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Introduction

The European Union (EU) is the regional organization with the most developed and active external relations in the world. In spite of the ongoing debate on whether it is a global actor or not and on the EU's capacities to act (Hill 1999; Cremona 2004; Petiteville 2006), it tries to contribute to global governance in a variety of fields (trade, humanitarian aid, development, environment, peace and security, etc.). Moreover, since the 1990's and the breakup of Yugoslavia, and since the beginning of the 2000's with the terrorist attacks in the USA, Madrid and London, the war in Iraq, the increasing phenomenon of state failure, the development of organized crime and the risk of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) spreading, the EU has increasingly been focusing on global security challenges as well as on how to deal with these 'new' threats that, according to it, are stemming from other parts of the world and endangering Europe (European Security Strategy, 2003).

One of the instruments the EU uses for global governance is interregional cooperation [1] and, through this cooperation, the promotion of regional integration as a way to respond to different kind of challenges such as peace and security, economic development or insertion into the globalized economy. This dimension of EU foreign policy[2] logically originates in its own historical experience and the perception of the great success it has achieved transforming a war-prone region into a security community (Alecu de Flers & Regelsberger 2005; Keukeleire & MacNaughtan 2008).

In this sense, Waever (1996) argues convincingly that in Europe, security, integration and identity have been tied together in a specific narrative: integration has been given a security quality as a matter of survival for Europe, a necessity for its peace and stability with the aim no to go back to the past

1Interregional cooperation is carried out in multiple fields such as trade, economic integration, development assistance, security, institution building, etc. The EU has regional policies or has concluded interregional agreements with almost every regions and regional organizations in the word.

2 EU foreign policy includes the policy led by the European External Action Service (EEAS) including the CFSP and CSDP, by the European Commission directorates having an external dimension, and the foreign policy of EU member states. However, in this paper I will focus on the foreign policy carried out by the EEAS and implemented by DEVCO and the EU delegations on the ground (formerly to the Lisbon Treaty reform, by DG DEV and AIDCO).

wars and avoid fragmentation. Therefore, my argument is that regional integration as a part of EU's identity and security has been translated through its foreign policy into the promotion of regional integration in other regions of the world as an answer to their security issues, but also to the EU's own security issues.

Interregional cooperation, and in particular the promotion of regional integration is thus emphasized in many EU official documents as a way for the EU to contribute to security governance. Indeed, the European Security Strategy (2003) stresses that "regional organizations (…) make an important contribution to a more orderly world"; and in its Communication on Conflict Prevention (2001) the European Commission commits to "give higher priority to its support for regional integration and in particular regional organizations with a clear conflict prevention mandate". Hence, promotion of regional integration seems to be for the EU a necessary part of security governance, stemming from its own securitization of integration as something essential for EU security (Waever 1996).

The main tools used by the EU in this regard are the diverse kind of agreements concluded with regions and regional organizations throughout the world, through which the EU channels financial and technical aid and, within them, the provisions for political dialogue. In many cases these agreements enable the EU to finance programs of partner regional organizations and help building their institutional capacities.

My paper will focus in particular on the assistance given by the EU to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) within the framework of the Cotonou Agreement and channeled through the European Community-West Africa Regional Indicative Programs, as well as on the political dialogue between the two regions. My argument is that the EU is trying to promote and influence the West African security and defense regionalization process going-on with ECOWAS[3]– and is, to a certain extent, shaping this process by exporting its political values and security norms through different means (socialization through political dialogue, technical and financial assistance, etc.). Therefore, a number of questions will be studied throughout this paper: why and how is the EU engaging in security governance in West Africa? Which is the main discourse(s) legitimizing this engagement? What makes this 'shaping' possible? Is there a tension between the EU's attempt to shape ECOWAS security and defense regionalization process and the concept of 'local ownership' and 'partnership' in the EU discourse?

The methodology I use in this paper relies on a discursive analysis of the EU and ECOWAS official documents, mainly in the fields of security and development; as well as on a discursive analysis of the interviews I carried out with European Commission and EEAS officials, and with Western Africans diplomatic officials. The objective is, on the one hand, to understand EU's

3 It has to be noted, however, that ECOWAS does not include all West African countries; Mauritania is not anymore part of the regional organization.

main discourse, how its identity constitute its action and objectives in this particular dimension of its foreign policy; on the other hand, to understand how ECOWAS perceives its relationship with the EU and how it has been adapting to this exposure to EU's ambitions, objectives, values and norms. My analysis relies as well on other primary material such as action plans, cooperation programs and their evaluations elaborated by the EU and ECOWAS, and also the reports of meetings in the framework of the political dialogue. This paper also draws from the literature on EU foreign policy.

The EU's structural foreign policy and security governance

Conflict prevention through a structural foreign policy

According to Manners (Manner 2002, p. 240), the EU is predisposed to act in a normative way – to promote norms and values – because of three main features. Firstly, as a result of EU's historical construction; secondly because of its characteristics as a hybrid polity; and lastly, as a consequence of its political-legal constitution, its constitutional norms embodying the principles of democracy, rule of law, social justice and respect for human rights. We can link this explanation of the EU as a normative power to the EU's approach to security governance, and in particular to one of its main component, conflict prevention[4]; on the one hand, the transformation of a conflict-prone Europe into a peaceful and prosperous area where war is not even a possible solution anymore resulted in the EU's focus on conflict prevention as aiming structural stability and at addressing the roots causes of conflict[5]. Indeed, European integration is associated by the EU to a long-term conflict prevention and peacebuilding project:

"The EU itself an on-going exercise in making peace and prosperity, has a big role to play in global efforts for conflict prevention." (Communication from the Commission on Conflict Prevention 2001).

And:

"The European Union is a successful example of conflict prevention, based on democratic values and respect for human rights, justice and solidarity, economic prosperity and sustainable development." (EU Programme for the Prevention of Violent Conflicts 2001)

Therefore, in its foreign policy the EU promotes a long term holistic and structural approach to conflict prevention through partnership and multilateralism, and using tools such as development and humanitarian aid, trade, interregional cooperation, political dialogue, etc. (Manners 2006;

4Indeed, the European Security Strategy (2003), states that "with the new threats, the first line of defense will often be abroad. The new threats are dynamic. (…) This implies that we should be ready to act before a crisis occurs. Conflict prevention and threat prevention cannot start too early."

5Addressing structural instability and root causes of conflict means tackling the socio-economic inequalities, environmental, natural resources, security issues and institutional weaknesses that, most of the time, are at the origin of violent conflict.

Lucarelli & Menotti 2006)[6]. Even if it is recognized that symptoms of conflict should also be addressed through more conventional crisis management, the emphasis is on structural conflict prevention, while the recourse to force remains the last possible option:

"Development policy and other co-operation programmes provide the most powerful instruments at the Community's disposal for treating the root causes of conflict. There is a need to take a genuinely long-term and integrated approach, which will address all aspects of structural instability in countries at risk." (Communication from the Commission on Conflict Prevention 2001)

This is what Manners – trying to differentiate a European from a more general Western approach – calls the EU's value of 'sustainable peace' which would be the EU's own translation of the more general value of 'peace' (Manners 2006; Manners 2006)[7]. On the other hand, the construction of regional integration – through the pooling of sovereignty and the building of supranational law – on the basis of principles such as democracy, rule of law and respect for human rights, turned the promotion of regional integration as well as of these principles into major dimensions of EU's conflict prevention approach, and more generally of EU's involvement in security governance. Indeed, as I mentioned in the introduction, integration has been at some point securitized, it constitutes Europe's identity and it is seen as a matter of survival for Europe to escape fragmentation and the return to past wars and divisions (Waever 1996). The result is that integration has the tendency to be understood by the EU as an imperative for peace and security also in other regions of the world following the logic that if it has been good – even necessary – for Europe, it should as well be good for others[8].

This holistic conflict prevention approach of the EU can be better understood using the concept of structural foreign policy elaborated by Keukeleire. Structural foreign policy is a policy conducted over the long-term, seeking to influence or to shape sustainable political, legal, socio-economic, security and mental structures. The objective of a structural foreign policy would be to shape structures that are sustainable in the long term, including when external pressure and/or support is gone (Keukeleire & Macnaughtan 2008, pp. 25-27). In this sense, the EU has a structural foreign policy aiming at shaping, transforming its international environment through its agreements,

6The EU's discourse points to extensive and comprehensive development assistance and programs respecting the local ownership of the beneficiaries (Communication from the Commission on Conflict Prevention 2001; European Consensus on Development 2005)

7Manners argues that none of the general values (peace, democracy, respect for human rights, rule of law) promoted by the EU are unique to the EU and its foreign policy; but what is interesting is the way in which particular EU interpretation of these values have been translated into guidelines principles of EU policy. These principles include conflict prevention principles in peace; conditionality principles for human rights, democracy, rule of law and good governance.

8This belief was confirmed in my interviews with EEAS officials (interviews on 13 September 2011 and on 16 September 2011).

development programs, enlargement policy, etc; trying to diffuse its values and norms internationally, with the will and the belief it can further its particular view of global governance. In the case of security governance in Western Africa, I will argue that the EU uses a structural foreign policy in two ways in order to influence and shape the peace and security architecture of the region. On the one hand, the EU promotes regional integration as the answer to security and stability issues, through the financing of ECOWAS security programs and supporting the development of its institutional capabilities. On the other hand, the EU is trying to export its political constitutional values and security norms, among which its own long-term holistic conflict prevention approach to Western Africa. The objective would be to "make these norms part of the mental structure of the elites and the populations" in the region (Keukeleire & Macnaughtan 2008, p. 223); thus in this case that ECOWAS officials and Western African elites in particular internalize the EU's approach, norms and values.

The EU has one crucial instrument to carry out its structural foreign policy here, the Cotonou Agreement[9]. Through this Agreement, as I will detail later, funding is directed to ECOWAS to support its programs and build its institutional capacity; it also provides for an on-going political dialogue between the two. Political dialogue is particularly relevant because it enables socialization[10] to take place through exchanges of view on political and security issues, dialogue around EU norms and values, and through the creation of a foreign policy machinery with regular meetings at different levels (Balfour 2006; Keukeleire & Macnaughtan 2008).

The EU discourses and security governance

Having described the nature of EU foreign policy, and the link between its identity, its security and the promotion of regional integration as a foreign policy action in the area of security governance and, in particular, of conflict prevention, I will now describe the EU's discourses at the basis of its action in security governance.

Firstly, one of the EU's discourses concerns its own security, presented as one of its main reasons to get involved into security governance and conflict prevention. This aspect is the central topic of the European Security Strategy (2003) which enumerates the list of 'new' security threats that Europe is facing (terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, regional conflicts, state failure and organized crime). The Strategy focuses in particular on the EU's vulnerability in the post Cold War globalized era:

9Legal agreements are the main instruments for EU's structural foreign policy. They represent a basis to support and/or induce structural reforms, and strengthened political, legal and socio-economic structures. (Keukeleire & Macnaughtan 2008, p. 207)

10According to Checkel (2007, p. 5), socialization is "a process of inducting actors into the norms and rules of a given community".

"The post Cold War is one of increasingly open borders in which the internal and external aspects are indissolubly linked (…). These developments (…) have increased European dependence – and so vulnerability."

And:

"Europe faces new threats which are more diverse, less visible and less predictable."

It also points to other regions of the world, from where negative security externalities are stemming and affecting Europe's security in the form of drug trafficking, terrorism or migration:

"Taking these elements together – terrorism committed to maximum violence, the availability of weapons of mass destruction, organised crime, the weakening of the state system and the privatisation of force – we could be confronted with a very radical threat indeed." (European Security Strategy 2003)

The somehow dramatic tone and wording used throughout the Strategy is used to demonstrate and legitimize – to national government and populations – the need for the EU's action in security governance. The discourse is one of a vulnerable Europe endangered by unstable regions in other part of the world, in order to promote actions to defend the EU against these threats. Of course, some areas are prioritized – being more sensitive for the EU – in particular its neighbourhood and Africa. Thus, as I have already underlined, the EU's promotion of regional integration – an essential dimension of its own security identity – is linked to its security concern. The discourse is that the European experience, replicated in other regions, would provide for economic development, democratic stability and a peaceful world (Terpan 2010):

"Both among its immediate neighbours and throughout the world, the EU seeks to project stability in supporting regional integration." (Communication from the Commission on Conflict Prevention 2001)

On the other hand, this security discourse is linked to regional integration through an general consensus on the fact that security issues need regional answers. It is in line with and linked to the 'logic', also developed by prominent scholars (Lake & Morgan 1997; Buzan & Waever 2003), that security issues are in general transnational and very often trans-regional, therefore they cannot be addressed efficiently by individual states[11]. The adequate answer in this case would be to adopt a regional approach to peace and security:

"Coherent policies are also needed regionally, especially in dealing with conflict. Problems are rarely solved on a single country basis, or without regional support, as in different ways experience in both the Balkans and West Africa." (European Security Strategy, 2003)

11This was one of the main arguments of the EEAS officials I interviewed (interviews on September, 13th 2011 and on September 16th, 2011).

Indeed, in all its thematic documents dealing with security issues the EU recommends the support of regional initiatives. This trend can be found in the EU Strategy to combat illicit accumulation and trafficking of SALW and their ammunition (2006), in the EU Programme for the Prevention of Violent Conflicts (2001), in the Communication 'Developing a strategic concept on tackling organized crime' (2005), etc.

The second basic discourse supporting EU's involvement in security governance relates to a 'solidarity' discourse. Throughout all the texts, the prevailing idea is that the EU has a 'mission' and a duty to fulfil towards poorer and more unstable parts of the world because of its own history, prosperity and peace, but also because it has the necessary means and instruments for launching holistic conflict prevention policies:

"The European Union has a duty to try to address the many cross-cutting issues that generate or contribute to conflict. It is also well placed to do this. It has the duty because it is one of the main promoters and beneficiaries of global openness and co-operation. It is well placed because it has the means and the authority to make a real impact." (Communication from the Commission on Conflict Prevention 2001)

Throughout this discourse the EU is constructed as a model which should help other less advanced regions – meaning less developed and still prone to conflict – to become more like it.

Thirdly, the other major idea present in the EU's discourses is that the EU has to assert itself as a major global actor, increase its influence in international relations – security governance being a major area to do so – and, by doing so, promote its worldview of a peaceful world based on multilateralism. These aspects are very present in the European Security Strategy (2003) which is considered a turning point for the EU's assertion as a global actor:

"A European Union which takes greater responsibility and which is more active will be one which carries greater political weight."

And:

"In a world of global threats and global media, our security and prosperity increasingly depend of an effective multilateral system. The development of a stronger international society, well functioning international institutions and a rule-based international order is our objective."

This general discourse implies different things. On the one hand, establishing relations with other regional actors is seen as a way to gain more weight in international relations. Indeed, the EU is supposed to be a privileged political partner for any regional organization in the world; it can therefore exert its influence on them in a favorable context for implementing its own policies and priorities, and project its conception of governance (Nivet 2006; Terpan 2010). In this line, when interviewed on September 13th, 2011, an EEAS official

working on West Africa, explained to me that the EU is a natural interlocutor for ECOWAS because the organization is the mirror of the EU in West Africa. On the other hand, the promotion of multilateralism is also linked to the EU's link between security, identity and regional integration: the EU's discourse points to a multilateralism based on regional organizations as one of the pathways to peace and security[12].

Thus, these three discourses are the basis of the EU's foreign policy action in the area of security governance; they are linked and reinforce each other giving a strong ground for the EU's promotion of regional integration as a mean to insure its own security as well as the security and stability of other regions.

The ECOWAS and the security situation in Western Africa

The European Union involvement in ECOWAS's security issues

Keeping in mind the discourses justifying the EU's involvement in security governance, why is West Africa's security situation and ECOWAS of particular importance for the EU, while this region is not even included in what the EU considers its 'neighborhood'? Indeed, the EU's involvement increased significantly in the last years: in the European Community - West Africa Regional Strategy Paper and Regional Indicative Programme (RIP) 2002-2007 support for conflict prevention and good governance was a non focal sector and was attributed 10 million euros, mainly in order to support ECOWAS; whereas in the 2008-2013 RIP, "consolidation of good governance and regional stability" became the second focal sector with 119 million euro, representing 20% of the total allocation of funds through the RIP.

One of the answers to this question concerns the EU's security. I stressed in the preceding section how the EU's discourse is concerned with these 'new' security threats. In fact, West Africa, as I will show later, seems to reunites all these security problems: all the states in the region are fragile states with weak institutions and control on their territory, which is a reason why drug trafficking, among other traffics, is increasing exponentially. The cocaine route originating from Latin America, now passes through West Africa before entering Europe. Terrorism is a recent phenomenon in the region, particularly in the Sahel region with the development of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and the kidnapping of EU citizens. Adding to these, the EU member states are increasingly concerned with illegal migration following the patterns of former colonial relations; these illegal migrants are fleeing from conflicts and underdevelopment. These issues are perceived in Europe as threatening its stability, and consequently the discourse pointing to needed actions is strong; as a matter of fact, West Africa is even brought up in the European

[12] This belief should nevertheless be considered carefully. It seems to ignore the fact that not all community-building projects rely on democracy and rule of law (ASEAN is an example); moreover, the way an interstate community will interact with the rest of the world is also likely to depend of its collective identity, which means it might not be automatically peaceful or open (Rumelili 2008).

Security Strategy as an example of an alarming situation requiring EU's involvement:

"The risks of proliferation grow over time; left alone, terrorist networks will become ever more dangerous. State failure and organised crime spread if they are neglected – as we have seen in West Africa. This implies that we should be ready to act before a crisis occurs." (European Security Strategy 2003)

This large augmentation is connected to the link the EU has been making since the beginning of the 2000's between security and development. The European Security Strategy (2003) states for example that security is a precondition for development. The result has been an increasing importance of security issues and objectives in EU development programs.
Another answer relates to the close relationship that some EU member states are keeping with ECOWAS member states since the end of colonization. It is the case of France with Ivory Coast and Mali for example, or the UK with Nigeria and Ghana. Indeed West Africa was colonized by three EU member states: France, the UK and Portugal. The links are still very strong and these EU member states, particularly France and the UK, are investing a lot in Western African countries in terms of economic, development and security policies, trying to maintain and/or further their influence. In the area of security, using the EU framework is also a way to 'europeanize' their foreign policy and be less exposed to accusation of neo-colonialism or paternalism. Moreover, these close links and shared history between Europe and West Africa, but also more generally with Africa, enable the EU to exert a particular influence in the region[13]. Hence, involvement in West Africa is an opportunity – reinforced by the demands from ECOWAS member states for cooperation and assistance[14] (Nivet, 2006), as well by the 'special' relationship the EU has with other regional organizations – to further its global influence. Africa is becoming increasingly important for the EU on a foreign and security policies level, as an important element of the EU's ambition to develop a "global foreign policy presence" (Keukeleire & Macnaughtan 2008, p. 216).

The security situation in Western Africa

13Taking into account that the EU and the EU member states together are the first donor in Africa. Moreover, the share of Sub-Saharan Africa in total aid commitments from the EU has even increased from 26% in 2005 to 40% in 2008 (Kitt 2010).
14During my interviews with Malian diplomatic officials on September 14th, 2011 and with Dr. Ibn Chambas, former President of the ECOWAS Commission, on the same date, the general discourse was that the EU should provide more assistance to ECOWAS, in particular in the field of organized crime, and mostly against drug trafficking. Dr Ibn Chambas also commented that the EU should share its 'best practices' with ECOWAS in terms of institutional organization. These demands were confirmed by an EEAS official working on West Africa (September 13th, 2011) who told me that ECOWAS officials asked the European Commission to send an EU mission to share its experience on the institutional level.

West Africa is a "geographical expression" describing a heterogeneous and "complex geo-political and social construction" (Francis 2010). The region includes sixteen very different states in terms of territorial size, population, economic strength, history – they emerged from the colonization of France, UK and Portugal[15] –, and are among the most underdeveloped states in terms of socio-economic development[16]. Moreover, they are situated at different stage of democratization, from consolidating democracy (Senegal, Ghana), to post conflict societies (Liberia, Sierra Leone) and to democratic transition (Nigeria) (Ebo 2007). The colonization of the region by three different countries led to cultural, linguistic, political and administrative differences which often fuelled political disputes among the leaders of Western African countries (Francis 2010); inter-state conflict is, however, not really an issue today anymore in the region. Nevertheless, the security situation in Western Africa is complex and interconnected: what is called 'classical' security issues such as violent conflicts (mostly ethnic-based, political, internal conflicts), 'new' security threats such as terrorism and organized crime, but also 'human security' issues (chronic poverty, underdevelopment, environmental and natural resources problems, etc).

Most of the literature on West African's history point to the colonization period as being at the source of many of these problems. On the one hand, the borders designed by the colonial powers divided ethnic groups among different states and regrouped others artificially in new states – leading to various intra-state conflicts opposing ethnic groups. On the other hand, the transplantation of European administrative and institutional structures, disconnected from the traditional African society and its patterns of collaboration led to the fragility of the new African states, the dominance of neo-patrimonialism and an absence of democratic structures, culture and practices (Alao 2000). The consequence has been, since then, the chronic political instability of West African countries. Periods of military dictatorship have been alternating with transitions to democracy, often interrupted by tense elections, violence and new coup d'état. Even though today most of the countries find themselves in a phase of democratic transition or consolidation, democracy is fragile and the possibility of coup d'état is still present like it was recently witnessed in Guinea or Cote d'Ivoire[17] (Madior Fall 2008). The transplantation of foreign administrative and institutional structures also led to structural failure in the administration of justice and the inability of the states to guarantee the security of their populations (Alao 2000); the preoccupation of

15The Francophone states are Senegal, Mali, Cote d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Niger, Benin, Togo and Mauritania; the Anglophone states are Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia, Gambia; the Lusophone states are Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde.

16The combined GDP of ECOWAS states in 2005 is 139 billion of dollars, but with Nigeria representing 78 billion, while Liberia and Guinea Bissau having less than one million (Ebo 2007).

17 See the Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations office for West Africa (UNOWA) (2011); during my interviews with Malian diplomatic officials (September 14th, 2011) and with Dr Ibn Chambas (September 14th, 2011), they repeatedly insisted on the major problem of political succession and on the fragility of democracy in Western Africa.

the authoritarian governments in power was mainly regime survival and self-enrichment instead of the security and welfare of their populations. Even after transition to democracy the rule of law remained very weak in most of the countries; hence, Ebo (2007, p. 3) argues that a "defining feature of security governance in the sub region has been the characteristic failure of the state to provide and/or guarantee public security". He also adds that this long period of military rules and the crisis of the post-colonial state have produced predatory statutory institutions – threatening and abusing citizens– and informal security structures often beyond the state (non-state actors opposing the states or allied with it) and sharing its theoretical monopoly of force (Ebo 2007, p. 4).

Chronic poverty, underdevelopment – originating partly from the colonization period – and internal conflicts also created a favorable context for the development of criminality. On the one hand, underdevelopment turned Western African countries into easy prey for organized crime (drug, human, oil, medicines, cigarettes, toxic wastes trafficking)[18]. This phenomenon, and in particular drug trafficking becoming a major problem in the region[19], is destabilizing the fragile democratic institutions of these countries. According to Aning (2009) there is the possibility of drug barons taking over political parties and the parliaments and executive branches of governments in West Africa because of the absence of state support for political parties and the lack of effective regulation on campaign financing[20]. On the other hand, the outbreak of internal conflicts like in Liberia in 1989 and Sierra Leone in 1991 opened the way throughout the whole region for the trafficking of small weapons, natural resources such as diamond to finance the war, and other criminal activities sustaining the war economy (Bah 2005; Francis 2010).

Finally, underdevelopment, ethnic and religious tension provided the space for the development of fundamentalism[21]. The result has been the apparition of terrorism in the region linked to AQIM and aiming both at kidnapping foreigners and at actions against state's institutions[22].

These security problems thus seem closely connected to each other. The trans-regional dimension can be emphasized: during the many civil wars, neighboring states were involved in the conflicts supporting either the

18See UNODC Regional Programme for West Africa 2010-2014.

19 "UNODC estimates that around 40 tons of cocaine consumed in Europe in 2006 had been trafficked through West Africa" (UNODC Regional Programme for West Africa 2010-2014)

20 Dr Ibn Chambas (interview on September 14th, 2011) also pointed to drug trafficking as one of the main security problems of the region and to its consequence on the political sphere and security institutions through the bribing of officials.

21 Nevertheless, it has to be noted that the development of Islamic fundamentalism has its roots in the Arabic colonization which preceded Western colonization, and is fostered by the spread of a political Islam coming from the Gulf countries.

22See the report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations office for West Africa (UNOWA) 2011 and the UNODC Regional Programme for West Africa 2010-2014.

governments or the rebels, refugees left for neighboring countries and contributed to destabilize them by getting involved in criminal activities or proposing their services as mercenaries; organized criminality and terrorist group are developing their network throughout the whole region (Francis 2010; Bah 2005; UNOWA 2011), etc. The EU and ECOWAS discourses favoring a regional approach to security issues stems from this situation of interconnection, as they framed increased regionalization as the solution to resolve it. In line with this discourse, ECOWAS has started to develop a regional peace and security architecture since the beginning of the 1990's.

The development of ECOWAS security architecture

What is striking is that, in spite of being the main purpose of ECOWAS in the Treaty, regional economic integration is less advanced and integrated than ECOWAS security mandate. In fact, the creation of ECOWAS was led by a mix of economic, political and security considerations; when established by the Treaty of Lagos in 1975, it was conceived as a mean to gain economic independence, self-sufficiency within the region and to support development (Alao 2000). However, the main interests of the governing political or military leaders were regime survival and the accumulation of wealth for them and their supporters (neo-patrimonalism); regional integration, with the Protocol of Non-aggression (1978) and the Protocol on Mutual Assistance on Defense (1981), was instrumentalized for this purpose (Alao 2000; Faria 2004; Ebo 2007). Later on, the creation of the Economic Community of West African States Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in 1990 to deal with the civil war in Liberia was the result of a security vacuum after the end of the Cold War[23], a fear for regime stability and of spillover of civil war; while the deepening of integration with the Treaty of Abuja in 1993 was also the consequence of these security and stability issues, as well as of democratization processes, and of the will to avoid economic marginalization.
Therefore, as I mentioned, in the 1990's, the internal conflicts in Liberia (1989), Sierra Leone (1991), Guinea-Bissau (1998-99), Cote d'Ivoire (2002) and Liberia (2003), triggered a regional response with the creation of an *ad hoc* instrument, the ECOMOG. An important amount of literature analyzes ECOMOG's interventions in these conflicts as ECOMOG's intervention in Liberia is a symbolic event, being the first ever African peace mission. This literature is quite contradictory, one part stressing its success and analyzing its shortcomings (Faria 2004, Alao 2000, etc.), while another part is mainly pointing to its failures and weaknesses (Obi 2009; Francis 2010; etc). Nevertheless, ECOMOG is the point of departure for the development of a regional architecture of security in West Africa. Since then, ECOWAS has been trying to develop a permanent institutional and normative framework to address these challenges with its Mechanism for Conflict Prevention Management, Resolution, Peace-keeping and Security (1999) working, as Ebo demonstrates, as a "pivot for the evolution of a related body of normative instruments and confidence building measures which have come to form the

23Western powers were unwilling to intervene directly in the Western African conflicts, as well as the UN which was already overloaded and lacking capabilities to deal with other crises (Faria 2004).

core of regional security cooperation in West Africa" (Ebo 2007). This Mechanism introduced an important change by moving beyond the strict sovereignty of states to intervention in the case of an "internal conflict that threatens to trigger a humanitarian disaster, or, that poses a serious threat to peace and security in the sub-region" (art.25). It was then complemented by a Moratorium on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) (1998)[24] replaced later by a binding Convention on SALW (2006), the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance (2001)[25], The Political declaration on Drug Abuse, Illicit Drug Trafficking and Organized Crimes in West Africa (2008) and its Action Plan, ECOWAS Common Approach on Migration (2008), the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (2008), etc. Nowadays, ECOWAS is in the process of adopting a West African Code of Conduct for Armed Forces and Security Service, establishing an ECOWAS Standby Force (ESF) of specially trained and equipped forces from the 15 member states, while a peace and security early warning system, the ECOWAS Warning and Response Network (ECOWARN), has been set up[26].

In spite of these developments, this regional framework remains weak because of the lack of resources and capabilities of the organization. The problems of ECOMOG have already been analyzed by many scholars (Alao 2000, Faria 2004, Obi 2009, Francis 2010, etc.), they usually point to: the lack of financial resources and equipment; an unclear mandate, lack of transparency and neutrality; a lack of political control over the military; the problem of Nigeria's domination; a lack of joint preparations; etc. Nevertheless, over its many missions, ECOMOG has managed to improve its practices and capabilities; it is now to be seen how this will developed with the establishment of the ESF.

It is, however, important to note that it is already surprising that a region with states facing such poverty problems, political instability and having relatively weak institutional capabilities was capable to achieve what ECOWAS has achieved in the area of peace and security (Ebo 2007). Thus, the criticism on the lack of political will is not always relevant in particular when it comes to intervening or deploying mediation efforts. This criticism is usually more pertinent when it comes to the implementation at the national level of the regional decisions and of the normative framework (Faria 2004; Nivet 2006; Ebo 2007; Obi 2009).

The EU and the fostering/shaping of ECOWAS security and defense regionalization process

24The Moratorium is also a landmark as it was the first attempt by any African regional organization to establish measures against SALW (Garcia 2009).

25This Protocol represents the normative basis for the Mechanism addressing issues of security sector governance but also more generally of the constitutional principles that should constitute the basis of the West African democracies (Ebo 2007, Madior Fall 2008).

26The ESF and ECOWARN are also situated within the African Union Peace and security architecture (APSA), a continental security structure working on the basis of the sub-regional organizations.

In this section, I focus exclusively on the action of the EU towards ECOWAS in the field of peace and security. Initially, it has to be noted that the EU strategy in the region in the area of peace, stability and security also include the programs directed to ECOWAS member states through the National Indicative Programs (NIP). However, my interest in this section is in the furthering of regional integration as an EU tool for security governance. Thus, I will focus mainly on the Regional Indicative Program (RIP) for West Africa, and on other instruments such as the African Peace Facility.

In the preceding sections I explained why the EU was concerned with West Africa security issues, the security situation of the region, and the evolution of ECOWAS peace and security architecture. As an answer to the shortcomings of ECOWAS, the EU's declared objective is "to help to bring about a significant improvement in regional governance and stability", to support and to place the organization in "a proactive position" (RIP 2008-2013). This is the first dimension of the EU action: promoting and fostering the regionalization of security and defense policies in West Africa, and strengthening ECOWAS as the adequate answer to respond to the security threats the region is facing. However, the role of the EU in West African security governance goes beyond this mere support, the EU is also shaping this security and defense policy regionalization process – exporting its own political values and security norms to the region through different channels such as political dialogue, on-going contacts at all levels, technical assistance, etc.

EU's actions and initiatives towards the strengthening of the ECOWAS peace and security architecture

Development cooperation with ACP countries started in 1963 with the Yaoundé Convention. The aim was to allow them to maintain a preferential access to the EC market as well as to receive aid. Yaoundé was then replaced by a succession of four Lomé Conventions which broadened the scope of cooperation. Lomé I (1975-80) was already supporting regional cooperation among ACP countries even though it was restricted to the economic level[27], this trend was confirmed by Lomé III where the EC committed to support efforts from the ACP countries "to organize themselves into regional grouping" (Lomé III Convention, 1985-90), and which included a Title on 'Regional cooperation'. The Lomé IV Convention (1990-95) went one

27 ECOWAS was actually created in 1975 by the Treaty of Lagos, it is likely that the EC example, the links with EC member states, as well as the support for regional grouping and cooperation in these EU-ACP agreements played an role in the event. Interestingly, in one of my interviews (September 14th, 2011), a Commission official from DEVCO summarized the support of the EU for regional integration in this way: "when the EU started developing its programs (…) the first thing we came up with was that there has to be regional cooperation because it's the way we do things…you create like in the bible, you take a rib out of yourself and you create another human being. We are based on regional cooperation so they must be as well (…)." – this argument reflects the EU discourse that what has been positive and necessary for Europe should also be for other regions.

step further by giving it “high priority” and including drug trafficking – for the first time a non-economic area of action – in the possible domains of regional cooperation that the EC would support. Not much later, a Communication from the Commission to the Council stressed that African regional organizations “have an important potential in the field of peace-building, conflict prevention, management and resolution” and that the EU should explore the possibility to engage these organizations in this kind of activities and even support them (Communication from the Commission to the Council. The EU and the issue of conflict in Africa: peace-building, conflict prevention and beyond, 1996). Indeed, since the beginning of the 1990’s, the issue of conflict in Africa gained an increasing importance in the relationship between the EU and Africa, the number of EU documents on this topic testifies this new concern[28]. There were multiple reasons to this new interest, the number of conflict in Africa was exploding during this period, African regional organizations – in particular ECOWAS – started intervening in these conflicts, and the EU was elaborating its new foreign and security policy (Faria 2004). Thus, since the crises in Liberia and Sierra Leone, the EU started mentioning quasi-systematically ECOWAS in CFSP statements concerning West Africa (Nivet 2006). However, the turning point in EU-ECOWAS relationship, and more generally in EU-ACP relations, is the replacement of Lomé IV by the Cotonou agreement in 2000, which made the relationship increasingly political and conditional, and not exclusively focused on economic and social development anymore (Keukeleire & Macnaughtan 2008)[29]. The emphasis on political norms and values became much higher with the introduction of ‘essential elements’ (respect for human rights, democratic principles, rule of law) which violation can lead to the suspension of the cooperation; a political dialogue was established to discuss these norms and values, as well as other political topics such as arms trade, organized crime, migration, peace and security. It also introduced peacebuilding, conflict prevention and resolution as policy priorities that should focus on “building regional, sub-regional and national capacities (…)” (Cotonou Agreement, 2000-2020). This evolution is part of a more general turning point in the international doctrine of development which introduced politics and security in cooperation programs on the basis that security, good governance, democracy are also necessary to development or, as the EU states in its Security Strategy (2003), because “security is a precondition for development”. It is in this context that EU action towards strengthening ECOWAS’ capabilities in the field of peace and security takes place.

Support for ECOWAS capabilities in peace and security actually started with the 8th EDF (1995-2000) under Lomé IV but its amount was too low to be

28The Council Conclusions on “Preventive Diplomacy, conflict resolution and peace-keeping in Africa” 1995; Communication from the Commission to the Council. The EU and the issue of conflicts in Africa: peace-building, conflict prevention and beyond 1996; Council Common Position concerning conflict prevention and resolution in Africa 1997; Council Common Position concerning conflict prevention, management and resolution in Africa 2001; etc.

29The Cotonou agreement in based on three pillars: political dialogue, trade, and economic cooperation. It was signed in March 2000 and entered into force in 2003.

significant[30]. Under the 9th EDF (2000-2007) operationalized through the 2002-2007 RIP[31], more funding started to be provided for ECOWAS and its action in peace and governance activities: more or less 10 million euro were invested in two programs directed to ECOWAS capacities in peacebuilding and conflict prevention (technical assistance to ECOWAS Executive Secretariat, for the SALW Moratorium, to early warning, mediation and electoral observation activities, etc.)[32]. However, the quantitative leap only happened with the most recent 2008-2013 RIP which allocates 119 million euro to peace and security in support of three main initiatives: fight against drug trafficking (in support of ECOWAS Praia Plan of Action), migration and support to ECOWAS capacities and initiatives in peace and security reflecting the fourteen priorities of the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (strengthening the Political Affairs and Peace and Security Department within ECOWAS Commission, operationalization of the ECOWAS Standby Force, mediation, SALW, organized crime, etc.). The three initiatives are being allocated more or less 25 million euro each[33]. It nevertheless has to be noted that these initiatives have either been formulated but not implemented yet, or are in the process of being formulated. One of the reasons of this delay according to DEVCO and EEAS official (interviews on September 15th, 2011) is the ECOWAS weak capacities to formulate action plans with the EU and to agree on the procedures of implementation. The other important instrument within Cotonou agreement through which the EU is influencing ECOWAS considerably – as I will argue later – is the political dialogue (art.8) conducted at many levels[34]. The dialogue between ECOWAS and the EU was already initiated in 1998 at the level of high-ranking officials which shows the importance that ECOWAS had as an interlocutor for the EU even before this format was used for all ACP countries and regions. However, ministerial meetings twice a year only started with Cotonou in 2000. They were further supported by meetings between the Executive Secretariat of the ECOWAS (now ECOWAS Commission) and the EU Heads of mission in Abuja; EU-ECOWAS-UNOWA dialogue; meetings at experts levels, etc. (Nivet 2006). Hence, contacts and meetings are on going and happening at all level.

However, the RIP is only allowed to finance civilian aspect of ECOWAS capacities in peace and security but finds itself most of the time at the border between civilian and more 'hard' security aspects. A more recent tool instrument is used to finance the military aspect of the support to ECOWAS,

30Interview (September 15th, 2011) with an EU official working in the EU delegation in Abuja.

31The Regional Indicative Programs (RIPs) are part of the operationalization of the Cotonou agreements, along with the National Indicative Programs (NIPs).

32Interview with an EU official (September 15th, 2011) working in the EU delegation in Abuja; see also list of donors in the 2008-2013 RIP.

33Interview with DEVCO officials (September 15th, 2011).

34It also has to be emphasized that political dialogue was strengthened these past years after the revision of Cotonou in 2005. Political dialogue became more 'systematic' and 'formalised', and the recourse to art. 96 (that may lead to the non-execution of the agreement in case of a country breaching the 'essential elements') became stricter.

the African Peace Facility (APF); it was established in 2004 with the aim to support peacekeeping operations led by African regional organizations[35]. It has been criticized to use EDF money for pure security actions but has been justified on the basis of the European Security Strategy stating that security is a precondition for development, and by the African ownership of these operations (Keukeleire & Macnaughtan 2008). ECOWAS has benefited several times from the APF. In 2004 it provided 12.5 million euros for ECOWAS peacekeeping operation in Côte d'Ivoire (ECOMICI); it also financed other kind of activities such as ECOWAS mediation efforts in Guinea, Niger, etc[36]. Alongside the APF, the Instrument For Stability (IFS) could also be used to support ECOWAS in a case of crisis but its usage is restricted for urgent, short-term actions when the geographic instruments are not flexible enough to be used. The IFS replaced the Rapid Reaction Mechanism (RRM) which was mobilized for example in 2002 to support ECOWAS mediation efforts in Côte d'Ivoire (Keukeleire & Macnaughtan 2008). Thus, the EU has at his disposal a whole range of instruments targeting civilian or more hardcore military aspects, enabling it to foster and influence the security and defense regionalization process in Western Africa – and it is increasingly using them.

EU discourse on ECOWAS

The EU produces two main type of discourse towards ECOWAS. The first one, addressing ECOWAS but also at all other African regional organization, is centered on ownership, partnership and joint responsibility; it is present in every agreement and official documents on EU-Africa and EU-ECOWAS relations. ECOWAS should have the ownership on the EU development programs and should be an equal partner with the EU (Cotonou Agreement 2000-2020; RIP 2008-2013); and indeed, the joint declarations following the EU-ECOWAS ministerial meetings where both parties 'agree' together on priorities and have "exchange of views", or EU-ECOWAS Joint Declaration on Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (2007), do give an image of partnership between the two organizations. Moreover, African regional organizations are also given by the EU discourse "the primary responsibility for prevention, management and resolution of conflicts on the Africa continent" (Council Common Position concerning Conflict Prevention, management and resolution in Africa 2005). On the one hand, the emphasis on ownership and partnership is a way to respond to the 'neo-colonial' and 'paternalistic' attitudes that were reproached to the Lomé Conventions (Lethinen 1997 in: Bonaglia, Goldstein & Petito 2006). On the other hand, the discourse on African responsibility is also a way not to get directly involved in African conflicts while dealing with them through promoting delegation for conflict prevention, management and resolution to African regional organizations.

35It as been given 740 millions euro since 2004 and was expanded to support conflict prevention and post-conflict stabilization activities. See: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/acp/regional-cooperation/peace/index_en.htm. This instrument has to be understood in the larger framework of the EU Strategy for Africa (2005) and the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership (2007) which aims, among other things, to build the APSA.

36See Annual Report – The African Peace Facility 2010.

This ‘delegation discourse’ is reinforced by the second main type of discourse formulated by the EU, aiming at giving legitimacy to ECOWAS and recognizing it as the key security actor in West Africa. This discourse appears evident in the declarations following the EU-ECOWAS Ministerial meetings where the EU ‘encourages’, ‘supports’, ‘welcomes’, ‘congratulates’, etc., ECOWAS integration and actions in the fields of conflict prevention and resolution (Nivet 2006). This discourse has at his basis the EU basic discourse I described in the first section of my paper arguing that regional integration is the adequate response for conflict prevention and resolution, and that security issues – mainly trans-regional – should be addressed regionally. Moreover, this ‘legitimacy’, ‘symbolic recognition’ discourse justifies the need to help building ECOWAS conflict prevention and resolution capacities. This discourse is so strong that it can go to the extent that the EU in some occasions favors the ECOWAS peace and security mandate even when it is not the more coherent way of dealing with the issue at stake, when initiatives targeting national states could be more useful - in this sense regional integration seems to be understood by the EU as an ‘imperative’, and does not necessarily has to be justifiable by the conditions on the ground.

However, these concepts of ‘partnership’ with, and ‘ownership’ of ECOWAS overly present in the EU discourse have their limits, as I will argue in the following part. Indeed, the gap between the two ‘partners’ is such that an ‘equal partnership’ is simply impossible between them: the EU has the money, the knowledge, massive technical and administrative capacities and strong political values and security norms that it continuously promotes in its political dialogue with ECOWAS; while ECOWAS regional integration process is still embryonic and faces capacities and financing shortages and weaknesses. Therefore, through its objective of helping to build ECOWAS conflict prevention and resolution capacities, the EU is shaping the ECOWAS security and defense regionalization process.

A shaping of the ECOWAS security and defense regionalization process by the EU?

The EU is trying to shape the ECOWAS mainly on the normative level while ECOWAS is also taking inspiration from the EU on the institutional level[37]. However, ECOWAS is not a mere replication of the EU institutional structure such as Francis (2010), among other scholars, asserts; he argues that, in particular since the last institutional reform in January 2007 that transformed the ECOWAS Executive Secretariat into the ECOWAS Commission, it is “obvious that this transformation into a Commission is a mere African imitation of the European Union (EU) model”. Of course, ECOWAS has inspired itself from the EU institutional model and objectives: it has now a Commission, a Court of Justice, a Parliament and aims at creating a common market, setting

37Nivet (2006, p. 12) argues interestingly that, while at the beginning the EU was trying to export its institutional model, the failure of this politics led the EU to try to inspire other regional processes on a more symbolic and normative basis.

up an economic and monetary union and becoming a supranational organization. However, it has also adapted this model to its own needs in particular concerning its peace and security mandate. Indeed, its internal security issues do not reflect EU, mainly external, security challenges; in response ECOWAS created within the Commission the office of the Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS), with three operational departments including: Political Affairs, Early Warning and Observation Monitoring Centre (ECOWARN), and Peacekeeping. Even though these departments might not be fully operationalized yet, they still originate from a reflection of the organization on its security needs and how to address them, as well as its exchanges with the AU on the setting up of the APSA.

Therefore, what the EU is shaping is not the institutional structure of ECOWAS but its security and defense regionalization process – the norms and values underlying it. I will give two examples of this 'shaping' before analyzing more generally the political dialogue between EU and ECOWAS, and its effect on ECOWAS security and defense regionalization process. The first example is the influence that the EU had on the elaboration of the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF). This 2008 ECPF complements the Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peace-keeping and Security (1999) and goes much further in the definition and the ECOWAS approach of conflict prevention. While, the Mechanism only refers briefly to conflict prevention stating that its objective is to "strengthen cooperation in the areas of conflict prevention (…)" (1999), the ECFP gives a much more elaborated view of conflict prevention. It defines conflict and refers to its "structural factors" and "root causes", dividing conflict prevention into "operation conflict prevention" and "structural conflict prevention" (including among others, political, institutional governance and developmental reforms), arguing for a comprehensive, integrated approach to prevention with long-term preventive initiatives, and for the mainstreaming of conflict prevention into ECOWAS policies and programs. Reading the ECFP, its similarity in terms of concepts with the Communication from the Commission on Conflict Prevention (2001) is quite striking. As I already detailed in the first section of my paper the core of this document focus on conflict prevention as aiming at the "roots causes of conflict" and "structural instability"; it recommends a "long-term and integrated approach" and the "mainstreaming" of conflict prevention in cooperation programmes. This concept of "structural stability" has first been elaborated by the EU in its 1996 Communication on Conflict Prevention and is part of what Manners calls, as I already mentioned, the EU's value of 'sustainable peace' (Manners 2006)[38]. My argument is thus that the EU has been exporting to ECOWAS its own conception of conflict prevention as aiming at structural stability through a comprehensive integrated and long-term approach. It has done so through two main instruments: the 2002-2007 RIP, financing a program which aimed to "assist ECOWAS to fulfill its mandate in the area of peace-building and conflict prevention, particularly to develop a Conflict Prevention strategy for

[38] 'Structural conflict prevention' is now part of an international corpus on conflict prevention promoted by the UN and other international organizations. However, the EU was a key actor in its development and it is the most influential representative of this approach in West Africa.

the region"[39]; and through political dialogue. In a statement to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), the EU Presidency claimed that:

"The challenge for ECOWAS remains to integrate short-term crisis management activities into a long term preventive strategy. The EU will intensify its political dialogue with ECOWAS and its member states, in particular on policies geared to address the structural root causes of conflict in a sustainable manner (…)." (EU Presidency Statement to the UNSC – Cross Border issues in West Africa, February 25th, 2005).

This statement testifies that the elaboration of a conflict prevention strategy by ECOWAS was an important point for the EU in its agenda for the region. And indeed, this point was regularly brought up during the ECOWAS-EU Ministerial meetings[40]. So the EU used its technical assistance to the ECOWAS Executive Secretariat, as well as socialization to its own conflict prevention norm through political dialogue, to shape the ECOWAS ECFP[41] and more generally ECOWAS approach to conflict prevention. The ECFP is thus in great part the result of the on-going dialogue between the EU and ECOWAS and of the EU's promotion of its conflict prevention norm.

A second example of the EU's action in shaping ECOWAS security norms is its influence on the transformation of the ECOWAS Moratorium on SALW into a binding convention. The EU has developed its own specific approach on SALW based on Joint Actions[42] and on an EU Strategy to combat illicit accumulation and trafficking of SALW and their ammunition (2006); and it made of this transformation a priority on its agenda for West Africa. Indeed, the EU diagnosed SALW as one of the major problems in West Africa, destabilizing regional stability, fuelling violent conflict, organized crime and terrorism, with all the consequences it entails for its own security[43]. The EU used three instruments at its disposal to further this transformation: support of the ECOWAS National Small Arms Commission[44] through the 2002-2007 RIP;

39See the list of donors and programs in the RIP 2008-2013.

402nd EU-ECOWAS Ministerial meeting (2001); 4th ECOWAS-EU Meeting at Ministerial Level (2003); etc.

41For Checkel (2007, pp. 5-6) the outcome of socialization is "sustained compliance based on the internalization of new norms (…); this adoption is sustained over time and is quite independent from a particular structure of material incentives or sanctions".

42Council Joint Action on the European Union's contribution to combating the destabilizing accumulation of small arms and light weapons (1999); Council Joint Action on the European Union's contribution to combating the destabilizing accumulation of small arms and light weapons and repealing Join Action 1999/34/CFSP (2002).

43See EU Strategy to combat illicit accumulation and trafficking of SALW and their ammunition (2006): "SALW contribute to a worsening of terrorism and organized crime, and are a major factor in triggering and spreading conflicts, as well as in the collapse of State structures."

44These National Commissions on SALW are implementing the ECOWAS Moratorium (now Convention) at the national level of ECOWAS member states.

direct financial and technical assistance given by the Council to the ECOWAS Executive Secretariat with the purpose to "set up the Light Weapons Unit within the ECOWAS Technical Secretariat and convert the Moratorium into a Convention on small arms and light weapons" [45]. Thirdly, EU-ECOWAS political dialogue[46] and EU political declarations pressuring ECOWAS to put this issue high on its agenda. Thus, in a declaration at the UNSC, the EU Presidency states that:

"Whereas the EU welcomes the recent renewal for three years of the Moratorium on the importation, exportation and manufacture of small arms in West Africa, we encourage the efforts of the ECOWAS Small Arms Control Program to transform the Moratorium into a legally binding instrument." (EU Presidency Statement to the UNSC – Cross Border issues in West Africa, February 25th 2005).

In this case the EU has been using its knowledge (an already well developed SALW approach) and its important technical competences compared to ECOWAS administrative and technical weaknesses[47] to push its own agenda. Indeed, the final 2006 ECOWAS Convention responds to EU's priorities as exposed in its 2002 Joint Action and its 2006 Strategy: creation of national and regional inventories, regional confidence-building measures and exchanges of information, strengthening of border controls, provisions on collection, storage and destruction, etc. Therefore, Nivet argues that the technical assistance given to the ECOWAS executive Secretariat does not correspond with the 'ownership' principle because it aims at directly influencing the shaping of the future ECOWAS Convention on SALW (Nivet 2006). Nevertheless, when I argue that the EU has been implementing its own agenda through the shaping of the ECOWAS Convention I do not imply that SALW are not considered as a pressing security issue in West Africa, among others, but that it was an issue high on the EU agenda and, hence, resulted into one of the most advanced security program of ECOWAS.

Thus, political dialogue was one of the main instruments used to shape the ECPF and the ECOWAS Convention on SALW. More generally, my argument is that the EU uses political dialogue to socialize ECOWAS to its political values, and promote its security norms and priorities; moreover, by exchanging views, pressuring ECOWAS to take common positions on stability and security issues in West Africa, the EU is fostering in ECOWAS the habit of consultation between member states – thereby supporting the integration

45Council Decision implementing Joint Action 2002/589/CFSP with a view to a European Union contribution to ECOWAS in the framework of the Moratorium on Small Arms and Light Weapons (2004).

467th EU-ECOWAS Ministerial Troika Meeting (2005); 4th ECOWAS-EU Ministerial Troika Meeting (2003); etc.

47According to an EU official working in the EU Delegation in Abuja (September 15th, 2011), ECOWAS has not operational capacities. He pointed to the fact that the job of 'project manager' did not exist within the organization; there were officials who took political decisions but nobody to manage the programs.

process. The European Consensus on Development stresses the promotion of EU's norms as an important dimension of political dialogue:

"Political dialogue is an important way in which to further development objectives. In the framework of the political dialogue (…), the respect for good governance, human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law will be regularly assessed with a view to forming a shared understanding and identifying supporting measures. This dialogue has an important preventive dimension and aims to ensure these principles are upheld." (European Consensus on Development 2005)

Therefore the EU is socializing ECOWAS to its political values, making sure, through the political dialogue consultations on the stability and security situation of ECOWAS member states, that ECOWAS will react and take position each time one of the 'essential' principles is in danger to be breached. This has been recently the case for Niger in October 2009 when President Tandja tried to extend its non-renewable mandate[48], as well as for Guinea after the violent repression of a political demonstration in September 2009[49].The objective of the EU here is to support stability in West Africa, which means supporting the democratization process of West African countries and the respect for human right. The assumption is that the EU values and norms should be privileged as they are the recipe for peace and stability, and they should be exported to West Africa because the region needs EU's assistance[50], as well as because the EU's own security depends also of West Africa stability. Even though these political values are not proper to the EU, it is still the most influential exporter of these values to Western Africa, as ECOWAS does not maintain with any other external actor an on-going and structured political dialogue such as this one. As I demonstrated previously, the EU is also pushing its security norms (such as conflict prevention and its approach on the fight against SALW), as well as its security priorities into the ECOWAS security agenda: drug trafficking, terrorism, organized crime, SALW, migration[51]. The EU is, in this way, participating to the construction of the ECOWAS security agenda. These issues are existing security issues in West Africa, however they would not have been prioritized as much without the EU-ECOWAS political dialogue[52]. Nivet argues that all

4816th EU-ECOWAS Ministerial Troika Meeting (2009) stating that "Both parties agreed that the action of the authorities are in grave violation of democratic principles".

4916th EU-ECOWAS Ministerial Troika Meeting (2009) where the "the two Parties strongly condemned the violent repression of the peaceful political demonstration on 28 December 2009 in Conakry by the security forces under the command of the CNDD (…)."

[50] This relates to the more general 'solidarity' discourse of the EU, stemming from its position as a model to follow because it has achieved peace and prosperity, it should therefore help poor and conflictual countries to reach the same peace and prosperity.

5112th ECOWAS-EU Ministerial Troika Meeting (2007); 13th ECOWAS-EU Ministerial Troika Meeting (2008); 14th ECOWAS-EU Ministerial Troika Meeting (2008); 17th ECOWAS-EU Ministerial Meeting (2010); etc.

52An EU official in the EU Delegation in Abuja (interview on September 15th, 2011) argued with me that the identification of security challenges was the same for the EU

these issues "mentioned in ECOWAS declarations and decisions, internal or intended for EU members and agencies" are "a reproduction of the discourse of the northern agenda", and that there is an "obvious trend among West African partners of articulating European-like normative discourses at regional level, without turning them into functional policies" (Nivet 2006). I would disagree with him in the sense that this process is more complex than what Nivet implies: through socialization taking place within political dialogue, ECOWAS is assimilating EU political values and security norms; however ECOWAS is not a passive recipient, it is adapting these values and norms to its own context and made a strategic choice in this sense to attract funding from external actors and gain international legitimacy and credibility[53]. The fact that this choice is partly strategic does not impede socialization to take place and these values and norms to be internalized over a period of time[54] - it is a social learning process. One proof of that would be the increasing amount of actions that ECOWAS is taking to monitor the stability of the region and prevent a breach of the democratic principle in one of its member states to take place: mainly through mediation actions (in Côte d'Ivoire a number of time since 2001, Togo in 2005, Guinea in 2007, Niger in 2009)[55] and electoral observation missions (in Togo and Côte d'Ivoire in 2010, Niger in 2011)[56].

On the other hand, the political dialogue fosters the ECOWAS security and defense regionalization process through the on-going consultations and joint monitoring of the stability and security situation of the region. In order to be able to dialogue with the EU on these issues, ECOWAS has to prepare beforehand through consultation between the member states in order to elaborate common positions on these topics. Hence, dialogue with the EU is participating to the creation of a consultation and cooperation habit betweens ECOWAS member states. The EU is also pressuring them to take common stances on sensitive issues such as in the recent Côte d'Ivoire case[57]. The

and ECOWAS, the challenges being so evident that there was no problem with the definition of security issues between the two regional organizations; however, he then briefly admitted that there were some sensitive points and that the EU was pushing forward some priorities that were not necessarily ECOWAS own priorities.

[53]This was the opinion of an EEAS official working on West Africa (September 13th, 2011), he told me that ECOWAS made a strategic choice in adopting these 'universal' political values which is why the organization has an important credibility today with its peace and security mandate.

54I agree in this with Finnemore and Sikkink (1998, pp. 902-903) arguing that adopting new norms is similar to 'peer pressure' among countries; three possible motivations exist for responding to such 'peer pressure': legitimation, conformity and esteem.

5511th ECOWAS-EU Ministerial Troika Meeting, April 2007; 7th EU-ECOWAS Ministerial Troika Meeting, May 2005; 16th EU-ECOWAS Ministerial Troika Meeting, November 2009.

56See ECOWAS press releases: ECOWAS observers to monitor the second round of the 2011 presidential election in Niger 2011; ECOWAS deploys an observation mission to monitor the 2010 presidential election in Togo 2010; 'ECOWAS observers to monitor the 2010 presidential election in Côte d'Ivoire 2010.

57Dr Ibn Chambas, former President of the ECOWAS Commission, acknowledged (September 14th, 2011) that political dialogue with the EU has many time facilitated

EEAS and DEVCO officials I interviewed (on September 13th and 15th, 2011) insisted on the role that the EU had in keeping ECOWAS together politically during the crisis; eventually ECOWAS took a very strong common position on the refusal of President Gbagbo to transfer its power to the winner of the elections, Mr. Alassane Ouattara. Indeed, ECOWAS went until the point to declare that if President Gbagbo refused to respond to its demand "the Community would be left with no alternative but to take other measures, including the use of legitimate force, to achieve the goals of the Ivorian people" (Extraordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government on Côte d'Ivoire, Abuja 2010). This kind of declaration, envisaging the use of force to reestablish democracy, is actually the first of its kind for ECOWAS.

Throughout my analysis it is possible to see the limits of the 'equal partnership' and 'ownership' concepts present in the EU discourse. First, it is difficult to talk about an equal partnership while – as I already noted – the gap between the two organizations is such as this one in terms of financial, administrative, technical and political capacities. As I demonstrated in this section, the administrative and technical gap between them has enabled the EU to shape some of ECOWAS main security documents. This reality is also reflected through the fact that the political dialogue is only concerned with the stability and security situation in ECOWAS member states and through the use of art. 96 of the Cotonou agreement – entailing the launching of a consultation procedure if one of the 'essential elements' is being breached in an ECOWAS country, and the interruption of cooperation in case there is no return to 'normalcy'[58].

The concept of 'ownership' also has its limits. Firstly, there is no definition of local ownership so it is difficult to understand what this concept entails: is it ownership on the elaboration of policies and programs and/or ownership on their implementation (Bendix & Stanley 2008)? There is no agreement between the EU and ECOWAS on what 'ownership' should mean. Secondly, while the EU is trying to apply 'local ownership', the tension between this concept and the operational and institutional weakness of ECOWAS compared to EU standards, accountability and transparency demands, makes it difficult for the EU to translate it into reality. Security also plays a role here, an EU official in the EU Delegation in Abuja (September 15th, 2011) was arguing to me that it was hard to find a balance between the capacities of the regional organization to implement programs and the role of external actors in these programs. He told me,

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the work of ECOWAS on these sensitive issues, when the democratic and the rule of law principles are being breached.

58Some discontent stemming from this procedure can be felt in some ECOWAS member states. For instance, Ambassador Ba of Mali to the EU (interview on September 14th, 2011) argued to me that the 'partnership' they have with the EU in the framework of the political dialogue was only working in an unilateral way as the country is convened to give explanation and the EU is monitoring the whole process by itself without the involvement of the region. His feeling was that political dialogue was not working in a satisfactory way.

“you have to combine two things: you have a problem and you can afford more or less time. Drug or organized crime, these activities don’t wait. You have to build capacities, reinforce the mandate of the ECOWAS Commission while tackling the problems before another states collapse. That’s where the problem is.”

Furthermore, another official from DEVCO argued with me (September, 15th 2011) that they would like to develop the ownership of the organization and therefore enter into ‘contribution agreements’, meaning that the EU would give money alongside a general program and some objectives while the organization would be handling alone the implementation of the program. However, in the ECOWAS case this was not possible because the organization did not pass the EU audit concluding that ECOWAS administrative capacities were still too weak for that. This type of discourse – justifying the non-application or semi-application of the local ownership concept with the weakness of ECOWAS – appeared in all my interviews with EU officials working on the implementation of regional programs in West Africa. Hence, the EU discourse suffers tensions and contradictions between the official ‘local ownership’ discourse and the difficulty to translate this discourse into practice. Thirdly, it might be interesting to reexamine the concept of ‘local ownership’ within the framework of the ‘structural foreign policy’ concept. As I mentioned already, the objective of a structural foreign policy would be to influence, shape and create structures that are sustainable in the long term, even when external support has disappeared (Keukeleire & Macnaughtan 2008). In this case, the concept of ‘local ownership’ would be irrelevant because the EU is partly shaping, constructing in relation with ECOWAS, through dialogue, exchanges and pressures, ECOWAS security agenda, norms and programs. The different elements I examined in this section seem to point in that direction.

Conclusion

To conclude, three basic discourses open the way for the EU engagement in security governance. Firstly, the EU’s security discourse pointing to the EU vulnerability in a globalized world: danger does not come from inside anymore but from the outside through security externalities coming from other parts of the world (terrorism, drug trafficking, migration, etc.). The EU has thus to protect itself through security governance. The second basic discourse concerns itself with the ‘solidarity’ principle describing the EU as having a mission: now that it has achieved peace and stability after centuries of wars and divisions, it should help others to reach the same prosperity. This discourse present the EU as a model which can help other countries because it has the means and tools available to do so. Thirdly, the EU’s involvement in security governance is posited as a way to assert itself as a global player, capable of acting on ‘hard’ issues such as security, beyond ‘soft’ issues such as trade and cooperation. However, the EU discourses underline a main concern of the EU for its security and stability; the 'solidarity' principle is also connected to security as involvement in security governance in unstable regions is seen as a kind of 'enlightened self-interest' by the EU officials (Duffield 2005).

The promotion of regional integration is on of the main tools for the EU security governance along with the promotion of multilateralism and international law, and the launching of missions. I argued that it is part of the EU's identity and that it comes from the securitization of integration in Europe, seen as the essential element for its survival, peace and prosperity. The region is therefore for the EU an adequate level to respond to security challenges conceptualized in its discourse as trans-regional. Hence, the EU promotes the same logic in other part of the world as the recipe – almost necessary – for peace and stability inside, and more generally in international relations. I also noted that this idea could be contested as not every interstate community is built on democracy, the respect of human rights and free market such as the EU, nor are they all open towards the exterior.
Following this logic, the EU is promoting regional integration in West Africa and in particular the regionalization of its security and defense policy through ECOWAS. More than fostering, the EU is also shaping this process by exporting to the region its political values and security norms, and thus participating in the construction/elaboration of ECOWAS' security agenda, norms and programs. West Africa is a particularly favorable context for the EU to do so because of the cultural and historical proximity, the strong links between its member states and ECOWAS member states. What has also enabled the EU to influence so greatly ECOWAS is the huge inequality between the two regions in terms of financial, technical and administrative capabilities, but also in terms of 'normative strengh' – the EU is a normative power, its norms constituting its foreign policy, while ECOWAS is slowly integrating the values and norms that the international community is diffusing. As for the concepts of partnership and ownership, while useful devices to try to correct the mistakes of past development and cooperation programs and reorient them towards a policy more respectful of the agency and interests of the 'partners', their applicability is limited in this process of 'shaping'. Moreover, the security discourse hinders their practice by putting an efficiency pressure on the EU programs which have to be carried out without giving full ownership to ECOWAS because of its institutional weakness. On the other hand, the high accountability and transparency standards required by the EU also limit the possible 'local ownership' of the ECOWAS in the programs funded by the EU. It might better be seen as an aspiration than as a reality. However, this tension in the discourse can be perceived negatively by the 'partners' who can doubt the EU discourse and point to its incoherence.

This problematization and deconstruction of the EU's discourse and practices does not try to show that the identity and discourse of the EU in itself is problematic, this will depend on the political context and effects of these practices. The content of the norms the EU is projecting aims at a more peaceful and just world, respectful of human rights, and in this sense can be seen as positive (Diez 2005). Moreover, as I stressed earlier, this does not mean that the other actor – ECOWAS in this case – is constrained to adopt EU norms, it has a room of maneuver and respond to and/or assimilate EU's discourse and value to advance its own political and security agenda. Finally, as Diez (2005) emphasizes,

"the projection of European norms and values (…) need to be subjected to continuous deconstruction through the exposition of contradictions within the discourse, and between the discourse and other practices. This would by no means undermine, but rather rescue, normative power from becoming a self-righteous, messianic project that claims to know what Europe is and what other should be like."

The next step would be to compare the support of the EU to other regional organizations in the security field: are the same discourse applied? Is the EU able to shape this process in other regional organizations? Does it use the same strategies than for ECOWAS? Is major inequality between the organizations a condition for that? What is the strategy of the EU when the region is not based on democratic principle, rule of law and respect of human rights? Another set of questions concern the agency of ECOWAS in this process. I commented that ECOWAS is not a passive recipient in its interaction with the EU. It would be necessary to examine more thoroughly how it is adapting to and modifying the EU's norms and values, as well as how the EU discourse is influencing its own discourse.

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