

Defense of S. K. B. Asante on African Integration: Convictions for Tomorrow?

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Abstract

S. K. B. Asante understood that regional and continental integration of Africa is a slow and tedious process which, probably, has no end, though it has benchmarks and milestones to strive for and to achieve. In his numerous writings on the subject, there is evidence to suggest that he understood there were phases of regional and Africa's development and integration and that the "expectations, reality and challenges" would change over time. In lieu of these considerations, he promoted both structuralist and functionalist ethos for integration. By doing so, he became the perpetual optimist, an apologist, who knew that though the journey to the mountain top may be arduous, he also appreciated also that, though he might not get to the top with Africa, he dreamt of a fully integrated Africa through regional and continental free trade. He visualized common currency, common markets, and the ultimate unification of the political standards of governance throughout Africa, with deep adherence to a revitalized AU protocols, regulations, customs, traditions and rules, despite identity politics, xenophobia and vigilantism. In fact, he never touched on those social ills of hate: identity politics, ethnic politics, Afroxenophobia, and vigilantism that have undermined and slowed down continental integration. This paper interrogates his works, motivations and pronouncements as a way of encouraging progressive development towards integration and

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tries to understand why he continued to push for integration, despite the deep challenges caused by some African Presidents, policies that undermine integration, poor funding mechanisms of the OAU/AU, and the lack of sustainable political will. Relying on the content analysis approach to investigations, the key finding in this paper is that, in his search to identify what Africa wants by way of integration, he pushed too hard, too quickly, too optimistically in an ecosystem, where there is cognitive dissonance about regional and continental integration, where the fundamentals are often not good, where government policies neutralize free market initiatives, euthanize the happiness of the people via restrictive human rights provisions, and weaken their agency.

Keywords: *African integration, regionalism, impediments, future progress*

Introduction

Since the formation of the Organization for African Unity (OAU) in 1963, there has been the expectation that such institutions and international collaborations would lead to greater dividends for the member States and create the impetus for national, regional and continental free trade, common markets and common Union. The OAU was in a hurry to evolve into the kind of compassionate humanism, albeit, aggressive promoter of European economic hegemony that the European Union, (EU) is viewed as having attained. This view and feelings of “Africa too can do it”, compelled OAU to become African Union, (AU) without having taking care of the core impediments that have blocked the socio-economic accelerated development of the respective nations in Africa since independence. AU had not considered how negatively ethnicity can influence politics, international relationships, and continental collaboration.

The aim of this paper is to find out the processes that lead S. K. B. Asante to the intellectual ends he reached in his pursuit of African integration. How, he visualized common currency, common markets, and the ultimate unification of the political standards of governance throughout Africa, with deep adherence to a revitalized AU protocols, regulations, customs, traditions and rules, despite identity politics, xenophobia and vigilantism. In fact, he never touched on those social ills of hate: identity politics, ethnic politics, Afroxenophobia, and vigilantism that were likely to undermine and slow down continental integration. This work interrogates his works, motivations and pronouncements as a way of encouraging progressive development towards integration and tries to understand why he continued to push for integration, despite the deep inter-regional cleavages, inter-governmental misalignment, and the social challenges he witnessed. This is in spite of his knowledge that, perhaps, he was many decades ahead of his peer and time, considering the frustration of purpose noticed at each epoch of the integration process caused by some African Presidents, policies that undermined integration, poor funding mechanisms of the OAU/AU, and the lack of sustainable political will.

This introductory investigation is focused solely on the review of the publications of S. K. B. Asante to tease out the following strands in his work: - (i) Understanding the history behind the success of European Integration, (ii) Structural and Functional approaches to African Integration, (iii) Phases of regional and African integration: the state of Progress or Retrogression, (iv) Pan-Africanism and Asante's vision of African integration, (v) Social exclusion, what it means in the context of Ghana, (vi) Summary and Conclusion. The author will follow this layout but will intermittently cross lines and bring into the conversation strands of thoughts and arguments from the other lenses.

Procedure and Approach

This paper is based on the content analysis of the writings of S. K. B. Asante. Those papers and books came to the author from Mr. Akwasi Okyere Boateng, to whom the author is grateful. Mr. Okyere Boateng is the Assistant Registrar at the Ghana Armed Forces Command and Staff College, GAFSC. The author also accessed books and other material from the library of GAFSC. The materials from Mr. Okyere Boateng were the following: (1) Implementing the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NAPAD), 2006; (2) Europe's Brand of Trojan Horse? Africa & The Economic Partnership Agreements, 2010; (3) Setting Straight the Record of Ghana's Recent Political Past, 2011; (4) No Road Signs, No Manuals: My Journey through Life, 2016; (5) Ghana and the Promotion of Pan-Africanism and Regionalism, 2007, (6) The African Peer Review Mechanism (Expanded version), 2013. In addition, Mr. Okyere Boateng provided the following Issues (Pamphlets) in African Regional Integration 2012a, 2012b, 2012c, 2015, and 2020: Building Capacity in African Regional Integration, 2007; Towards a New Dawn for Regional and Continental Integration in Africa, 2020; Ghana and the West African Economic Integration Process in the 21st Century: Potential Development Opportunities, Challenges and Prospects; The Political Economy of Africa's Region - Building and Regional Integration; ECOWAS institutions as Facilitators of Regional Integration: Present Roles and Achievements, Strengths and Weaknesses and Perspectives; Capacity challenges of Managing Regionalism in Africa at the National Level: The case of ECOWAS; The African Peer Review Mechanism: A decade of Ghana's Experience. GAFSC Library yielded the following books (i) S. K. B. Asante. (1997). Regionalism and Africa's Development: Expectations, Reality and Challenges, (ii) Africa's Development in the Twenty-first Century, (Eds.) Kwadwo Konadu-Agyemang, Kwamina Panford. 2006; (iii) Anthony Bende-Nabende, Globalization, FDI, Regional Integration and sustainable Development, 2002; (iv) Maurice Schiff and L. Alan

Winters, *Regional Integration and Development*, 2003. Other materials were obtained from the library of the Institute for Security, Disaster and Emergency Studies, and from the World Wide Web. The author briefed each of the books read and analyzed the summaries into a coherent piece to address the themes on African integration and the analysis contained in this paper. Hopefully, this review will be useful to future integrationists.

I. Understanding the history behind the success of European Integration

Africa, it appears, has never really understood why EU as a political conglomerate works, why the Treaty of Westphalia was so critical in cementing the intellectual and personal beliefs of the people of Europe that although small is beautiful, big is powerful, awesome, economically enabling, and supportive, and diplomatically powerful and self-sustaining. This is because Africa has not really fought itself for long duration to warrant a union so compelling that it leaves each member no room to backslide. 'The Peace of Westphalia, signed in 1648, ended the Thirty- and Eighty-Years Wars and created the framework for modern international relations among European nations, and which has now become part of international norms in international relations and diplomacy. It enunciated the concepts of state sovereignty, mediation between nations, and diplomacy. This "*formed the normative structure or constitution of the modern world order*" (Cavendish, 1998). It laid the foundations of the modern state system by welding the idea of territoriality with the notion of legitimate sovereign rule.' OAU and its progeny of AU emerged out of social need to form a union similar to that of the European Union to advocate the affairs of Africa (Asante, 1997). Whereas the EU's etiology provides it with a solid historical reminder to pursue a unified agenda, African Union was motivated by the desire of the founding fathers to show to the world that Africa has, somehow, arrived (AU Charter, 1963). That

Africa is as relevant as Europe within the comity of nations as well as international affairs and cannot be ignored. The Treaty of Westphalia ended colonial legacies for Europe, of war and instability, of pain and suffering and under-development as well as religious intolerance. In the case of Africa, the key players, the governments and the various successive Presidents have not understood that colonial legacies have never been the harbinger of their economic woes, their human rights encroachments and their backwardness in cosmopolitan progression of their respective nations, but themselves, their leaders and their desire to be backward, their quest to stay put and not venture into critical thinking about the things that frighten them, design innovative governance system and the commitment to reject inimical practices that promote debt and fiscal recidivism. Africa has not accepted that despite the multiplicity of centers of religious centers, there is still serious incidence of religious intolerance, and the lack of autonomy and freedom.

By their sheer numbers, the collection of the various regional economic groups that have been promulgated by Africa makes the Treaty of Westphalia a baby, uninventive regional attempt at conglomeration to spur regional peace and development. Yet, the multiplicity of treaties and regional associations formed by Africa since the installation of the OAU provides clear message to the world that, African regional integration was a movement which never was to be realized in real time any time soon. It appears to be a movement that prides itself with the promulgation of protocols and legal frameworks, grandiose conferences, and demonstrably showy parliamentary adoption of such international instruments into their constitutional frameworks whether monist or dualist legal regimens with no regard to the end game, whether real results are achieved or not. Was S. K. B. Asante aware of these challenges? Yes. Anyone who is familiar with Asante's work would know that he was not naïve about the challenges of integration, even though he chose to ignore some

critical issues such as identity politics, ethnicity, vigilantism and Afroxenophobia. If there is ever a demerit for his work, these would be the attributes. He wrote that “the continental approach to African development encountered various obstacles. Foremost among these was “newness of the states which made it difficult for national leaders to divest themselves of their newly acquired authority in favor of collective decision-making”. This statement imports into the conversation the Weberian articulation of leadership based on patrimonialism, which he defined as having two vectors, namely, “dominance and legitimacy”. By this, Weber meant the claim of “legitimacy” (that is to say, authority) of an entity or a person has as a ruler over the ruled. He established three types of domination, namely, “legal”, “traditional” and “charismatic”. Under the Traditional authority of domination, “obedience is owed not to the enacted rules but to the person who occupies a position of authority by tradition or who has been chosen for it by traditional master (Weber, 1978; Ersenstadt, 1973, Norman, 2023). Patrimonialism became the preferred political ethos by African leaders who had control over all resources of the states and apportioned these resources as they saw fit. The idea of a “continental integration undoubtedly underestimated the difficulties of welding together largely nationalistic societies differing in size and level of development so soon after independence” coupled with the lack of adequate infrastructure, roads, communications links, different political ideologies, and geopolitical influences that were brought on the young movement as well as egotistic leaders (Asante, 1997, p. 33-34).

II. Structural and Functional Approaches to African Integration

From Structural Functionalist perspective, African integration has been a resplendent success under either the OAU or AU, in terms of the creation of the norms (regional protocols), customs (legal frameworks), traditions (official conduct and interpretation of the protocols, legal frameworks); and institutions (actual

secretariats for the regional agencies) that were or are meant to provide for or serve as the administrative vehicle for the integration of Africa. The AU has succeeded in creating a complex network in each of the major regions of Africa to work together for the promotion of solidarity, mutual development, cross-national trade, sharing intelligence and cooperate on many levels. From the Structuralism viewpoint, where the interests is in the relationships between systems and people, the integration of Africa has been both a resplendent success for providing the institutions, customs, traditions and the norms but a monumental failure when viewed from the relationships between the structures, the conventions, the protocols, the customs, traditions and institutions and the people of Africa, the intended beneficiaries of all the strivings of the OAU or AU. In simple terms, for example, the creation of the African Continental Free Trade compact, offices, secretariat, bank accounts, appointment of chief executive officers, directors and other essential staff have been smooth, and proceeding quietly, even if the procedure for the selection of the essential staff has been discriminatory, and not based on merit. Getting the people to interact with these structures, these offices, and entities has been a tedious slow-moving train with a great deal of uncertainties and reluctance. Getting the respective African nations that are members of AfCFTA to get active in the institution, appears to be more challenging due to the differential manufacturing and productive strengthens of each of these nations.

III. Phases of Regional and African integration: State of Progress or Retrogression

In his own handiwork, Asante acknowledged the developmental phases of African integration. He admitted that the entire integration process of Africa has been built on the European Commission model from its inception, and which also suffered at the developmental stages by going through various phases. He did not approach the concept from the point of view of a novice

but a researcher and a professional integration advocate, who knew that nothing good grows with speed beyond the natural order of things. The discussion starts with the portion of the review with his oldest book that was accessible to the process, to determine whether he was flamboyant about the integration of Africa as a feat that was going to be achieved overnight and without serious periods of retrogression, and even complete dismantling of all that has been built before due to disruptions from civil wars, military takeovers, sabotage and geopolitical machinations against African integration and resilience. Not everyone in Africa is in support of integration. Not every President was or trusts that integration would not devalue his social standing as a national President to be replaced by the functional president under the AU system.

Reading through his most significant book: *“Regional and Africa’s Development: Expectations, Reality and Challenges (1997)”*, one realizes that Asante knew (as any professional in his situation and proximate to the corridors of power and interests on integration should know or should have known) whether integration was achievable now. Or it was going to be a long, drawn out process with many false starts, stalled movement and loss of inertia and a sense of purpose at many critical junctures. As a Senior Regional Adviser in Economic Cooperation and Integration and Coordinator, Southern Africa Desk and Task Force, in the Cabinet office of the Economic Commission for Africa at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, he was in the best place to know what was feasible, what was possible and what was probable. For a man to be too close to the action of integration with many challenges to forward advances to still be motivated by the personal and professional belief that integration of Africa was going to happen, shows that Asante was an incurable optimist, a true devotee of Pan-Africanist credentials and the belief that if Europe can do it, so can Africa. Maybe it would not be today, or even tomorrow, but it shall happen. By the 1980’s he was well aware that “the growing

gap between the high initial expectations and the actual achievements of the first phase of integration considerably reduced the interests in economic cooperation and integration as a policy issue" (Asante, 1997, p. xiv). This is to say, the respective African governments themselves had lost interests in the entire integration process. As a diplomat, he could not use those words of condemnation, but any astute reader and researcher should know that Asante was guided by diplomatic niceties and polite speech. As much as he worked and advocated for African integration, he did not engage in aggressive advocacy and dissemination of ideas, among the grassroots of the African populations. His audiences were elitist political leaders, academics, and researchers as well as international audience and operatives who were similarly situated. His language was nuanced, almost too refined to qualify for advocacy to the masses. In this regard, he failed not as a professional but as a grassroots instigator of general knowledge and awareness about the benefits of integration for the very cohort of the African population he did not reach out to, to include in the continental concerns about integration. Nonetheless, he was unfazed by the drawback because he knew that 'regional and subregional economic cooperation and integration is widely recognized and accepted as a necessary pre-condition for the long-term sustainable development of African countries" (ibid, p. xiv). No sooner had he dismissed the challenges of the 1980s than the 1990's ushered in a new impetus that infused the struggle for regional integration with new purpose, new optimism, (his never waned), when the trend in the world compelled new argument in favor of "regional solidarity" coupled with "rapid changes in technology and globalization of world production". It appeared at this time that the economic crisis of the 1980s, the structural adjustment program, liquidity challenges, the neck-lacing of the Ghanaian population during part of Rawlings' military administration between 1983-86, the mistakes of the past, had given birth to a new thinking on the "revitalization of the existing economic

communities and transformation of others into more dynamic groupings that would enable them to adjust to the rapidly changing economic landscape in many regions of the world” (Asante, 1997, p. xiv). This new impetus came about, according to Asante, through the “conversion of the United States to the regional approach; the emergency of regional arrangements among industrial and developing countries and a move away from inward-orientation towards more outward-oriented arrangements among developing countries... in addition to unilateral trade liberalization” on the part of these African States (ibid, p. 1).

A. The First Wave of integration

The harbinger of African integration is the European Commission and subsequently, the European Union or simply, the EU. The European Economic Commission, (EEC) was the first wave of regionalism across the world. Perhaps, he could have gone farther back to the Peace of Westphalia, (POW) to be the true beginning of European integration due to the dividends the POW produced for Europe. The Peace of Westphalia, signed in 1648, ended the Thirty- and Eighty-Years Wars for Dutch independence and created the framework for modern international relations, the framework of which African integration is based. The Peace of Westphalia was a series of peace treaties signed between May and October 1648 in the Westphalian regions of Osnabrück and Münster, which ended the Thirty Years’ War and the Eighty Years’ Dutch independence War. The Thirty-Year War was a series of wars in Central Europe between 1618 and 1648, which were between Protestant and Catholic states in the fragmented Holy Roman Empire. Then there was the Eighty Year War, or Dutch War of Independence (1568–1648), which was a revolt of the Seventeen Provinces against the political and religious hegemony of Philip II of Spain, the sovereign of the Habsburg Netherlands. The Peace of Westphalia formulated a compact for all parties to recognize

the Peace of Augsburg of 1555; that Christians of non-dominant denominations were guaranteed the right to practice their faith; and that each exclusive sovereign would have territorial control over its lands, people, and agents abroad. The Peace of Westphalia established the precedent of peace reached by diplomatic congress and a new system of political order in Europe based upon the concept of mutual co-existence of sovereign states.

The 'era of regional integration' began with the post-World War II period, but at the initial stages of this process, the use of the word 'integration' by economists and researchers was pejorative (Haokip, 2012). "Today, economic integration is an essential aspect of the dynamics of modern society in its continuous process of transformation" (ibid, Asante, p.2). He added on the same page that 'in most recent economic literature, the term "integration" or "common market" have tended to become nearly synonymous with rapid economic growth, acceleration of economic development or big push" (ibid, p. 2). The European Free Trade Association, (EFTA) established in 1960, the United States support for the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, (GATT) the Latin American Free Trade Association, (LAFTA) of 1960, the Central American Common Market (CACM) in 1961, the Central African Economic and Customs Union in 1964, the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), 1987 and the Caribbean Free Trade Association of 1968 capture the essence of the First Wave.

B. The Second wave of regionalism

It appears the impetus or fervor that ignited the fire for the first wave, died down or off in some regions, after it became apparent that human nature being what it is, does not want to build universal systems but wish to hold on to conservatism and segregationist isolation in trade and in development. "Despite generally negative experiences, new approaches to regional

cooperation stated to re-emerge". The new found inspiration for integration may have been motivated by the strengthening of the powers of EU, the enlargement of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) creating the fear that if others did not join the bandwagon, they stood to lose on the new wave of regionalism, trade and economic advantages that integration offered or best, promised. The United States was reeling under economic challenges in the 1950s and 1960s until its falling fortune was salvaged by the Bretton Woods Agreement in 1944 and signed by 730 delegates from 44 allied nations, and which led to the creation of the International Monetary Fund and the Bank for Reconstruction and Development, (IBRD) or today, the World Bank. The Bretton Woods Agreement created a collective international currency exchange regime that required a currency peg to the U.S. dollar which was in turn pegged to the price of gold. The Bretton Woods Agreement collapsed in 1971 under President Richard Nixon of the USA. Since then the world's currencies are pegged to the U.S. dollar (Loo, 2023).

No sooner had the Second Wave begun than new concerns about the lack of political will, mistrust and concerns about GATT emerged to derail hitherto fore, gradually deepening of integration among the various nations to the various regional associations. The forces of multilateralism weakened after it initially reared its head only to be replaced by a renewed commitment to regionalism and integration. While some researchers blamed the slow pace of integration and the full realization of GATT protocols even after the Tokyo Round discussions created doubt among the large collection of participants to the GATT agreement. Some of the participants to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, like any large collection of people with competing interests, they were at the table to add nothing to the discussion. While Asante ascribed the justification for the renewed interests in integration to the, as he put it, "the United States was no longer the leader it was in the

1950s and 1960s when it accounted for close to half of the Global Domestic Product (GDP). It can no longer generate large benefits for the world economy by freeing up its trade, nor take up the cause of the promotion of free trade (Asante, 1997, p. 5). It is the observation of this author that that judgment was not well-thought out, due to the fact that the United States of America has the ability to re-invent itself in so many ways due to its technological and innovative advantage over many of the nations in the world. Just when the critics of the United States think the end has come for it, it revives itself from whatever doldrums it might have been cocooned and blossoms into a new petal of envy. Despite this observation, other supranational developments took place that gave a breadth of fresh air into African integration, which Asante attributes to the United Nations Development Program's release of the Human Development Report in 1994, and the liberation of South Africa from Apartheid system, also in 1994 by Nelson Mandela and Frederik Willem de Klerk.

IV. Pan-Africanism and His Vision of African Integration

Pan-Africanism promoted African integration in a loose way with no clear strategy as to how the goal of integration was meant to be achieved. 'Regional cooperation and integration started off as aspects of Pan-African movement which aimed at the "unification of African forces against imperialism and colonial domination" (ibid, p. 32). As noted in other papers previously, "the record of regional integration in Africa so far has been a sobering one, and many regional groupings are marked by uncoordinated initiatives, political conflicts and low levels of intra-regional trade", although the external and domestic factors what impeded African integration in the past have improved in recent years" (Harsch, 2002, p. 1). In today's Sub-Saharan Africa, concepts of continental integration and re-integration appear to be surviving on life-support from the Secretariats of African Continental Free Trade Agreement, (AfCFTA); Economic Community of West African States, (ECOWAS); Southern African

Development Community, (SADC); Community of Sahel-Saharan States, (CEN-SAD); East African Community, (EAC); Intergovernmental Authority on Development, (IGAD); Economic Community of Central Africa States, (ECCAS); Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, (COMESA) and Arab Maghreb Union, (AMU) and other confluations on these dimensions:- trade integration; productive integration; macroeconomic integration; infrastructure integration and free movement of people. Asante (1997) saw these developments as positive signs that regional and continental integration “the consolidation of the African economic space through the formation of subregional common markets leading eventually to a continental common market and economic community” (Asante, 1997, p. xiv; 1). Notice that each one of these dimensions has been subjected to substantial limitations and disruptions, due to different roles, structures, mandates and which does not augur well with collective action on the part of the member nations of Africa Union. Although these regional groups were suggested by the 1990 Lagos Plan of Action for the Development of Africa and the Abuja Treaty of 1991, which proposed the creation of the Regional Economic Communities “with a view to regional and eventually continental integration” it actually has led to fragmentation, and group identities (Africa Regional Integration Index, 2023). On or about the 19th of February, 2023, the African Union Convention on Cross-Border Cooperation, also known as Niamey Convention, was ratified by the Ghanaian Parliament in accordance with Article 75 of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana. This is intended to improve Ghana’s image as a country which is committed to the African Union and ECOWAS. So far, only 17 of the 55 AU Member States have signed the Convention, and only five of those 17 have ratified it and deposited the instruments of ratification with the AU Commission in accordance with Article 17 of the Convention (Akwen, 2011; Duthie, 2011; De Melo, 2014). Such policies and regulations tend to eat into the spirit of regional

integration due to the misapplication of the regulation or policy at the national and operational levels.

It is difficult to speak of African integration when the continent is bedeviled with identity crisis, when the continent harbors xenophobic tendencies towards not Caucasians or Asians or Chinese, but towards members of other African nations. Part of this paper's goal in this work as it has been in the previously published papers on issues of integration, identitarianism, Afroxenophobia and vigilantism, is to show that there are really no great differences between the purveyors of hate and violence in Europe and in Africa on the basis of ethnicity or race or economic status (Norman, 2022). Whiles Identitarianism and Afroxenophobia are two distinct types of hate crime, Vigilantism or violent behavior is the means through which either Identitarianism or Afroxenophobia obtains its tortuous expressions (Hanekom & Webster, 2010). If either of such philosophies were merely rhetorical in nature, and devoid of actual violence or hate crimes, it may not have received the attention of many scholars, researchers, politicians, policy makers and the public. Both Identitarianism and Afroxenophobia have violent streaks, the manifestation of which could be a lone wolf attack in a mosque in New Zealand (Hartleb, 2011; Hart, 2016; Handler, 2019), or the destruction of Christian Churches in Niger and Chad simply because a satirical magazine in Paris had poked fun or drawn unacceptable image of the Prophet Mohammed (Norman, 2015).

“The African Union is a useful supranational organization which has great dreams for regional and continental integration for the betterment of the people of Africa. In many ways, the African Union having been a copycat of just about every initiative of the European Union appears to have superficial understanding of how a continental integration works. It may not have understood how it is supposed to work and how conflict and

misunderstanding should be managed for greater community good (Asante, 1997, p. 1-3). From his 1997 book, S. K. B. Asante provides the historical and sociological motivations for the creation of the Organization for African Unity, (OAU) in 1963. He indicated that, there has been the expectation that such institution and international collaborations would lead to greater dividends for the member States and create the impetus for national, regional, and continental free trade, common markets and common Union, which to some extent substantial progress has been made. But it also appears reading through Asante's body or works on integration, and as I have also recently written, that "the OAU was in a hurry to evolve into the kind of compassionate humanism, albeit, aggressive promoter of European economic hegemony that the European Union, (EU) is viewed as having attained. This view and feelings of "Africa too can do it", compelled OAU to become African Union, (AU) without having taking care of the core impediments that have blocked the socio-economic accelerated development of the respective nations in Africa since independence. AU had not considered how negatively ethnicity can influence politics, international relationships, and collaboration" (Norman, 2023, p. 4; Hart, 2016; Hartleb, 2011; Holtsi, 1986; Miller & Rensmann, 2010; Johnston, 1996). In "*Identity Politics in Ghana, 2023*" the author argued that Africa, it appears, has never really understood why EU as a political conglomerate works, why the Treaty of Westphalia was so critical in cementing the intellectual and personal beliefs of the people of Europe that although small is beautiful, big is powerful, awesome, economically enabling and supportive, and diplomatically powerful and self-sustaining. This is because Africa has not really fought itself for long duration to warrant a union so compelling that it leaves each member no room to backslide" (Norman, 2023, p. 4-7).

If Africa really desires integration as end game for national development, then Africa ought to end social exclusion, identity

politics and Afroxenophobia through vigilante activities. It is rather surprising that Asante did not tackle these difficult questions at all in the many papers and write-ups he produced. Asante was well aware of what happened in Ghana with respect to the expulsion of Nigerians in 1968 and 1969. He was aware of what happened to Ghanaians in Nigeria in 1984 with the expulsion of Ghanaians from Nigeria. From the point of view of integration, to play strategic amnesia with such critical events, speaks volumes about not the personality of the man, since he was in a job which he could not probably express his outrage against such official actions. It speaks volumes about Africa when it comes to trust and continental inclusive approach to development. The Rwanda genocide was another case where Asante could have provided the nexus the lack of trust and the lack of progress on African integration, because it poses the wicked question that, if an ethnic group could be killed in the way it happened in Rwanda, what would happen to minorities in a continental Africa where multiplicity of tribes and ethnic groups come together to live under one umbrella? What protection would the minority tribes enjoy if their leader is not the President of the continent?

Aleme, (2011) provides a historical overview of Pan-Africanism, which led to attempts of African unity that were plagued from the beginning by the division between the so-called "Casablanca Group," which was led by Kwame Nkrumah, and which called for a federation of African states, and the "Brazzaville/Monrovia Group," which favored a slow progression toward an economic union. Ultimately, a compromise was made to establish the Organization of African Unity, which was founded as an intergovernmental organization with no real powers over states. Its main objective was to end colonialism in Africa, especially apartheid in South Africa. Its record on this is debatable, as while these objectives were met, the OAU did not appear to have had much to do with the transition. Thus, integration in Africa was

flawed from the beginning and despite a change to the AU, many are still skeptical. Adopting similar institutions to the EU will not help either, argues Aleme, since all African states, with the exception of Morocco, are already members; there is no shared value of democracy on the continent; and the AU has followed an overly ambitious timeline (Aleme, 2011, pp. 59–65).

IV. Social Exclusion, What Does It Mean in the Context of Ghana?

In another paper in 2017 under the title, “*Define “Social Exclusion”, Articulate Realistic Benchmarks and Evaluation Modalities for the Livelihood Empowerment against Poverty Program*” the author offered reasons why Ghana has not been able to create a true ‘inclusive society’. The author explained that part of the challenge of integration and social inclusion is due to not operating a merit-based selection program for every competitive opportunity in the general stream of commerce and the economy. Another reason is partly that Ghana does not have a working definition of what social inclusion ought to be or is.

The definition of social exclusion is contextual (Harvey, 1990; 1994; Silver, 1994; Barry, 1998; Peace, 1999; 2001). Sen (2000) indicated that the historical roots of the concept of social exclusion dates back to the time of Aristotle. Mathieson et al. (2008) reported that in the modern era, it was Rene Lenoir, Secretary of State of Social Action Gaullist government, French, that first popularized the term. However, even in France, the concept dates back to Emile Durkheim’s work in 1895. Peace (2001) in his paper tracing the origins of the term, added the dimension that *exclusion sociale* was not an affirmative action concept (or entitlement concept) as it is made out to mean now, at least, in France. This reading reverts to Rene Lenoir’s socialist policy initiative. It was used as a motivating tool to enable people to re-engage in society, especially those who had been down and out and wanted to get back into mainstream social activities like

securing gainful employment, marrying someone who is actually gainfully employed, and so on. Peace wrote that “it is important to know what people were being excluded from and by whom” (Peace, 2001; Estivill, 2003; Levitas, 2005). “In the case of ‘exclusion sociale’ the agency was clear. The French Government made policies that excluded particular groups from receiving social insurance (or support) on the basis of explicit criteria. If you wanted to be included amongst those who had access to social insurance you found a job, or you got married to someone who had a job. This was inclusion and exclusion in a definable sense” (Peace, 2001). It was as Sen had advocated, a way to get people to do “meaningful things” and to be “fully human” (Sen, 1979; 1982; 1987; 1993; 1995). In the European Union and other parts of the Western Industrialized world, the term has come to mean variously as exclusion from employment (Peace, 2001), from education in the United States of America (Brown vs. Board of Education, 1954; Myrdal, 1944), and equal opportunity in the EU (Madanipour et al. 1998). Brown vs. Board of Education was a seminal case in which the US Supreme court ruled that establishing separate public schools for black and white students was unconstitutional.

In Ghana, the philosophical underpinning of social exclusion appears to be focused purely on entitlement, proximity to authority, political power and ethnicity (Norman, 2023; Bettinger, 1977; Blakely & Bradshaw, 2002; Blank, 2003). Attempts at programs in Ghana on social inclusion are all national attempts to right the wrongs of society against those who live in chronic extreme poverty (Bradshaw & Muller, 2005). It appears to be an apology and acceptance of blame/responsibility on the part of government for creating the conditions for extreme poverty to exist in the first instances (Blank, 2003). Again, in Ghana, the concept of social exclusion is both dicey and dodgy because the society does not accept that it is stratified, but rather a classless one. The fact is, like any other society it is very much stratified on

economic, professional, age, gender, ethnic, political, regional, district, and even sub-district lines (Norman et al, 2016; Norman & Aviisah, 2015). Having said this, it is also important to note that in the parochial and agrarian communities of Ghana, there is the amalgamation of the classes irrespective of one's financial standing or value. It is therefore difficult to import social exclusion into this cultural milieu. The conflation of the classes occurs at cultural and chieftaincy events and practices, marital rites, funeral rites and community projects.

What appears to have created the current cohort of the population with extreme poverty in Ghana and in other African nations is, perhaps, attributable to persistent bad government policies since independence until this moment (Blank, 2003). Ineffective and unethical developmental programs egoistically selected infrastructural monstrosities that do not contribute to the collective wellbeing of the people of the areas where such projects were built. Over the years, successive governments have combined to disenfranchise the average man and woman in many African nations through vote-buying, delegates buying and usurping the authority of the people to elect representatives who can add value to them but promote those who dangle carrots in front of them and seduce them to surrender all their dignities to the politicians. All of such activities have created a permanent state of underclassness, poverty and deprivation across board (Silver, 1994; Levitas, 2005; Norman, 2022). As Asante advised, "if genuine and sustainable economic integration is to be pursued...the approach to date - the denial of participatory democracy to socio-economic groups then the process of regionalism - should be changed" (ibid, Asante, p. 179).

VI. Summary and Conclusion

This paper is by no means the end of such investigative analysis of the work of S.K.B. Asante. There is more to the body of works a researcher of long service like him had produced which can be

analyzed in one go or which can be summarized in a short scholastic review. This review does not claim to be the final voice on the body of works of Asante. But from what has been produced here, S. K. B. Asante was essentially a diplomat with a pen who sought to chronicle the important economic developments in Africa's efforts towards continental integration. He was well aware that true integration like that of the European Union was not achievable "immediately", which could be a euphemism to be either integration now or never. Built into the expectation of African integration was the reality that the journey was not going to be easy, the nations are too dissimilar, the leaderships of the respective African nations still devoted to parochialism within the broader protective umbrella of the African Union, and perhaps, under the political philosophy of "separate but equal" mentality. Asante understood without saying that the only block towards rapid African integration is not due to differential economic and developmental statuses of the respective nations, but the unwillingness of African leaders and Africans in general to surrender a part of their national sovereignty to create a greater sovereign nation of a United States of Africa. African leaders are too much in love with patrimonialism to be able to sacrifice a part of their personal pride, national pride and parochial expectations of a few powerful people that have essentially captured the respective nations for their personal and exclusive exploitation. Such a conclusion may appear compelled on Asante but in his many writings, he appears to have deliberately dodged the discussion of the political blockade to progress towards integration by the African leaders, perhaps, due to the diplomatic locus as a Senior Regional Adviser in Economic Cooperation and Integration and Coordinator, Southern Africa Desk and Task Force, in the Cabinet office of the Economic Commission for Africa at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. He could have gone out on a limb to speak truth to power but this never happened. African integration ought to be approached as an intersectional concern of economics, politics,

human rights, civil liberties, and the search for wellbeing and happiness. When these values are neglected in the movement towards integration, that noble goal would hang in abeyance until the goal is defined in broad and human terms and not merely an economic disposition.

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