D. Duckacels, D. Latouche and Garth Stevenson (eds), *Perforated Sovereignities and International Relations: Trans-Sovereign Contacts of Sub-national Governments* (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1988).

the informal network of relations, which have existed for decades and, in some cases, centuries at the level of communities or culture area astride binational boundaries.

This advantage enables transboundary cooperative efforts to respond better to criticisms which generally deride macro-size inter-governmental organizations for international cooperation as something essentially remote from the people. In this regard, it is pertinent to refer to one of the series of insightful observations in an ECOWAS-Commissioned study conducted by the ECA on "Economic Integration in West Africa" to the effect that "international efforts at economic cooperation in the subregion are, for now, largely an affair of government, and not quite of the people⁵." And if, as the study has correctly asserted, "economic cooperation is for the people⁶", there cannot be a more logical starting point than the borderland communities. Such communities have suffered more than their counterparts in other sub-national areas from the obstructionist effects of borders; they are, therefore, better situated to appreciate the value of transboundary socio-economic planning and development.

Besides, borders constitute the locus for most of the interchanges between the limitrophe nation-states demarcated by them. Accordingly, borderlands should be viewed and treated as the most suitable grounds for training and testing the sincerity of nation-states and governments committed to international cooperation including efforts at regional economic integration. The relative smallness of the area and of the inter-governmental organization involved makes for greater ease of effectiveness of control and monitoring.

Finally, the use of "sub-national micro-diplomacy ultimately allows for continental and sub-continental levels of aggregation. In other words, there is the macro dimension of this essentially micro-level operation. This point is supported by evidence not only of the widespread nature of the phenomenon of borderlands and small nations which in Africa, as in Europe (as we shall presently examine), have the attributes of border regions⁷. Such available evidence further emphasizes the importance to be attached to the recognition of borderlands as vital units of regional planning at international levels. Some observers of the European efforts at transboundary cooperation see such cooperation as "a significant step towards eventual European

5 U.N.-ECA, *Strengthening Economic Integration in West Africa*, (ECA, Addis Ababa, 1984), Paragraph 181.

6 Based on the model of Switzerland as a typical example, all member-states of ECOWAS are, e.g. of predominantly 'border' characteristics. These include not just small-sized states like Benin, Togo and The Gambia or the land-locked Sahelian states of Niger, Upper Volta and Mali. There is also Nigeria, the biggest of the states in the sub-region, with 15 of its present 21 constituent states directly linked with the international boundaries.

7 Hansen, 1982; *op.cit.*

economic and political integration"; and Niles Hansen, arguing with particular reference to the US-Mexico border, has commented quite usefully that the European experience "should prove instructive for ... other countries where common border region problems and opportunities are still neither understood nor appreciated adequately in the respective national capitals"⁸.

Whatever our sensitivity about comparisons which make Europe the reference point for Africa, it is fair to consider the border regions on the latter continent as essentially a replica of those on the former. In Europe, as in Africa, with particular reference to the Western Subregion, neighbouring border regions represent areas of distinct official Languages, national histories and cultures as well as differing economic systems and administrative organizations.

This is not surprising since the border, which spawned the borderlands of Africa in the first instance, were creations of European imperialists who drew and, for a long time, managed them on the model of the borders of their own respective metropolitan countries. As has been discussed in several scholarly works⁹, the borders of modern Africa are so much European superimposition that all the legal instruments for dealing with them have remained exactly the same 'Agreements', 'Treaties', 'Protocols' and 'Notes' which the particular European powers established between or among themselves at the time of the drawing and the maintenance of the colonial boundaries.

The rulers of independent African states which, at least in territorial structural terms, are for the most part no more than successors of the former European colonies, have to this extent maintained the *status quo*: Not only were the legal instruments inherited; the institutions, personnel and the mode for dealing with the subject of boundaries have remained basically the same European antecedents or their derivatives. Little wonder then that border relations in Africa have continued to feature the same kind of mutual jealousy, conflict and tension; and have continued to be managed within the framework of the same kind of diplomacy and laws that govern such relations in Europe of the nation-state. Structurally, the borders of Africa pose

8 See, e.g., I. Brownlie, *African Boundaries: A Legal and Diplomatic Encyclopaedia*, C. Hurst and Co., London and University of California Press, 1979; A.C. MacEwen, *International Boundaries of East Africa*, Oxford University Press, 1971 and J.C. Anene, *The International Boundaries of Nigeria, 1885-1960*, Longman, Ibadan History Series, 1970.

9 Relevant works include W.I. Zartman, "The Politics of Boundaries in North and West Africa", *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 3, August, 1965, pp. 155-173 and the more comprehensive Saadia Touval, *The Boundary Politics of Independent Africa*, Harvard University Press, 1972.

as much obstacle to international cooperation efforts as have been known of their counterparts in Europe.

African and Africanist scholars are quick to point out that the borders of modern African states are artificial; they were arbitrarily drawn with little or no regard for pre-existing entities; they have split up unified culture areas and natural zones or distinct ecosystems. From the viewpoint of the comparison in this paper, the crucial point that is often missed in all these familiar remarks is that in all such matters the borders of nation-states in Africa are really not different from the European ones¹⁰. It has been argued elsewhere, for example, that the phenomenon of artificially partitioned culture areas is as much a feature of borders and borderlands in Africa as they have been in Europe and the wider world of European-type nation-states¹¹.

In France, for example, the ethnic structure of the state is, in spite of the centuries of centralist-state tradition, not in any essential sense different from the structure of the independent states that have grown out of her former African colonies. With particular reference to the issue of partitioned culture areas astride the borders and the corresponding internal multiethnic situation of the state, Peter McPhee has most aptly observed in a recent work that:

the territorial map of France does not correspond to an ethnocultural map, either within the hexagon or along its borders. To the northeast the border slices into the Flemish-ethnic entity (the rest of which is to be found in the adjacent area of Belgium). In the South, the border cuts through two Iberian lands: the Basque country (Euskadi) and Catalonia (each shared with Spain). Corsicans speak Italian dialects. Lower Brittany has a million people using the Celtic language. There are at least ten or twelve million who know something of Occitan. Inversely, the territorial map of France does not include the French-speakers of Belgium and the Bernois Jura. Franco-Provence is spoken between St.

10 It is, for example, a matter of great fascination to compare the responses of the Catalans, "an ethnic group, neither French nor Spanish" to the parallel socialization processes by France and Spain in the Cerdanya Valley arbitrarily divided into two by the Franco-Spanish border in the Eastern Pyrenees on the one hand; and, on the other, the Yoruba, also an ethnic group neither French nor English, arbitrarily divided into two by the Anglo-French Nigeria-Dahomey colonial boundary in Western Yorubaland. See Peter Sahlins, *Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees* (U.C. Press, Berkeley, 1989) and A.I. Asiwaju, *Western Yorubaland Under European Rule, 1889-1900: A Comparative Analysis of French and British Colonialism* (New Jersey, Humanities Press, 1977).

11 A.I. Asiwaju, ed. *Partitioned Africans: Ethnic Relations Across Africa's International Boundaries, 1884-1984*, C. Hurst, London, 1985, Chapter 12: "The Global Perspective".

*Etiennes and Fribourg, Grenoble and Lers-le-Sannier, even in the Val d'Aosta*¹².

The phenomenon of shared populations and related natural resources, important in any discussion of transboundary economic cooperation, was widespread in Europe - as can be very easily illustrated by the numerous instances on the borders of Switzerland, Italy, Yugoslavia, Turkey and so on. These European instances are replicated by the several parallel instances in Africa.

The features of a border region, such as we have tried to summarize, make it respond well to its typical and functional definition as an area of national and cultural interface, a region of social and economic interpenetration in which the functions and influence of the state on the one side of a given boundary normally fade gently into the sphere of its neighbour. This has to be in view of the fact of shared human and material resources and associated activities and interests spanning the border.

But in spite of this fact, the policy vision of the situation in Europe up to the 1960s was more or less as it is today with most states of Africa where borders and borderlands have continued to be viewed largely in conflict and tension terms. The notion of sovereignty (as expounded in the thoughts of 18th Century European political philosophers) and the rather exclusive use of diplomacy and international law as sole instruments for dealing with international relations, including those affecting common borders and border regions, have continued to be emphasized at the expense of positive efforts at international cooperation. Political concerns, particularly those relating to state security, are viewed as far more important than issues of economic cooperation and overall social welfare. In Africa, as in Europe of the pre-world Wars era, most states are faced with threats of instability; and this fact has come to exercise a commanding influence on the more or less permanent state of tension along most of the borders.

This paper draws attention to the situation in Europe where the position has eased somewhat within the last two or so decades. This change has been due to a conscious and collaborative effort on the part of the nation states. Rather than continue to view borders in terms of conflict and tension, the new attitude in Western Europe has allowed for a new approach which now places emphasis on the more positive issues of transborder cooperation, planning and development. Borderlands have come to be viewed in terms of human needs and material developmental possibilities. Contrary to the disposition of the traditional diplomatic approach, by which the often distantly

12 Peter McPhee, "A Case Study of International Colonization: The Francisation of Northern Catalonia", *Review*, III, 3, Winter 1980, pp. 400 - 401.

based national governments monopolized control, the new strategy allows such borderlands problems that are local to be so studied and resolved. It is realized, for example, that regional planning and development by any national government is impossible without adequate consultation with national authorities on the other side of the border. It is especially impossible for a local or regional community or authority in a border area to undertake coherent local development programmes without consultation with and possible input by counterparts on the other side of the border. What is said about development extends to issues of security, including the question of law enforcement, in the border areas.

In such a changing condition, the old ideology of national self-interest is being strongly persuaded to yield place to an emergent alternative doctrine of mutual necessity and functional relationship between peoples and governments on both sides of a border. National sovereignty and associated international boundaries are not abandoned, but encouragement is given for borders to function less as lines of division and exclusion than as points of contact and mutual inclusion. In Europe, the cradle of nation-state and borders, transborder informal linkages which have been inspired by the fact of shared human and material resources straddling several of the borders, have been accorded formalized and internationally legalized status in recent years. Through processes and developments which have spanned the last twenty or so years, the member states of the Council of Europe, which embraces the whole of Western Europe, have between 1979 and 1982 endorsed the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Cooperation Between Territorial Communities or Authorities¹³. The Convention is a major triumph of 'micro-diplomacy'; and the implementation of its provisions would be the final demonstration of the incomparable advantage of international socio-economic integration at the grassroot level.

The Outline Convention is indisputably the most important result of the series of experiments in international socio-economic cooperation at the local level. The Convention and its antecedents issued out of a persistent search for regional and local solutions to regional and local problems. Success has depended at every stage on the support of the border communities themselves; and, as Hansen has correctly observed, "even though economic development is the stimulus to transboundary cooperation, such efforts can be facilitated by the presence of similar linguistic or ethnic groups on both sides of the border"¹⁴. In this regard, it is pertinent to emphasize the leading

13 Council of Europe: *European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation Between Territorial Communities or Authorities*, No. 106 of the European Treaty Series, Strasbourg, 1982.

14 Hansen (1983; *op.cit.*)

role of the people along and across the Rhine valley where, as in Africa, "borders represent more the results of past conquests and diplomatic arrangements than natural geographical barriers"¹⁵.

The interest of the local people was so easily enlisted because in Europe, as elsewhere, national governments generally prove negligent or negative in their attitude to the affairs of their border regions. National governments, often based at considerable distance from the borders, generally vacillate in dealing with problems affecting these sub-national area because "the only institutionalized means of communication across borders was international law and diplomacy"¹⁶. This is often compounded by usual bureaucratic red-tape of state officials. Central governments, especially those of centralist states like France, impeded transborder cooperation "because of fear that the sovereignty of the nation-state would be compromised". The social, economic and political marginalization of border regions which generally result from this style of handling by national governments, often left the border communities with the impression that their salvation can only lie in their own hands.

In the circumstance in which border communities in Europe found themselves, the need for self-reliance was too obvious to require being preached about from outside. In a situation of economic neglect, such as is so clearly reflected in the influential 'location theory' and 'growth pole' literature¹⁷ which commonly stress the disadvantage of border regions in matters relating to industrial location and international trade; and in situations where border communities must cope with problems of conflicting official mandates, resulting from manifestations in border regions of the differing political, legal, administrative, economic and cultural traditions and institutions of the nation-states in contact, the local people often have no choice but to rely on their own steam. Here lies the significance of the informal linkages which generally characterize border relations. In the absence of officially sanctioned mechanisms, sufficiently informed and adequately sympathetic toward the special requirements of the border regions, the informal network was the only mode left for the local people in order for them to get around the problems of the border. These often include the barrier effects which generally stand in the way of border peoples wanting to take obvious 'ad-

15 Ibid.

16 This point is generally observed by nearly all scholars - Ellwyn Stoddard, Oscar Martinez, Niles Hansen, John House, etc. - who work on the United States-Mexico border relations.

17 For a detailed discussion of the literature and application of these spatial theories to border regions, see Niles Hansen (ed), *Growth Centres in Regional Economic Development*, Free Press, New York, 1972. There is a summary of the views in his latest book on *Border Economy*, op.cit., chp. 2. ("The Nature of Border Regions").

vantage of potential complementarities in public services and facilities as well as potential scale and agglomeration economies"¹⁸.

Not surprisingly, then, the experiments in transboundary cooperation, which preceded the establishment of the European Outline Convention, were all results of local initiatives. They include such organizations as the Regio Basiliensi created in 1963; the Euregio, launched in 1970; and the Conference of Upper Rhine Valley Planners begun in 1979. The others are the federal-type Association of European Border Regions, based in Bonn, Western Germany; the Committee for the Promotion of Alpine Region Cooperation with headquarters in Turin, Italy; the Liaison Office of European Regional Organizations based in Strasbourg, France.

The Regio Basiliensi, one of the early examples of these transboundary cooperative efforts, was directly inspired by both the business and civic elites in Basel, Switzerland, who felt the need to do something positive about the increasingly pronounced economic marginalization of the city, due largely to its location at the northwest corner of Switzerland¹⁹. But, as we have already hinted, the border situation made it impracticable for any coherent planning to be undertaken for Basel without due cognizance taken of the city's status as a trinational agglomeration with parts in the adjacent areas of Northwestern Switzerland, Upper Alsace in France and "Sudbaden" in Germany. Indeed, for a more complete view of the planning needs of the area a good note was taken of the wider regional setting of the city. Regio Basiliensi then came to have as the area of its operation the entire historical 'Regio' which is defined as "the European border area of the Upper Rhine between the Jura, the Black Forest and the Vosages and has more than two million inhabitants"²⁰.

In the words of Dr. Hans Briner, the founder and Secretary General of Regio Basiliensi, "Its purpose is the planning and encouragement of economic, political and cultural development of this trinational area"²¹. Funded through contributions initially made by private business and the concerned Swiss Cantons, Regio Basiliensi was founded on centuries of traditions of "close cultural and economic ties", most of which antedated the birth of France, Germany and Switzerland as nations. Alemanic, a German

18 Hansen, *op.cit.*

19 For detailed information on 'Regio Basiliensi', see Hans J. Riner, 'Coordination of Regional Planning Across National Frontiers: Regio Test Case - Switzerland/France/Germany'; "General Information", Basel, Sept. 1981 and H.P. Schmid, "The Transfrontier - Impact of Nuclear Power Stations in Basel-Region ('Regio', Germany/France/Switzerland), all documents supplied by the Service de Coordination Internationale de la Regio, Basel, Sept. 1981.

20 Service de Coordination Internationale de la Regio, p. 1; also Briner, "Coordination of Regional Planning...", p. 3.

21 *Ibid.*

dialect, is the common local language. The preservation of this common history and culture has been stated as an objective for the "coordinated planning and harmonization in the individual regions"²².

Regio Basiliensi's achievements are quite impressive. Quite apart from its series of surveys and recommendations on coordinated transportation and its environmental impact studies with particular reference to the implications and consequences of the nuclear plants located in the area, Regio Basiliensi has provided the brain behind the creation of the Basel-Mulhouse airport, built with Swiss money but located on French soil and jointly managed by both countries. Of crucial importance are studies of the opinions of the local people as the proper basis for the transboundary cooperation efforts in the trinational area.

The Euregio founded in 1970, constituted another early example of transboundary cooperation in Europe²³. Essentially a federation of three pre-existing associations of municipalities in the German-Netherlands border region, the Euregio operates through a joint international secretariat and a parliamentary council. The main objectives are "to develop common policies and programmes in socio-cultural and economic matters and to promote the principle of a genuine European transborder region, priority being given to the development of a single transborder region, not two border sub-areas"²⁴.

The Conference of Upper Rhine Valley Planners, which was launched in 1979, represented a major endeavour to promote large-scale transboundary planning on an informal level. While the focus of the Conference has been on issues affecting West Germany, France and Switzerland, a fact that would have made it a mere duplication of the Regio Basiliensi, the Conference's interest is made to cover the whole area of the Rhineland from Basel to Frankfurt. Again, like Regio Basiliensi's, the Conference's main impact has been in terms of the detailed analyses it has sponsored on such shared environmental issues as water and air pollution and undesirable urban pattern. There are also studies of planning in several matters including land use, economic and demographic trends, and transportation.

The Association of European Border Regions, based in Bonn, advanced the trend of federation already noted in our discussion of both the Euregio and the Conference of Upper Rhine Valley Planners. It consists of fifteen border region organizations most of which belong to the Rhine Valley. Of

22 Ibid.

23 Information on Euregio is derived from Hansen (1983).

24 Council of Europe, Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe: *Report on Transfrontier Cooperation in Europe*, No. CPL (15) 6, Strasbourg, 1980, cited in Hansen, *op.cit.*

similar structure and function is the Committee for the Promotion of Alpine Region Cooperation based in Turin, Italy.

The European Outline Convention should be considered as the logical conclusion of this whole business of upward movement for transboundary cooperation in Europe. It is by far the most comprehensive and all embracing. For us in Africa, the Convention represented a noteworthy example of how to build an international socio-economic cooperation at the level of a whole continent or any of its major subregions upon solid local foundations. The Council of Europe, which produced the Convention, was the first and, with twenty-one member states, it is still the largest Western European political organization to be formed since the traumatic experience of the Second World War. Founded in 1949, the Council operates through a Parliamentary Assembly and the Committee of Ministers which functioned as its deliberative and executive organs respectively. The Committee of Ministers decides on recommendations submitted to it earlier by the Assembly or the Committees of government experts that may be set up from time to time. The decisions take the form of recommendations to governments or formal conventions or agreements. Member states who ratify these decisions are legally bound by them.

Given the intense and widespread nature of transborder cooperative movements and organizations in Europe, it is not a surprise that the subject has been a matter of an ever increasing interest to the Council. Accordingly, a number of organizations has to be created within its framework and given assignments specifically related to the question of international cooperation in border regions. The two most notable of such Council of Europe organizations are European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning and the Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE), and later being the only such body in Europe which represents local and regional authorities in their relations with international institutions. On transboundary cooperation, the Council of Europe is guided not only by its own appropriate institutions; there is as well a constant link with the various transboundary cooperations, especially those enrolled in LOERO at Strasbourg.

Because of its intimate link with, and direct knowledge of the aspiration of local communities, including those in border areas, the CLRAE has proved the most vital organ of the Council of Europe and one which has done more than any other body to give rise to the Outline Convention. It did not just encourage central governments to recognize the need for transborder cooperation; more importantly, "it has emphasized that the organization of such cooperation requires the close participation of elected representatives of border regions and municipalities". CLRAE's direct involvement with border regions has left it without any iota of doubt about the fact that such regions and authorities are the loci where problems of international coopera-

tion are most keenly felt. CLRAE is, therefore, the organ which has driven the point fully home with the Council of Europe that regional planning and development in a border region is completely unrealistic without a systematic consultation between planning authorities on both sides of the boundary. The Committee's view of transboundary relations as a process of five progressively complex phases of information exchange, mutual consultation, active collaboration, harmonization of planning and integration of planning has had its strong impact on the notion of progression manifest in the Outline Convention and its Appendix.

The Outline Convention was passed by the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly in 1979; and on 21 May, 1980 in Madrid, it was opened for signature. It has now been signed by Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and West Germany. There are, altogether, 12 articles plus an appendix containing five draft "Model Inter-State Agreements" and six model 'Outline Agreements, Statutes and Contracts Between Local Authorities'.

The provisions of the Convention oblige each signatory member state "to facilitate and foster transfrontier cooperation between territorial communities or authorities within the jurisdiction of other Contracting Parties" (Article 2). The purpose of the Convention was to achieve "concerted action designed to reinforce and foster neighbourly relations between territorial communities or authorities within the jurisdiction of two or more Contracting Parties" (Article 2:1). Although each signatory member state retains as always its sovereign rights on matters of international relations, there is an undertaking by each "to resolve any legal, administrative or technical difficulties liable to hamper the development and smoothrunning of transfrontier cooperation" (Article 4).

The draft model agreements between states or between local authorities are to assist such states and authorities to conclude supplementary agreements that will facilitate the execution of the provisions of the Convention. Sixteen broad areas of transborder cooperation have been identified on the basis of existing experience. These include urban and regional development; transport and communications; energy; nature conservation; water conservation, education, training and research; public health; culture; leisure and sports; mutual assistance in disaster; tourism, commuter labour; economic projects; improvement in agriculture, social facilities and miscellaneous issues. (Article 6 of the second Model Inter-State Agreement on Transfrontier Regional Consultation).

The European experience in transboundary planning, such as we have just sketched, may be considered relatively too short to become an authoritative reference point. In fact, the Outline Convention was not ratified by France, understandably the most reluctant and the last Council-of-Europe

member to do so, until 1984. However, the history and the substantial achievements of the Convention as a treaty with a firm rooting and foundation in the geographical realities on the ground and the resultant spontaneity of support by the signatory powers must be viewed as good and reliable enough indicators of success²⁵. In any case, the urgent need in Africa for an alternative strategy which would make current efforts at regional economic integration more relevant and more demonstrably meaningful to the predominantly rural and local peoples of the continent (so well represented by the border communities) oblige us to take a specially serious note of the European experience.

It is already worthy of the attention of Africa that in spite of traditional attachment to the notion of sovereignty and the use of the usual type of diplomacy and international relations, including international economic cooperation, the governments of Western European countries, most of them members of Council of Europe, have mobilized their concerted effort for a new kind of diplomacy that allows local and regional authorities on the borders of the nation-states to function as agents of relations and cooperation between them. The era of borders that divide and separate thus appears to be giving way to a new era of borders that join²⁶. As the informal linkages across European international boundaries are accorded formalized status, the discrepancy and gaps between the boundary-maintenance policy of nation-states above and the boundary-disregarding attitudes and behaviours on the ground are being reduced, if not eliminated. There is in this new development a demonstration effect which gives us in Africa an opportunity not only for a comparable adjustment of policy to the realities of relations on our borders. There is also a new chance to recover what was lost at the time of the establishment of the friction-stanced boundaries, viz., the pre-colonial concept of boundaries as zones of mutual contact²⁷.

We have already pointed to the structural and functional similarities between borders and border regions of Europe and those of Africa. There is, therefore, no doubting the fact that the human and material resources for achieving transboundary cooperation in Africa are not any less than those in

25 For an assessment of the impact, see Alois Partl, "The International Development of Transfrontier Cooperation: Achievements and Prospects: Implementation of the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Cooperation Between Territorial Communities and Authorities", 3rd European Conference on Frontier Regions; Barken, 4 - 6 Sept. 1984.

26 For some application of the paradoxical concept of borders as institutions that both join and divide, see John H. Haddox, "The Border: A Place to Live, A Place to Learn", Faculty Research Award Lecture, University of Texas at El Paso, 1982; and Peter Brown and Henry Shue, (eds.), *The Border That Joins*, Rowman and Littlefield, New Jersey, 1983.

27 A Synthesis of the views of this pre-colonial African concept of boundaries is contained in A. I. Asiwaju, "The Concept of Frontier in the Setting of State in Pre-Colonial Africa", *Presence Africaine*, Nos. 127/128, 1983.

Europe. The border regions of Africa may and do vary not only from those of Europe but from one another in terms of local details. Nevertheless, the prospects and problems are substantially the same. With particular reference to the question of transboundary cooperation, Africa has all, and perhaps even more than what it has taken in Europe.

First is the fact of abundant human resources. This point can be simply illustrated by the widespread presence of peoples and communities of the same culture on both sides of every border. The present writer's recently completed research on this subject provides some conclusive evidence: the detailed checklist of African border culture areas shows that each of the one hundred and three international boundaries on the continent features this type of 'population overhand'²⁸. The proverbial neglect of border areas, a pronounced feature of the African situation featuring a general absence of industrial activities and urbanization processes, has aided the accentuation of the primordial cultural pull and intra-group relations across the borders²⁹. The sense of rejection and disregard for the borders in partitioned culture area of Africa is probably greater than in industrialized and relatively individualistic societies of Europe. The peoples of Africa, those at the borders not exempted are known for their reservations, expressed in many instances in the form of armed resistance, against European colonial establishment, including the establishment of the colonial boundaries. Against this background, it is easy to see how the culture areas astride such boundaries have been conducted to domesticate, if not totally neutralize, the locally judged 'harmful' effects of the alien cultures and differing states mandates criss-crossing at the borders.

The ethnic ties across African borders are often reinforced by the interlocking character of the border settlement pattern. Here again, the details vary between the two border situations in focus but the substance of the matter is once more the same. Thus, whereas urbanization along borders is a major issue in transborder relations in Europe, there is perhaps no location

28 Examples of 'Partitioned Africans' include the Yoruba and the Borgu astride Nigeria-Benin Boundary, the Hausa across Nigeria/Niger, the Ewe of Ghana/Togo, the Wolof of Senegambia in West Africa; the Somali of Somalia/Ethiopia/Kenya/Djibouti in Northwest Africa; the Maasai of Tanzania/Kenya. The Alur of Uganda/Zaire, Kongo of Zaire/Congo/Angola; The Cokwe and the Lunda of Angola-Zaire in Central and East Africa; the Chewa-Ngoni of Zambia/Malawi/Mozambique, the Name and Ba-Tswana of Angola-South Africa and Botswana/South Africa respectively - all of Southern Africa. Each of these culture areas is sufficiently large to constitute units for transboundary regional planning.

29 This point is brought out with repeated emphasis in the case studies included in the book on *Partitioned Africans*. The Yoruba example received some publicity on January 9 - 10, 1983 when the Ooni of Ife and four prominent Nigerian Yoruba Oba paid a two-day visit to the Alaketu of Ketu, joined by the Onisabe of Sabe, two Yoruba Oba in the Peoples Republic of Benin (see the Report by A. I. Asiwaju in *West Africa* of Feb. 28, 1983).

outside the singular case of Brazzaville (Congo) and Kinshasa (formerly Leopoldville, in Zaire) where settlements of standard urban sizes are found in twin-type location along any African bi-national boundary. However, there are equivalent medium-sized urban centres not directly on the boundaries but within the confines of the borderlands, not to count the innumerable village-level communities, of the same type of dual location along several African borders³⁰. As in Europe, there is the same degree of interdependence in social and economic matters and a comparable degree of informal linkages between the communities across the borders. In a number of instances, as Mills has been able to discover in his study of the Nigeria-Benin case, the frontier village communities are experiencing a remarkably high rate of growth³¹, enough to justify the advance attention of experts concerned with border environmental questions.

African border communities and local authorities face the same kind of social, economic and political problems that had stimulated development from the informal to formalized transborder relations in Europe. Quite apart from questions relating to shared land and related natural resources, which call for transborder planning, there are actual experiences of governments in border areas which point attention to the need for joint action. Examples abound of rural development programmes of governments on one side of the border, falling short or becoming inadequate precisely because the services, provided for the nationals on the one side of the border could really not be made inaccessible to their kin on the other side. A situation like this has, for example, generated complaints by the Zambian government about Mozambican and Malawian Chewa and Ngoni kinsmen who over-burden the medical, agricultural and educational facilities provided under the state's rural integrated scheme for kinship groups resident on the Zambian sides of the boundaries with these neighbouring states³².

The description of the policy potentials in Africa will be incomplete if it does not include some statements as to whether or not there are in Africa institutional infrastructure or frameworks with a level of capacity which has enabled the Council of Europe to play the role known of it in the Europe

30 Examples of border settlements of interlocking location include such prominent Nigerian cases as Badagry and Porto Novo, Imeko and Ketu, Bussa and Nikki along the Nigeria-Benin Border; the two Daura, and Katsina and Maradi on the Nigeria-Niger boundary and other dual villages on the Nigeria-Cameroun border.

31 See L.R. Mills, "The Development of a Frontier Zone and Border Landscape along the Dahomey-Nigeria Boundary", in *The Journal of Tropical Geography*, Vol. 36, June 1973, p. 44.

32 S.H. Phiri, "Some Aspects of Spatial Interaction and Research to Government Policies in a Border Area: A Study in the Historical and Political Geography of Rural Development in the Zambia/Malawi and Zambia/Mozambique Frontier Zone (1970-1979)", Unpublished Ph.D Thesis, University of Liverpool, 1980.

case. There is, of course, no doubt the fact of numerous intergovernmental organizations in the continent; but for the purpose of the concern in this paper, there appears no better choice than the Organization of African Unity (OAU). The human and material resources necessary for the adoption of a transboundary planning and coordination have been found to be a truly African-wide phenomenon. What is required is an organization with a political leverage at the level of the entire continent itself. Aside the current anxiety about OAU's commitment to its own preservation and survival, there is no doubt about its capacity to play the roles analogous to those of the Council of Europe. If adequately informed and advised, the OAU can resolve to aid the promotion of borders that join in the same way as it has resolved to maintain the boundaries as they were at the independence of member states. The same concern for continental unity, peace and overall development which decided the resolution for the *status quo* in 1963 is today all the more compelling for another decision to devalue the barrier effects of the boundaries. African equivalents of the European Conference of Ministers Responsible for Regional Planning and especially the CLRAE can be easily added to the existing organizations with the OAU.

Given the fact of the immense possibilities for transboundary planning in Africa, the question then arises as to what should be done to translate the potentials into actual policy. Several considerations easily come to mind; but perhaps the most important and urgent relates to the need for a massive and systematic public enlightenment programme. This is necessary to bring about a desirable change in the attitude and outlook of the political and bureaucratic elites at all levels, including those of the border regions themselves. The special emphasis on the local political and bureaucratic elite is placed if only to call attention to the extent to which Africa has lagged behind trends in Western Europe and some other parts of the wider world, notably North America, in spite of the point about comparable resources. For whereas in Western Europe and say, the U.S.-Mexico borderlands, informal linkages across borders have for long involved local authorities on both sides of borders³³, in Africa, cross-border informal linkages have remained for the most part an affair of the members of the border communities and their traditional rulers without the involvement of their local governments or

33 Studies of informal linkages involving local, political and business elites along non-African borders include the "Regio" series in Europe. The United States-Mexico researchers are more impressive in number, and they include William D'Antonio and William H. Form, *Influentials in Two Border Cities*, University of Notre Dame Press, 1965; J.W. Sloan and Jonathan P. West, "Community Integration and Policies Among Elites in Two Border Cities: Los Dos Laredos" in *Journal of Inter-American Studies and World Affairs*, Vol. 18, 1976, 451-474 and "The Role of Informal Policy-Making in United States-Mexico Border Cities" in *Social Science Quarterly*, Vol. 58, No. 2, June 1977, pp. 277-282.

local administrations³⁴ manned by the Western-educated elite. This point is especially manifest in situations such as those which prevail along all the four landward borders of Nigeria where, as elsewhere in West Africa, an officially English-speaking federalist state is in daily encounter with French-speaking centralist neighbours; and local governments as such in the one state are in direct juxtaposition with the local Administrations of its adjacent neighbours³⁵.

To ensure success of the public enlightenment programme, the need for a new approach to borderlands research is more than obvious. This calls for a specially collaborative effort. Routinely, the recognition of borderlands as distinct regions compels the use of multidisciplinary instrument for their study. This point is all the more pressing since the view of development and cooperation taken in this paper is one of complete integration, not limited to trade and market. Encouragement should therefore, be given for teamwork involving experts of appropriate research orientation and interests in the related disciplines of the humanities, social sciences, law, environmental design (with particular reference to environmental impact studies of border situations), education, public health, agriculture and the natural sciences³⁶. The second level of collaboration relates to institutions focussing on the various borders or distinct segments of particular borders and border regions. Such institutional collaboration must connect relevant research centres both within individual nation-states and those of their neighbours across the borders³⁷. This bi-national dimension is especially demanded by the need to

34 This special feature of African border relations will be discussed in the paper - "Informal Linkages Across Borders: The African Experience" - to be presented at the International Seminar on "Problem-Solving Along Borders: A Comparative Perspective, Centre for Inter-American and Border Studies of UTEP in March 1984.

35 The Concept of 'Local Government' denotes a degree of local autonomy that does not form part of the feature of "Local Administration"; it is, therefore, usual to use the first in reference to local or regional authorities in federal states and the latter for equivalent units in centralist states.

36 For a sample effort, see A.I. Asiwaju and Adeniyi, P.O. (eds.) *Borderlands in Africa: A Multidisciplinary and Comparative Focus on Nigeria and West Africa* (Lagos: University of Lagos Press, 1989).

37 For a more detailed elaboration of the writer's thoughts on research as a tool for the achievement of Transborder cooperation in Africa, see his *Artificial Boundaries*, an Inaugural Lecture delivered at the University of Lagos, Nigeria, in December 1984 and published same year. Subsequent developments in research and policy on border questions in Africa, with particular reference to Nigeria, have been detailed in the 'Preface' to the English/French bilingual re-issue of the Lecture, under the imprint of Civiletis International (Publishers) in New York. In Nigeria, perhaps the most important development on the policy scene has been the establishment of the National Boundary Commission with its emphasis on peaceful resolution of conflicts and promotion of transborder cooperation and confidence-building. The selling of the idea to other African countries is anticipated.

adequately inform policies on bi-national relations, good neighbourliness and international cooperation.

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