



A Peer Reviewed International Journal of Asian
Academic Research Associates

AARJSH
ASIAN ACADEMIC RESEARCH
JOURNAL OF SOCIAL
SCIENCE & HUMANITIES



NIGERIA AND THE ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES: THE DE FACTO HEGMONIAL POWER

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Abstract

This paper examines the status and role of Nigeria in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) from a critical perspective. Relying on both primary and secondary data, it is unequivocally clear that Nigeria has been leveraging on her abundant natural and human resources to play a leadership role in ECOWAS, starting from 1975 when with the support of Togo under President Eyadema, she formed the organization inspite of the initial lack of interest of the Francophone countries. It is clear that ECOWAS has provided an avenue for mutually beneficial economic cooperation among member states. It has also been useful in helping to sustain democracy in the sub-region as evidenced by ECOMOG efforts in chasing out military regime as was the case in Liberia and Sierra Leone. It is recommended that Nigeria should strive to play a vigorous role in ECOWAS in order to make the organization grow from strength to strength.

Keywords: Nigeria's role, Francophone member states, ECOMOG, Mutual economic benefits of member states.

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