

**The Economic Partnership Agreements negotiation
processes in West Africa and Southern Africa
– an argument for neofunctionalism or liberal
intergovernmentalism?**

Carmen Paping

Student Number: 586826

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Supervisor: Prof. Markus Haverland

Second reader: Asst. Prof. Adria Albareda Sans

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Summary

This paper aimed to evaluate which regional integration theory best explains the negotiation processes of West Africa and Southern Africa regarding the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) with the European Union (EU). The EPAs are trade agreements whereby regions gain preferential access to the European market while partially opening up their domestic markets. West Africa and Southern Africa approached the EPA negotiations significantly different, with West African countries mandating their regional institution called the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to negotiate with the EU on their behalf, while the Southern African countries negotiated with the EU directly on the governmental level.

The two theories applied in this study were liberal intergovernmentalism and neofunctionalism, which are the most prominent theories used to explain regional integration. The main argument by liberal intergovernmentalist is that member states and their national preferences dominate the regional integration process. In contrast, neofunctionalist argue that regional integration is dominated by elites and interest groups who shifted their loyalties to the regional level and that regional institutions established by member states can reach a certain level of autonomy. From these theories, three propositions were derived each, which were tested on the cases of the EPA negotiation processes of West Africa and Southern Africa.

Analysing the first set of propositions, the aim was to determine whether national interest groups or regional interest groups influenced the national preference formation of governments. In both regions, interest groups, such as export industries, farmers organisations and trade associations, were active nationally and regionally. However, the preferences of the West African and Southern African governments reflected the demands from the national interest groups to a larger extent than regional interest groups' demands, as expected by liberal intergovernmentalist theory. The second set of propositions focused on the role of the regional institutions. ECOWAS had an active role in the West Africa EPA negotiations, and the ECOWAS Commission was able to influence the negotiations in its favour, as neofunctionalist theory predicts. On the contrary, Southern Africa's regional institution, the Southern African Development Community (SADC), was relatively absent during the EPA negotiations. Therefore, the SADC Secretariat was unable to influence the outcome of the negotiations, in line with liberal intergovernmentalism. The third set of propositions examined the negotiation process on the regional level. Both in West Africa and Southern Africa, negotiations were dominated by asymmetric interdependence between countries and interstate bargaining. This process was expected by liberal intergovernmentalists.

To conclude, liberal intergovernmentalism has its limits, mainly when it comes to capturing African countries' dependence on the EU. Still, the theory has the most explanatory relevance when analysing the EPA negotiation processes of West Africa and Southern Africa

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Table of Contents

Summary	ii
Acknowledgements.....	ii
List of abbreviations	v
List of tables.....	vii
1. Introduction.....	1
2. Literature review.....	3
2.1 Regional integration in Africa.....	3
2.2 The Economic Partnership Agreements.....	5
3. Theoretical framework.....	7
3.1 Liberal intergovernmentalism.....	7
3.1.1 Propositions:	9
3.2 Neofunctionalism.....	9
3.2.1 Propositions:	12
3.3 Regional integration theory applied to the African context	12
4. Research design and methods	14
4.1 Selection of the research design.....	14
4.2 Structure of the congruence analysis	14
4.3 Internal and external validity	15
4.4 Selection of cases and theories.....	16
4.5 Data collection	16
5. Analysis.....	18
5.1 Introduction into the EPAs.....	18
5.2 National preferences formation.....	19
5.2.1 West Africa	19
5.2.2 Southern Africa.....	25
5.3 The role of regional institutions	29
5.3.1 West Africa	29
5.3.2 Southern Africa.....	31
5.4 The negotiation process	32
5.4.1 West Africa.....	33
5.4.2 Southern Africa.....	37
6. Discussion.....	41
7. Conclusion	45
7.1 Limitations	45
7.2 Further research	46
References.....	47

List of abbreviations

- APIBANA – African Pineapples and Bananas Association
- ASCCI - Association of SADC Chambers of Commerce and Industry
- BEMA - Botswana Exporters and Manufacturers Association
- BFTU - Botswana Federation of Trade Unions
- COPAN – Cocoa Processors Association of Nigeria
- COSATU - Congress of South African Trade Unions
- EAC – East African Community
- EBA – Everything-But-Arms
- ECOWAS – Economic Community of West African States
- EPA – Economic Partnership Agreement
- EU – European Union
- GAWU - General Agricultural Workers Union
- GSP – Generalised Scheme of Preferences
- GTLC- Ghana Trade Livelihoods Coalition
- LDC – Least Developed Country
- MAN - Manufacturers Association of Nigeria
- MFN – Most Favoured Nation
- NANTS - National Association of Nigerian Traders
- NATF - Namibian Agricultural Trade Forum
- NGO – Non-governmental organisation
- PAPED – Economic Partnership Agreement Development Programme
- ROPPA - Network of Farmers Organisations and Agricultural Producers
- SACHI - Southern African Christian Initiative
- SACU - Southern African Customs Unions

SADC – Southern Africa Development Community

SASPN - Southern Africa People's Solidarity Network

SATUCC - Southern African Trade Union Coordination Council

TDCA – Trade Development and Cooperation Agreement

TWN – Third World Network

UEMOA - Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest Africaine

List of tables

Table 1 Overview of the preferences of interest groups and countries in West Africa.....	24
Table 2 Overview of the preferences of interest groups and countries in Southern Africa.....	28
Table 3 Overview of demands during the negotiations in West Africa.....	36
Table 4 Overview of demands during the negotiations in Southern Africa.....	40

1. Introduction

After the end of the Cold War, Europe signed the Treaty of Maastricht in 1993 and officially established the European Union (EU) as an institution. Since then, Europe's influence globally has expanded exponentially (Söderbaum & Van Langenhove, 2005). The EU became a success story for regional integration and was often considered a model for other regions (Murray-Evans, 2004). During this time, bringing regional integration to other parts of the world became one of the EU's primary foreign policy strategies. This strategy is most apparent in the EU's approach towards the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries (Söderbaum & Van Langehove, 2005). The 79 ACP countries were selected for preferential access to the European market due to their historical colonial ties with countries that are part of the EU (Carbone, 2020). In 2002, the EU started the negotiation process for new trade agreements with the ACP countries, called the Economic Partnership agreements (EPAs). The EU divided the ACP countries into seven different regions and started the EPA negotiations with each group of countries separately (Bernal, 2013). The main aims of the EPAs are to enhance economic growth by establishing free trade zones between ACP regions and the EU, stimulating intra-regional trade, and promoting regional integration in each region (Isaac & Bellonwu-Okafor, 2016).

The first two regions in Africa to conclude the EPA negotiations were West Africa, comprising 16 countries, and Southern Africa, comprising six countries. Both regions concluded the negotiations in 2014 (Oloruntoba, 2016). These two regions chose significantly different approaches while negotiating with the EU. The 16 countries in West Africa decided to mandate their regional institution called the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to negotiate with the EU on their behalf (Weinhardt & Moerland, 2018). In contrast, the Southern African countries negotiated with the EU directly on the governmental level. This makes the EPA negotiations between West Africa and Southern Africa and the EU interesting cases to analyse in this thesis. Another interesting aspect about these regions is that they both have a clear regional hegemon. For the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Group, this is South Africa, and for West Africa, this is Nigeria (Hulse, 2018). Furthermore, West Africa has the largest market of all the ACP regions, making the EPA with the region especially important for the EU (Curran et al., 2008). Also, the negotiations in Southern Africa make a compelling case to study because South Africa has experience negotiating with the EU, as the only country on the continent (Hulse, 2018).

This paper aims to evaluate which regional integration theory best explains the negotiation processes regarding the EPAs and looks at the different strategies used by West Africa and Southern Africa towards the EU during these negotiations. The two theories that will be applied in this study are liberal intergovernmentalism and neofunctionalism, which are the most notable theories to explain regional integration. Therefore this paper aims to answer the research question:

Which regional integration theory best explains the negotiation processes of West Africa and Southern Africa while establishing the Economic Partnership Agreements with the European Union: liberal intergovernmentalism or neofunctionalism?

To answer the research question, this next chapter will give an overview of the existing literature on regional integration in Africa and previous research on the EPAs. In the third chapter, an in-depth explanation of the two theories, liberal intergovernmentalism and neofunctionalism, will be provided. At the end of each subchapter, the propositions based on the theories will be formulated. Also, an overview will be given of research applying regional integration theory to the African continent. In the fourth chapter, the methodology will be discussed, explaining the choice to conduct a congruence analysis. In the fifth chapter, the analysis, the two cases will be thoroughly assessed regarding each of the three topics: national preference formation, the role of regional institutions and the negotiation process. At the end of each subchapter, a conclusion will be drawn on which proposition is most relevant. The discussion is provided in the sixth chapter and will compare the outcome of the two regions. Afterwards, these findings will be compared to the findings of previous research on the subject. In the seventh and final chapter, the research will be concluded, stating both the limitations of the study and the recommendations.

This thesis has both scientific and social relevance. Firstly, the scientific purpose of this research is to fill a gap in the literature of regional integration theory. Research regional integration on the African continent applying the lenses of theories, such as liberal intergovernmentalism and neofunctionalism, remains limited. Mainly the liberal intergovernmentalism is rarely discussed in debates on regionalisation. This is surprising as regional integration has been taking place in Africa since the 1960s, and the continent has multiple large regional institutions to date. Two important regional institutions, SADC and ECOWAS, will be analysed in this research which will be a relevant addition to the discourse on regional integration theory outside the scope of the European Union. The social relevance of this research can be found in the fact that the EPA negotiations were on the political agenda of the African regions for over ten years. The outcome of the negotiations was expected to have an enormous impact on the African economies, some argue positively and others negatively, due to its changes in trade relations. Furthermore, there was a significant power imbalance between the EU and the African regions, making it especially interesting to assess how they organised themselves during the negotiation process. Lastly, if one theory has explanatory relevance to the EPA negotiations, it can help formulate expectations for developments regarding future regional integration based on this theory.

2. Literature review

This chapter aims to give an overview of the relevant existing literature on regional integration in Africa. First, the most significant studies on regional integration in Africa will be summed up. Afterwards, an overview will be given of the relevant research regarding the EPA negotiations in West Africa and Southern Africa.

The choice was made to position the discussion of previous studies applying the two theories of liberal intergovernmentalism and neofunctionalism on the regional integration in Africa at the end of the next chapter, after an in-depth explanation of both theories has been provided.

2.1 Regional integration in Africa

After gaining independence from colonial rule in the 1950s and 1960s, African countries put regional integration high on the political agenda (Börzel & Risse, 2016). Since then, various scholars have studied this phenomenon by conducting descriptive and comparative analyses.

Rather than trying to explain the regional integration process on the African continent, numerous scholars assessed the historical developments in order to describe the process in its unique context. For example, in his article ‘The United States of Africa: a revisit’, Ayittey (2010) provides a descriptive analysis to compose the lessons learned throughout the years. In his research, he focuses on describing the circumstances and events that led to the rise of the Organisation of African Unity, later becoming the African Union. Similarly, Marinov (2014) did a more descriptive study as he analysed the expansion of regional integration in Africa over time. His research started with the African countries’ independence up to the establishment of the African Union in 2002. Meanwhile, he discussed the possibilities for the formation of an African economic community. Marinov remains optimistic about the chances for an African economic community but does point out that the process is much slower than expected.

Over time, the number of comparative studies looking at regional integration increased substantially. In these studies, there was more focus on explaining regional integration taking place in Africa and concluding whether it could be considered successful or not. One of the scholars that conducted a more comparative study is Jordaan (2014). In his research on intraregional trade in Africa, using the data from the United Nations Economic Commission of Africa, he determined that intraregional trade remained limited. Most African countries continue to trade more with industrialised countries outside the continent. Therefore, Jordaan regarded regional economic integration in Africa as a failed attempt. He ascribes this failure to countries’ lack of resources and capacity to fully implemented regional integration plans. Additionally, he points out the national governments’ unwillingness to transfer the decision-making power to the regional institutions. Bachmann and Sidaway (2010) came to a similar conclusion with their comparative analysis on the East African Community (EAC) and the EU’s role in

the region's integration process. Despite the EU actively encouraging regional integration in the Global South, they argued that the path the EU took in its integration process could not be considered a model for the EAC. In their opinion, this process does fit within the East African context, mainly because the EAC member states showed little interest in establishing supranational institutions.

Many scholars argued that it is not reasonable to expect the same regional integration process in Africa as in Europe. Foiramonti & Mattheis (2015) conducted a comparative study whereby they analysed whether Africa is taking the same path towards regional integration as Europe. Applying both 'old' theories of regionalism and 'new' regionalism, they believe the process of integration in African regions should become a field of study of its own. Likewise, Draper (2012) is convinced that Africa needs its own path to regionalisation instead of copying the EU model. He emphasises that the geopolitical and economic structures in Africa, among other things, are tremendously different from that of Europe. One of his arguments is that African states do not have the capacity to "engage in complex institutional forms of economic integration along the lines of the EU model" (Draper, 2012, p.79). Moreover, Gibb (2009) analysed regional integration and the neo-patrimonial state system in Africa. Using Southern Africa as a case study, he studies market integration and the state's role using development theory. Gibb also concludes that the European integration model is unsuitable for Africa due to the continent's considerably different political and economic composition. He also states that the integration process that took place so far has been predominantly state-led and highly dependent on member states' willingness to share sovereignty because of their neo-patrimonial system. As a result of the African context being highly different from the European context, various scholars started to move away from what they called the 'European' theories of integration and developed the concept of 'new regionalism' (Söderbaum & Shaw, 2003; Hettne, 2006; Börzel & Risse, 2019).

However, several scholars state that the 'old' integration theories cannot wholly be neglected. With their research, de Lombaerde, Söderbaum, van Langenhove and Baert (2010) also strive to contribute to the debate on comparative regionalism. They do so by looking into the different theories trying to explain regional integration. In their opinion, the regional integration theories can be considered Eurocentric because these theories were developed to explain the establishment of the European Union. However, instead of creating an entirely new theory, these scholars promote more interaction between experts from the different fields, both from Europe and the Global South. They urge them to collaborate to be able to fully grasp the highly complex issue of regional integration in Africa. Jetschke and Lenz (2011) agree that when trying to explain regional integration in Africa, regional integration theories should be used to some extent. Their research on the establishment of regional institutions in the Global South emphasises the global interdependence between these institutions.

This research aims to contribute to the debate on the applicability of regional integration theories in the African context. Therefore, this thesis decided to analyse neofunctionalism and intergovernmentalism while explaining the EPA negotiations between West Africa and Southern Africa and the EU.

2.2 The Economic Partnership Agreements

Various studies have analysed the potential impact of the EPAs on West Africa and Southern Africa, focusing predominantly on trade and regional integration (Stevens, 2006; Goodison, 2007; Bouët, Laborde & Traoré, 2017). Krapohl and van Huut (2019) are highly critical of the EPAs' impact on the African regions. According to them, the EPAs will negatively affect the regional integration processes in each negotiation block. Krapohl and van Huut point out the substantial discrepancies between African countries, which will also be discussed later in this thesis. While some countries have a high stake in the successful implementation of the EPA, others already have favourable access to the European market and have little to gain from signing the agreement. Due to these highly differentiated interests, the EPAs will most likely “split the regions and built up further obstacles for deeper economic integration” (p.579). On the contrary, Berends (2016) argues that African countries will benefit from the EPA, whereas the EU itself will not. When analysing the contents of the EPA between Southern Africa and the EU from an economic perspective, he concludes that an increase in trade resulting from the EPA will positively impact the Southern African economies.

Many studies analysing the EPAs have focused on the EU's influence in the regions with which it is negotiating. For example, Langan (2017) examined the EU's normative power during the EPA negotiations using a critical moral economy lens. He concludes that while the EU promotes the EPAs as a means to strengthen African economies, the EU also clearly has strategic, self-interested motives for these agreements. Likewise, Hurt (2012) focused on Europe's influence in Southern Africa's EPA process. He argues that the EU is trying to impose its own ideas of development through market liberalisation on Africa with the EPA instead of addressing the needs of Southern Africa. While analysing the EPA process in West Africa, Koné (2010) draws the same conclusion in his research on the developmental needs of West Africa.

Other scholars concentrated their studies on the role of African countries and their regional institutions during the EPA negotiations with the EU. One of them is Murray-Evans (2015), who focussed on the concept of African agency during the negotiations when looking at the SADC Group EPA. He emphasised the diversity in African countries' interests in the EPA. He concluded, “these negotiations were characterised by a pattern of differentiated African interpretations and responses to the choice set on offer under the EPAs and by a series of strategic interactions and power plays between African regional partners” (p.1859). Weinhardt (2017) conducted a similar research for West Africa, but instead used game theory. Looking at the strategies of both West Africa and Europe while negotiating, she stated “we need to pay greater attention to actors' subjective interpretations of the rules of the game”

(p.294). Moreover, Vickers (2011) studied the position of the smaller countries in Southern Africa and their role in the EPA negotiations. He concludes that these countries had little negotiation power as the talks were dominated by the EU on one side and South Africa on the other. Also, the absence of the SADC and SACU Secretariats during the negotiations weakened their position as the institutions could not lobby on their behalf. In her research on actorness in the EPA negotiations, Hulse (2018) also argues that Southern Africa was hindered by the SADC countries being divided among four different EPAs and, consequently, the lack of institutional participation from the SADC Secretariat. Meanwhile, she states that West Africa had a higher degree of actorness due to the successful involvement of the ECOWAS Commission during the negotiations. In line with these studies, this thesis will focus on the EPA negotiation processes from the perspective of West Africa and Southern Africa.

3. Theoretical framework

This chapter goes in-depth on the two most important theories in regional integration, namely liberal intergovernmentalism and neofunctionalism. Each of the theories will be thoroughly described, after which propositions based on these theories will be formulated.

Regional integration theory looks into the reasoning behind states' decision to establish a regional organisation. Furthermore, regional integration theory assesses how these organisations are shaped and how they can change over time. These theories not only look at the influence states have on regional organisations but also the influence these organisations have on their member states. The majority of research on this phenomenon has been centralised around the establishment of the different EU bodies and their expected future developments (Schimmelfenning, 2018). When theorising regional integration, there are two so-called grand theories: liberal intergovernmentalism and neofunctionalism (Saurugger, 2014).

The choice was made for these two theories as they are at the centre of the “key debates on regional integration theory” (Schimmelfenning, 2018, p.1). Neofunctionalism, developed by Haas at the end of the 1950s, was one of the first attempts to explain and theorise the establishment of the EU (Niemann et al., 2019). Despite being criticised by many scholars throughout the years, the theory continues to be one of the primary theories applied when attempting to explain the formation of regional institutions. The regional integration theory intergovernmentalism, in the 1990s revised to liberal intergovernmentalism by Moravcsik, was developed as a direct response to neofunctionalism's inability to explain certain events (Moravcsik & Schimmelfenning, 2019). As these two theories offer different, and in many aspects competing explanations to the same phenomenon of regional integration, they are interesting to test in this research. Applying these two theories to events in Africa, such as the EPA negotiations, is especially interesting because the theorisation of regional integration on this continent remains limited (Gibb, 2009).

3.1 Liberal intergovernmentalism

Liberal intergovernmentalism considers states being the central actors within regional integration. According to this theory, states create regional organisations to serve national purposes, such as enhanced national security and economic gain (Schimmelfenning, 2018). The theory was initially developed in the 1960s by Stanley Hoffman. In the 1990s, liberal intergovernmentalism, as it is known nowadays, came into existence after Andrew Moravcsik revised the theory. To develop the theory, Moravcsik predominantly employed ideas from international political economy and international relations, particularly liberalism and institutionalism (Moravcsik & Schimmelfenning., 2019).

The theory rests on two main assumptions. Firstly, the assumption that societal actors within the country have the ability to voice their preferences and help shape the national political agenda (Moravcsik &

Schimmelfenning, 2019). Consequently, the national interests are not fixed, as assumed in early international relations theory, but rather issue-specific (Moravcsik, 1998). However, the influence of interest groups remains solely within the national domain. During negotiations with other international actors, the state is the unitary authority and speaks with a single voice (Moravcsik & Schimmelfenning, 2019). Secondly, the theory is based on the concept of bounded rationality. Bounded rationality means decision-making is done under several constraining circumstances, such as the limited availability of information and the unpredictability of the future. Under these circumstances, actors will calculate the costs and benefits of their options and choose the one that maximises their utility. (Moravcsik & Schimmelfenning, 2019). Therefore, “it anticipates that states will delegate or pool just enough authority to ensure that national governments will find it in their interest to comply with the deal” (Hooghe & Marks, 2019, p.1116).

In his book ‘The Choice for Europe’, published in 1998, Moravcsik explains how the institutions of the European Union come about. He does so based on a rationalist framework. Moravcsik states, “the rationalist framework proposes that international negotiation be disaggregated into a causal sequence of three stages: national preference formation, interstate bargaining, and institutional choice” (1998, p.20). In the first stage, national preference formation, different potential negotiation outcomes on national objectives are scrutinised and weighed against each other. According to intergovernmentalists, domestic politics are shaped by the underlying national demands of the dominant interest groups in the country. Within the national domain, different interest groups compete to convince the national political elites of the importance of their cause and get their demands on the political agenda (Cini, 2010). In most instances, economic interests, more precisely commercial interest, play a central role in the process. As mentioned previously, once the formation of the national preferences is finalised, the state will present these preferences using a single voice. This means the part played by national interest groups is finished, and it is now up to states to represent these interests during interstate bargaining (Saurugger, 2014).

In the next stage, interstate bargaining, the states negotiate to see whether their national preferences can be realised more adequately through international cooperation. When reviewing the establishment of the Treaty of Rome by the European member states, Moravcsik concludes “interstate bargaining was dominated by governments, which proved quite capable of providing efficient policy initiatives, mediation, and mobilisation” (1998, p.138). With this, intergovernmentalism suggests that regional institutions do not significantly influence the outcome of the bargaining processes (Cini, 2010). During the bargaining process, there are a few critical conditions, such as the compatibility of states interests, whether collaboration would result in beneficial outcomes for all parties involved, and how these benefits are distributed regionally (Schimmelfenning, 2018). However, preferences cannot always be compatible, and in these contexts, asymmetric interdependence between states is an important factor. Asymmetric interdependence occurs when some states have less need for a specific agreement than

others or if there is unequal access to information between states. In the first scenario, states with little need for a deal are less worried about the outcome of the negotiations being non-cooperation. Consequently, they have a stronger negotiation position to push their demands as they have little to lose. In the second scenario, states with more information about the situation are frequently in a position to manipulate the outcome of the negotiations in their favour (Moravcsik & Schimmelfenning., 2019). Moreover, not all states have the same relative power going in the negotiation process. There are so-called ‘big states’ and ‘small states’. While small states can always decide to reject a notion, big states can use different means to persuade them to vote in their favour (Saurugger, 2014). The outcome of the negotiations is expected to reflect the lowest-common denominator between the parties involved (Cini, 2010). Once the states determine the best strategies to reach their goals effectively, they are laid out in agreements. There is rarely a need for third-party involvement in this bargaining process because they are not considered to have more information than states (Moravcsik & Schimmelfenning, 2019).

In the final stage, to ensure the agreements established in the previous phase are upheld, governments decide on whether the establishment of an international institution is in their best interest. If that is the case, it must be agreed upon how much decision-making power this institution will receive (Moravcsik & Schimmelfenning, 2019). When making this decision, the government considers how they can best keep each other in check and ensure agreements are adhered to. The effectiveness of supranational cooperation and its gains are important in this context (Moravcsik, 1998). For example, once a regional institution governs an agreement, national interest groups against the agreement have less influence in the matter. This reduces the chances of a country defecting on the deal (Schimmelfenning, 2018). As Schimmelfenning puts it, “the institutions that governments establish are designed to lock in intergovernmental bargains, not to enable autonomous supranational agency and endogenous change” (2018, p.11).

3.1.1 Propositions:

P1: National preferences are established by interest groups competing within the national domain

P2: Regional institutions are promoting the agendas of member states and do not influence in the outcome of the negotiations

P3: The negotiation process is dominated by member state bargaining, speaking with a single voice, and their asymmetric interdependence

3.2 Neofunctionalism

Neofunctionalism was one of the first serious attempts to explain the regional integration process taking place in Europe, most especially the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community and, at a later stage, the European Economic Community (Niemann et al., 2019). The theory is rooted in

pluralist and functionalist theory. It aims to explain the process of regional integration, while intergovernmentalism addresses integration as one or a series of confined occurrences (Niemann, 2006). Neofunctionalist theory has been established in the 1950s and 1960s by Ernst Haas. Over time several scholars revised the theory, such as Leon Lindberg in 1963 and Stuart Scheingold in 1964 (Saurugger, 2014). Neofunctionalism positions regional integration as the result of multiple actors, both the government and national and regional interest groups, believing that cooperation on a supranational level helps them achieve their interests more effectively. For this purpose, the decision is made to establish regional institutions (Hooghe & Marks, 2019). This is based on the premise that all actors involved can benefit from regional integration, which contradicts the realist assumption that international cooperation is a zero-sum game. The decision is not based on ideologic beliefs but instead made with self-serving interests in mind (Jensen, 2010). Thus, according to neofunctionalists, the state is not one unified actor but consisting of different actors, which all significantly influence the integration process. This is contrary to intergovernmentalists' assumption that states are the main actors. Instead, "neofunctionalists conceptualise the state as an arena in which societal actors operate to realise their interests" (Hooghe & Marks, 2019, p.1114).

Two main concepts distinguish neofunctionalism from other theories, namely spillovers and elite-socialisation. These are the predominantly unintended consequences from regional integration over which states have limited control (Schimmelfenning, 2018). Lindberg explains spillovers as "a situation in which a given action, related to a specific goal, creates a situation in which the original goal can be assured only by taking further actions, which in turn create a further condition and a need for more action and so forth" (1963, p.10). As a result, the demand for further regional integration arises. While the initial integration process was a deliberate decision of states, early neofunctionalists believed the expansion of regional integration occurs with a degree of automaticity (Niemann et al., 2019). However, later on, this notion of automaticity was rejected. It was believed that the degree of expansion depends on several factors, referred to as path-dependency. Path-dependence means that "the timing and sequence of prior integration matters because it progressively narrows the range of options" (Hooghe & Marks, 2019, p.1115). One of these factors is a cost-benefit analysis that will be made to assess whether regionalisation is preferred to re-nationalisation (Schimmelfenning, 2018).

Three different types of spillovers can be distinguished. Firstly, functional spillovers occur due to increased interdependence between states as a result of regional integration. Regional integration oftentimes results in negative externalities. To tackle both these negative externalities and exploit new opportunities, it becomes beneficial to expand integration to other policy areas (Krapohl, 2017). Secondly, political spillovers, which are the result of the regional political playing field gaining strength. The assumption is made that over time the interactions on the regional level between the national elites of the member countries will increase. This will result in the socialisation of these national elites, which eventually leads to national actors shifting their loyalties and interests to the

regional level. Consequently, the regional political playing field expands and gains more influence (Wiener et al., 2019). Thirdly, cultivated or institutional spillovers means that regional institutional actors, such as the European Commission, have gained sufficient influence to shape the regional integration process. The assumption is made that these institutional bodies can act as supranational institutions by surpassing the national state preferences to obtain an outcome favouring the region. For example, during the negotiation process, such an intragovernmental actor can encourage states to make concessions in one area with the idea that these will be compensated in another area later on (Krapohl, 2017).

Elite-socialisation refers to the shift in political attitudes and loyalties from political leaders and bureaucratic officials from the national level to the regional level. Early neofunctionalism considers national elites to be the driving forces behind regional integration and predicts that elite groups will be formed over time that will promote European norms and ideas instead of their national state's interests. For example, the expectation is that employees of the European Commission will act in the best interest of Europe during their decision-making rather than in the interest of their own countries. These shifting loyalties result from continuous interaction between these actors in the regional domain (Jensen, 2010). "For the neofunctionalist, the political attitudes that matter are those of the national political, administrative and economic elites and the representatives of international organisations" (Pentland, 1973, p.128). Later on, the role of the public was acknowledged as well in the integration process and their influence in shaping national preferences, for example, through the European elections (Niemann, 2006). Moreover, interest groups can show similar tendencies to elites regarding diverging interests towards the regional level. These interest groups are expected to organise themselves supranationally more often and develop their interests accordingly. Together they try to influence the policymaking process of regional institutions while also encouraging the regional integration process among their own government (Jensen, 2010).

Furthermore, neofunctionalist theory is supported by two essential assumptions. Firstly, just like intergovernmentalists, neofunctionalists adopt the notion of actors' bounded rationality and believe that they have self-serving interests. However, neofunctionalist theory differs in the sense that it thinks these interests can change over time as the integration process progresses. States have the ability to learn from the interactions on the regional level and adapt their national preferences accordingly (Niemann, 2006). Secondly, while regional institutions are established by national actors, they can develop to a point where they obtain autonomy from these actors, or at least to a certain degree. As autonomous, supranational actors, regional institutions can lobby for more integration to enhance their power (Wiener et al., 2019). Furthermore, the changes that result from regional decision-making are often incremental (Niemann, 2006). As Schimmelfenning summarises it, "regional integration establishes an ideational and institutional environment that transforms the identities, values, and norms of actors" (2018, p.11).

3.2.1 Propositions:

P1: National preferences are established by interest groups forming regional alliances

P2: Regional institutions influence the outcome of the negotiation process, putting forward their own integration agenda autonomously

P3: Governments and interest groups are both important actors in the negotiation process on the regional level

3.3 Regional integration theory applied to the African context

Above, the two theories applied in this research have been thoroughly discussed. In these subchapters, the main focus was on the integration process of the European Union, for which they were designed. Now it is time to assess their applicability outside of the EU. Building upon the literature review provided in the previous chapter, this subchapter will give an overview of the relevant studies applying neofunctionalism and liberal intergovernmentalism to the European context.

The first scholar to bring neofunctionalist theory to the African context was Joseph Nye. In 1963, he started studying regional economic integration in East Africa and the effect of a common market. In 1970, Nye published his article 'Comparing common markets: a revised neo-functional model'. He analysed the formation of common markets in East Africa and Central America, applying the neofunctionalist model. While Nye admits that East African governments are unlikely to give up their sovereignty, making the process more difficult, he does emphasize that regional integration is not solely a European phenomenon. Therefore, he concludes his article by saying, "it is both possible and imperative to study the politics of common markets in a comparative perspective and that the neo-functional model ... can serve as a useful process model for analysing the comparative politics of common markets in a variety of settings" (p.835).

More recent scholars did not fully agree with Nye. Hurrell (1995) concurs that neofunctionalism provides a valuable contribution to the debate on regional integration in Europe. However, in his explanatory research on the comeback of regionalism in global politics, Hurrell identifies three reasons why neofunctionalism is not as applicable to other regions. Firstly, because the theory primarily aims to explain the workings of regional institutions instead of the factors that led to integration in the first place. Secondly, neofunctionalists assume that in time the role of the states on the regional level diminishes, while in Africa, states continue to be the most powerful actors in the integration process. Thirdly, neofunctionalism predicts the rise of strong regional institutions and further integration due to spillovers, which cannot be witnessed on the African continent. In line with the last argument, Krapohl (2017) agrees that neofunctionalism is unlikely to explain the integration of regions other than Europe. In his book 'Regional integration in the Global South', he briefly addresses the European theories of intergovernmentalism, neofunctionalism, and institutionalism. He argues that regional economic interdependence between countries that neofunctionalists consider the basis for functional spillovers is

relatively absent for African countries. Furthermore, he points out that the theory fails to consider the dependence of the Global South on Western economies. He states that “neofunctionalism needs to conceptualise such interactions between the respective regions and the outside world in order to be applicable to developing regions.” (p.222, 223).

In his article on regional economic integration in Africa, Jiboku (2015) analyses the theories of functionalism, neofunctionalism and neo-realism. Hereby, he focuses on another essential neofunctionalist concept, namely ‘elite-socialisation’. Jiboku concludes that neofunctionalism fails to explain the interest groups and political parties' inability to effectively organise themselves and get involved in the regionalisation process. Moreover, more he argues that neofunctionalism “does not give explanations as to why countries which voluntarily decide to sign regional agreements and establish regional economic institutions (as it is particularly the case in Africa for example with ECOWAS, SADC, and AU) often become reluctant to implement such agreements” (p.15). Aniche (2020) also approaches the discussion from another angle by moving from the European integration model and instead focusing on regionalism from a decolonial perspective. In his research, Aniche reflects on the historical background of the regionalisation process in Africa before going into the regional integration theories. According to him, neofunctionalism is unable to explain the ways in which regional integration in Africa failed, as the neofunctionalist expectation of integration being a linear and gradual process cannot be seen in Africa. Lastly, as Krapohl (2017) also pointed out, Aniche emphasises that neofunctionalism fails to consider African economies dependence on the West.

There are substantially fewer scholars who applied liberal intergovernmentalism to the African context. One of them is Krapohl (2017), who sees more potential for liberal intergovernmentalism to be translated to other regions than for neofunctionalism. His argument is that liberal intergovernmentalism centralises intraregional economic interest rather than interdependence. Therefore, the theory can more easily be expanded to include extra-regional economic interests as well, which are the dominant interests of African states. Furthermore, Krapohl argues that liberal intergovernmentalism places less emphasis on the rise of regional institutions during the integration process and can thus better explain why African regional institutions remain relatively weak. However, Börzel and Risse (2019) disagree with the first argument. They argue that both theories are rooted in regional interdependence and, thus, fail to consider the context of extra-regional dependence. Still, the scholars believe that the two theories would be more applicable if they “broaden their understanding of interdependence to encompass extra-regional economic relations, security externalities, as well as regime stability” (p. 1239). Overall, it can be said scholars are hesitant about the explanatory relevance of neofunctionalism and liberal intergovernmentalism when analysing regional integration in Africa. Nevertheless, while scholars point out several weaknesses of neofunctionalist theory, research on liberal intergovernmentalism is too limited to draw a conclusion.

4. Research design and methods

In this chapter, the methodological aspect of the research will be explained in more detail. The first subchapter will elaborate on why a congruence analysis was chosen as the research design. The second subchapter gives an overview of the analysis that will be applied. The third subchapter will explain why the choice was made to analyse these specific cases and why neofunctionalism and liberal intergovernmentalism were chosen as theories to be tested. The fourth subchapter will discuss the validity and reliability of the study. Finally, the last subchapter provides the reasoning behind the data source selection.

4.1 Selection of the research design

This thesis is interested in exploring the overarching topic of regional integration. The decision was made to conduct a qualitative research, as it provides the opportunity to go more in-depth into one particular case and consider the context necessary to identify and analyse the different approaches taken by the regions towards the EU while establishing the EPAs. As this research looks into regional integration in two regions, West Africa and Southern Africa, it is considered a small-N research. Blatter and Haverland (2012) set out three different small-N research methods: co-variational analysis, causal-process tracing and congruence analysis.

In this research, the decision was made to apply a congruence analysis. Blatter and Haverland define congruence analysis as “a small-N research design in which the researcher uses case studies to provide empirical evidence for the explanatory relevance and relative strength of one theoretical approach in comparison to other theoretical approaches” (2012, p.144). A congruence analysis is most suitable out of the three small-N research methods, as this thesis seeks to contribute to the academic discourse on the explanatory relevance of regional integration theory outside the scope of the European Union. Instead, a co-variational analysis aims to find out whether a specific independent variable influences another dependent variable. While a causal-process tracing method seeks to explain how an outcome came to be by identifying several causal factors influencing the outcome (Haverland and Blatter, 2012). The purpose of this research is not to find out whether certain variables influenced the EPA negotiations, nor is it to explain the outcome of the EPA negotiations, as a multitude of these two types of research already exists on the subject (e.g. Hulse, 2018; Berends, 2016; Krapohl & van Huut, 2020).

4.2 Structure of the congruence analysis

At the start of the research, after the literature review and theoretical framework are finalised, the most significant step in a congruence analysis is the formulation of the propositions. As defined by Blatter and Haverland, the purpose of propositions is that they “specify the constitutive concepts and formulate the causal connections to define and characterise a paradigm or theory” (2012, p.160). The propositions formulated are derived from the two abstract theories: liberal intergovernmentalism and

neofunctionalism. Since the propositions are closely linked to the theories, it was decided to position them in the theoretical framework at the end of the subchapters explaining the theories. What is important to note is that the two theories in this research are competing theories, meaning they have their own arguments for the phenomenon of regional integration rather than complementary ones. Consequently, each of the three propositions deduced from liberal intergovernmentalist theory competes with one of the three propositions deduced from neofunctionalist theory.

Once the propositions are formulated, the next step is to move to the cases. Firstly, for both cases, the information relevant to the propositions will be compiled, and a set of empirical observations will be made for each of the topics. The three topics structuring the analysis are national preference formation, the role of regional institutions and the negotiation process. Then the empirical observations of one topic will be compared to corresponding liberal intergovernmentalist and neofunctionalist proposition. As the propositions are competing, a conclusion will be drawn on which of the two propositions has the most explanatory relevance for that specific part of the negotiation process. This process will first be done for West Africa on national preference formation and then repeated for Southern Africa before moving to the next topic. Eventually, in the discussion part of this thesis, a conclusion will be drawn on which theory has the most explanatory relevance for the entire EPA negotiation process in both West Africa and Southern Africa.

4.3 Internal and external validity

The validity of research can be divided into two parts: internal and external validity. Internal validity refers to the causal relationship subject being researched and its outcome, thus whether other factors cannot explain the outcome. Within a congruence analysis, the internal validity consists of a vertical element of control and a horizontal one. The vertical element of control is based on the separation of the development of the propositions derived from the theory and their ability to be confirmed or rejected the proposition when compared to the empirical observations (Blatter & Haverland, 2012). Therefore, the propositions were first derived from the liberal intergovernmentalist and neofunctionalist theory before going to empirical observations. The propositions are formulated and specified so that the empirical observations can only confirm one of the two propositions. This element of control will be reflected in the analysis. The horizontal element of control compares the two theories to see if one theory has more empirical congruence than the other (Blatter & Haverland, 2012). For this reason, the choice was made to test both liberal intergovernmentalism and neofunctionalism in their ability to explain the EPA negotiations. This comparison will be part of the discussion section of this research.

Whereas the internal validity of the congruence analysis method is high, the external validity should be regarded differently than with other methods. External validity refers typically to the ability of the findings of the research to be generalised to other case studies. However, within congruence analysis, “generalising conclusions are drawn for the theoretical discourse” (Blatter & Haverland, 201, p.197).

This entails that instead of striving to generalise the findings to similar case studies, the goal is for the results to serve as an argument for the explanatory strength of a specific theory. In this research, that purpose is to contribute to the academic discourse on regional integration theory outside the EU.

4.4 Selection of cases and theories

To find out the explanatory relevance of a theory, the propositions deduced from the theory need to be tested using the empirical observations made from a case. Therefore, this subchapter will again state the reasoning behind the choice to test the two regional integration theories, intergovernmentalism and neofunctionalism, and the decision to use the EPA negotiations in West and Southern Africa as cases to be analysed.

As explained in the theoretical framework, the following two regional integration theories will be compared in this research: liberal intergovernmentalism and neofunctionalism. These two theories were chosen as they have been the most influential theories when analysing the regional integration process in Europe (Schimmelfenning, 2018). In many aspects, these theories give competing explanations for regional integration. Thus it will be of interest to compare them in this congruence analysis. Furthermore, these theories have been predominantly tested in the European context. Therefore, it will be interesting to apply them to the cases of the EPA negotiation in West Africa and Southern Africa and thereby assess the explanatory value of these theories on other regions than the EU.

The two regions chosen as cases to analyse are West Africa and Southern Africa and their negotiation processes while establishing the EPAs with the EU. The EPA negotiations are selected as a focus area for this research because they are a strong example of Europe's intentions to promote regional integration in other regions of the world (Söderbaum & van Langenhove, 2005). As explained in the introduction, West Africa and Southern Africa had significantly different approaches during the EPA negotiations with the EU (Hulse, 2018). As mentioned previously, the regional institution ECOWAS was put in charge of negotiating with the EU on behalf of the West African nations (Weinhardt & Moerland, 2018). Meanwhile, the Southern African countries, also referred to as the SADC Group, negotiated with the EU on the government level (Krapohl & van Huut, 2020). Therefore, it is interesting to explore whether one of the regional integration theories has explanatory relevance for both negotiation processes.

4.5 Data collection

When it comes to case studies, Yin (2013) distinguishes six sources of evidence: interviews, direct observations, participant observations, physical artefacts, documentation, and archival records. As part of this thesis, desk research was conducted using the latter two sources. The majority of the findings are based on documentation. A wide range of documents has been used for the data collection, both primary and secondary sources, such as policy papers, briefing notes and newspaper articles.

Additionally, some archival records are used, mainly from the regional institutions. These archives were accessed online. For example, the online archive containing the Final Communiqués of the Ordinary Session of the Authority of ECOWAS Heads of State and Government proved considerably valuable. Notably, both documents prepared by European and African sources have been used for contextual purposes.

5. Analysis

This chapter will analyse the two cases through the lenses of the two integration theories: liberal intergovernmentalism and neofunctionalism. First, an introduction to the EPA negotiation processes in West Africa and Southern Africa will be provided for contextual purposes. Then each of the propositions, as formulated in the theoretical framework, will be tested, and a conclusion will be drawn on which of the two theories best explains the situation. The subchapters are divided into the main topics of the propositions, namely national preference formation, the negotiation process, and the role of regional institutions. Both the liberal intergovernmentalist proposition and the neofunctionalist proposition will be stated at the start of each subchapter to guide the analysis. A division is made between West Africa and Southern Africa in each subchapter to explain their own regional processes.

5.1 Introduction to the EPAs

The EPAs are newly established trade agreements between the EU and the ACP countries. The main objective of the EPA is “to establish an economic and trade partnerships to achieve rapid and sustained economic growth” (Council of the European Union, 2014, p.13). To achieve this objective, the approach was to promote trade through tariff-free and quota-free access to each other’s markets. However, the free-market access would be asymmetrical in two main ways. Firstly, the EU planned that ACP countries would liberalise 80 per cent of their market, while providing them full access to the European market. For the remaining 20 per cent, tariffs were still allowed to protect the sensitive goods from international competition. Secondly, while the EU would open its market instantly, the ACP countries would be given a 15-year timeframe to gradually open their markets (Bouët et al., 2016). Furthermore, the EPAs are primarily focussing on promoting regional integration, as it is considered one of the best ways to improve the economies of ACP countries (CONCORD, 2015).

The EPAs builds upon three earlier trade agreements between the EU and the ACP countries: the 1963 Yaoundé agreement, the 1975 Lomé agreement and the 2000 Cotonou agreement. The latter two agreements paved the way for the EPAs (Tröster et al., 2020). Significantly different from its predecessors, the EPAs had to be in line with the new World Trade Organization’s (WTO) standards on multilateral agreements and therefore requires, among other things, partial reciprocity in market openness (Krapohl, 2017). The negotiation process was expected to be concluded at the end of 2007. However, when the moment was there, only the Caribbean region signed an EPA with the EU (Carbone, 2020). After the first deadline, the EU offered country’s the option to sign EPAs individually, referred to as Markets Access Regulation (MAR) 1528/2007 or interim EPAs, that allowed these countries to maintain their access to the EU as under the Cotonou agreement while waiting for the region to finalise the complete EPA agreement (Kwa et al., 2014). A new deadline was set for October 1st, 2014, after which countries not considered least developed countries (LDCs) would lose their preferential access

to the European market. Both West Africa and Southern Africa managed to finalise their regional EPAs just before the deadline (Hulse, 2018).

The West African EPA covers the 15 member states of ECOWAS and Mauritania. Out of these countries, 12 are considered least developed countries (LDCs). Even without the EPAs in place, LDCs have tariff- and quota-free access to the European market under the Everything-But-Arms (EBA) agreement. Importantly, these agreements are non-reciprocal (Bouët et al., 2016). The three West African countries not considered LDCs are Nigeria, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire. Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire signed interim EPAs with the EU, while Nigeria did not (Ramdoo, 2014). The ECOWAS' Executive Secretariat, from 2008 onwards referred to as the Commission, was put in charge of the negotiations with the EU on behalf of the 16 countries. The Commission was supported by the West African Economic and Monetary Union, in French abbreviated to UEMOA, of which half of the region's countries are members (Weinhardt & Moerland, 2018).

The SADC Group EPA covers six countries: Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, and Eswatini. Angola has the option to join at a later stage and only played an observing role during the negotiations (Berends, 2016). South Africa also had an observatory position at first, as the country already has a trade agreement with the EU called the Trade, Development and Cooperation Agreement (TDCA). In 2007 the government decided to officially join the EPA negotiation process (Kwa et al., 2014). After the first deadline in 2007, Botswana, Lesotho, Eswatini and Mozambique signed interim EPAs with the EU (Kwa et al., 2014). The 14 countries comprising the regional institution, the SADC, were separated into four different EPAs. Still, the EPA with six Southern African countries was referred to as the SADC Group EPA (Hulse, 2018). The countries did not mandate the SADC to negotiate, instead, the SADC Secretariat established a designated EPA Unit to support individual countries in their negotiations with the EU (EDCPM, 2006).

5.2 National preferences formation

In this subchapter, two propositions will be tested while analysing the national preference formations in West Africa and Southern Africa. The liberal intergovernmentalist proposition is: *National preferences are established by interest groups competing within the national domain.* The neofunctionalist proposition is: *National preferences are established by interest groups forming regional alliances*

5.2.1 West Africa

To test the two propositions, this subchapter will first provide an overview of the West African interest groups having a stake in the outcome of the EPA. With this, the distinction is made between those lobbying on the national level and those on the regional level. When assessing their demands, the two aspects of the EPA that will be focussed on are access to the European market and liberalisation of the

domestic market. The choice was made for these two issues to be analysed because interest groups had the strongest opinions about these topics. Once the preferences of the interest groups are formulated, the same will be done for the priorities of the national governments of Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria. The choice was made for these three countries because they have considerable influence in the region. They have the largest economies in the area and trade the most with the EU (Ramdoo, 2014). Afterwards, a comparison will be made to see whether national or regional interest groups influenced the national preferences most and, thus, which of the two propositions best explains the national preference formation process of West Africa during the EPA negotiations.

As the EPA is a trade agreement, the main aim was to enhance countries' exports to the EU, West African exporting industries had a significant stake in the outcome of the EPA negotiations. The interest of the Ghanaian and Ivorian exporters in tropical fruits was represented by the regional alliance the African Pineapples and Bananas Association (APIBANA). The APIBANA was created to jointly lobby the interest of tropical fruit farmers directly to Africa's regional institutions. Their products are primarily exported to the EU. Therefore, in their opinion, full access to the European market under the EPA is considered the only way to save the country's export businesses. Consequently, they demanded the EPA negotiations be finalised (Ghana MMA, 2012).

Apart from APIBANA, the export industries mainly lobbied on the national level. The Ivorian tropic fruit exporters came together in the Ivorian Central Organisation of Grower-Exporters, which had the same demands as APIBANA and was at the time highly in favour of Côte d'Ivoire signing an interim EPA to ensure the EU would not impose tariffs on their products (Coulibaly, 2007). The Ghanaian Sea Freight Pineapple Exporters Association also wanted full access to the EU by signing the interim and regional EPA. It was willing to liberalise 80 per cent of the domestic market in return (Kwa et al., 2014). In Nigeria, it was the cocoa-producing industry that would benefit most from the EPA. They organised themselves on the national level by forming the Cocoa Processors Association of Nigeria (COPAN). COPAN was also in favour of Nigeria signing the EPA. However, in their lobby efforts, they were more focused on receiving financial compensation for the loss in annual revenues due to the EU increasing its import tariffs once the country moved to the GSP than convincing the government why they should sign the agreement (ICTSD, 2008).

The other side of the coin is that with improved access to the European market comes liberalisation of the West African countries' domestic markets. As mentioned previously, the new WTO standards urge multilateral agreements to incorporate a certain level of reciprocity regarding market liberalisation. For this reason, the EU demanded 80 per cent market liberalisation from countries entering the EPA, meaning no tariffs or quotas can be placed on most European products imported by the countries. Consequently, another relevant interest group in the EPA process are the domestic farmers. Gaining access to the European market was not a necessity to these farmers as their products are sold locally.

However, they are concerned about their governments opening the domestic markets. They believed that removing import tariffs would lead to an influx of European products while their products were not ready for international competition. Thus, they expect the EPA to destabilise the local markets and result in the loss of livelihoods (Diarra, 2015).

Therefore, on the regional level, farmers organisations in West Africa came together in the Network of Farmers Organisations and Agricultural Producers, in French abbreviated to ROPPA (Gabriel, 2016). In 2005 ROPPA published a press release proclaiming that the only option was to refrain from signing the EPA altogether if states wanted to protect the local population (Transnational Institute, 2005). Additionally, on the national level, West African farmers' organisations, such as the Malian National Coordination of Peasant Organisations and the Confederation of Burkina Faso Farmers, agreed to protest in their own countries, simultaneously urging their governments to withdrawal from the EPA (Diarra, 2015). This resulted, among other things, in nearly 2000 Burkinabe farmers going to the streets of Ouagadougou, the capital city, to protest against the EPA at the end of 2007 (Mutume, 2007). In Ghana, the Ghana Trade Livelihoods Coalition (GTLC) was against signing the EPA. The GTLC was convinced liberalisation would destroy the domestic market and undermine the national development efforts (Kwa et al., 2014).

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs), especially human rights and developmental organisations, had similar concerns to domestic farmers' organisations. Therefore, they demanded West African government did not sign the EPA with the EU. The most prominent regional alliance against the EPAs was the 'Stop EPA campaign', a shared initiative from African NGOs led by the Africa Trade Network and several prominent European NGOs, such as Oxfam and ActionAid. By 2007 almost 160 organisations joined the campaign to raise awareness about the EPA negotiations and convince governments not to sign (Lorenz, 2011). Another initiative was led by the Economic Justice Network Ghana in 2014, whereby West African NGOs published a joint statement voicing their discontent with the decision of the ECOWAS Heads of State and Government to approve the EPA text for signature. They were against reciprocal market liberalisation. They were apprehensive about its effect on domestic economies, especially the cheap, subsidised European products entering their markets and the loss in revenue from import tariffs. Moreover, they believed the implementation of the EPA would be detrimental to West Africa's own regional integration agenda (TWN Africa, 2014).

NGOs on the national level were also against the signature of both the interim EPAs and the regional EPA. In Ghana, NGOs jointly warned the government that in their attempt to protect a small group of exporters by signing an interim EPA, they were considerably harming their economy in the long term. They claimed the interim EPA has an adverse effect on ECOWAS' regional integration process, as it introduces another trade regime in the region again. Furthermore, they are concerned about Ghana opening its market for the same reasons as the interest groups mentioned above. The Ghanaian NGOs

use the example of Ghana's poultry industry which collapsed after a change in national legislation resulting in European products flooding the market (Social Watch, 2011). Additionally, research published by the Ivorian Civil Society Convention raises similar concerns for the Ivorian economy due to increased competition of European products, diminished tariff revenues and complications for the regional integration process (GRET, 2020).

The last important interest group to be mentioned here are the trade unions and trade associations representing the manufacturers, traders and farmers. The most influential interest groups in Nigeria regarding the EPA were two trade associations: the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) and the National Association of Nigerian Traders (NANTS) (Onyekwena & Ekeruche, 2019). These groups lobbied directly to the Nigerian government and strengthened their claims with self-funded research. The outcome of their research was that the country would lose out more than €1 trillion in tariff revenues if they removed their income tariffs for European products and, thus, were against the liberalisation of the domestic market. Furthermore, the trade associations were convinced the infant industries in the manufacturing sectors were not yet ready to compete with the European market. Therefore, they urgently advised the government not to sign an interim EPA nor join the regional EPA (Onyekwena et al., 2017). The Ghanaian trade union General Agricultural Workers Union (GAWU) had the same worries about the loss of import tariff revenue. Also, GAWU believed Ghanaese products were not ready to compete with European products (Ghanaweb, 2013).

With the active involvement of interest groups expressing their preferences during the EPA negotiations, the West African governments formulated differing national interests. Out of all sixteen West African countries, Côte d'Ivoire was first and foremost in favour of an EPA. The country signed an interim EPA at the end of the negotiation period in 2007 to ensure preferential access to the European market for the country's export industries. The Ivorian President Ouattara continued to encourage the successful conclusion of the regional EPA negotiations (Kwa et al., 2014). Ghana's government expressed a similar interest in the EPA due to the tariff- and quota-free access the country would gain to the European market. Ghana confirmed its interest by signing the interim EPA in 2007 and the regional EPA in 2016. The argument for signing made by the Ghanaese Minister of Trade and Industry Spio-Garbrah was that entering the EPA would remove €400 million worth of export taxes (Lokka, 2016). Both countries expressed their willingness to open 80 per cent of their domestic market to the EU (Modern Ghana, 2009). Nigeria's President Buhari, on the other hand, firmly said the country had no interest in signing the regional EPA nor an interim EPA. He expressed his government's concerns about opening Nigeria's market to the EU and its effect on employment opportunities in the country (Odunsi, 2018).

Before looking at the two propositions again, the table below will briefly summarise the preferences of the interest groups and countries to help with the comparison. Their preferences regarding the two main

aspects of the EPA are reflected in the table: access to the European market and liberalisation of the domestic market. First, the interest groups on the regional level will be mentioned. Then, the demands of national interest groups will be stated for each of the countries. Finally, following summaries of the national interest groups, the outcomes are shown: the governments' national preferences.

<u>Name interest group</u>	<u>Type of interest group</u>	<u>Access to EU market</u>	<u>Liberalisation national market</u>
<u>Regional</u>			
African Pineapples and Bananas Association	Export industries	In favour	Indifferent
Network of Farmers Organisations and Agricultural Producers	Domestic farmers	Indifferent	Against
Stop EPA campaign	NGOs	Indifferent	Against
Economic Justice Network Ghana	NGOs	Indifferent	Against
	Trade unions	-	-
<u>National – Ghana</u>			
Sea Fright Pineapple Exporters Association	Export industries	In favour	Willing to liberalise 80%
Ghana Trade Livelihoods Coalition	Domestic farmers	Indifferent	Against
-	NGOs	Indifferent	Against
General Agricultural Workers Union	Trade unions	Indifferent	Against
	National government	In favour	Willing to liberalise 80%
<u>National – Cote d'Ivoire</u>			
Ivorian Central Organisation of Grower-Exporters	Export industries	In favour	Indifferent
	Domestic farmers	-	-

Ivorian Civil Society Convention	NGOs	Indifferent	Concerned
	Trade unions	-	-
	National government	In favour	Willing to liberalise 80%
<u>National – Nigeria</u>			
Cocoa Processors Association of Nigeria	Export industries	In favour (unless compensated financially)	Indifferent
	Domestic farmers	-	-
	NGOs	-	-
Manufacturers Association of Nigeria	Trade associations	Indifferent	Against
National Association of Nigerian Traders	Trade associations	Indifferent	Against
	National government	Indifferent	Against

Table 1: Overview of the preferences of interest groups and countries in West Africa

In West Africa, interest groups were especially active throughout the negotiation process and established an abundance of regional alliances during the negotiation process, as predicted by neofunctionalist theory. Nevertheless, the first proposition focuses on the effect of national and regional interest groups on the national preferences of governments. Despite the clear presence of regional alliances, the national preferences of the governments of Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire predominantly reflect the demands of national interest groups. As shown in the table, Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire followed the interests of their exporting industries. In Nigeria, it hard to tell whether they followed the regional or national interest groups. As reflected in the table, most regional interest groups lobbied against domestic market liberalisation, so in practice, Nigeria's government decided in line with their interest. However, it seems the country followed the demands of the strong lobby of their trade associations. When comparing the different interest in the table, the preferences of interest groups were almost always the same on the regional and national level, which significantly complicates the testing of the propositions. However, as explained in the text, the lobby efforts of exporting industries were primarily on the national level and the lobby of trade unions and trade associations solely on the national level. Therefore, it could be said that the national preferences of all three countries reflect the demands of national interest groups to a larger extent than the interests of regional alliances. Consequently, the intergovernmentalist proposition is considered more applicable for explaining West African states' national preference formation process during the EPA negotiation than the neofunctionalist proposition.

5.2.2 Southern Africa

This subchapter will follow the same structure as the one above. First, the preferences of national and regional interest groups will be explained. Then, the preferences of the national governments of South Africa, Botswana, and Namibia will be presented, as they were most influential during the EPA negotiation process. Lastly, the government preferences will be compared to those of the interest groups to find out which of the two propositions is most applicable to the national preference formation process of Southern Africa.

The private sector of Southern African countries, which would benefit from access to the European market, came together in the Association of SADC Chambers of Commerce and Industry (ASCCI). The ASCCI was in favour of an EPA to ensure access to the European market but under several conditions, such as additional resources to implement the agreement and continued allowance of export taxes to maintain policy space (Kwa et al., 2014). Nationally, South Africa's agricultural exporters favoured the country joining the EPA negotiations to obtain better access to the EU for 21 agricultural products but with specific requests. The exporters lobbied through the Agri South Africa (AgriSA) on outstanding issues such as the MFN clause, Rules of Origin and export taxes (Kwa et al., 2014).

In Namibia, three primary industries were interested in the EPA: the beef, fish, and grape businesses. The stakeholders in the beef industry came together in the Meat Corporation of Namibia Ltd. They extensively lobbied with the Namibian government for the signature of the EPA to obtain stable market access to the EU. If no deal would be reached and Namibia would move to the GSP scheme, such high tariffs would be placed on their beef that a large share of their exports was expected to collapse (Melber, 2013). Even though fish products would face slightly lower tariffs, the Confederation of Namibian Fishing Associations also stressed the urgent need for the EPA to be signed (Brandt, 2013). The grape farmers were in a slightly different position in that they had something to gain rather than lose with EPA. At the time, a quota was placed on Namibian grapes that would save grape farmers vast amounts of money in tariffs once removed (Weidlich, 2007). Consequently, the Grape Growers Association demands were that those opposed to the EPA would take responsibility for the losses that would be made if no deal was reached (Cloete, 2013). Botswana's exporting industries were represented by Botswana Exporters and Manufacturers Association (BEMA). The country's largest exporting industries are diamonds and beef. The latter sector would benefit significantly if the EU removed tariff and quotas. Consequently, BEMA expressed its support of the regional EPA and interim EPA (Moseki, 2009).

In contrast to the active involvement of West African domestic farmers expressing their resistance to the EPA, Southern African domestic farmers did not form regional nor national collaboration to influence the EPA negotiations. The same holds for national NGOs who were surprisingly absent throughout the negotiation process, while on the regional level, faith-based and developmental NGOs

lobbied substantially. Two regional NGOs called upon governments to step up during the negotiations: the Southern African Christian Initiative (SACHI) and the Southern Africa People's Solidarity Network (SASPN). Their two main demands were not to open the domestic market to the EU and for SADC and SACU to take control of regional integration (Van den Bosch, 2010). Additionally, some Southern African NGOs, such as the Third World Network (TWN), joined the Stop EPA campaign. TWN's Head of Programmes Hormeku called the EPAs an attempt to re-colonise Africa. He firmly warned the countries not to liberalise their markets by signing the EPA as it would keep the countries dependent on the exports of natural resources while manufactured goods were imported from the EU (Lorenz, 2011). An employee of the Botswana Community Based Organizations Network, who was a part of the Stop EPA campaign, summarised the NGOs concerns clearly: "we pointed out that the EPAs posed a threat not only specifically to government revenue, local producers and industries, food sovereignty, essential public services, and the regional integration of African countries, but also to the right and capacity in general of African countries to develop their economies according to the needs of their people and their own national, regional and continental priorities." (Eppmwengo, 2007).

However, the trade unions and trade associations in Southern Africa were highly active during the EPA negotiations representing the traders, manufacturers and farmers. On the regional level, the trade unions and trade associations in SADC countries together formed the Southern African Trade Union Coordination Council (SATUCC). They were opposed to the EPAs as they believed liberalisation of their markets would mean that cheap European imports would destroy their industries (Kwa et al., 2014). Similarly, the Botswana Federation of Trade Unions (BFTU) called upon the Botswana government to protect the domestic market by not signing an EPA (Lorenz, 2011). In Namibia, the agricultural trade associations joined forces in the Namibian Agricultural Trade Forum (NATF) at the start of the EPA negotiations. The NATF and the Namibian Manufacturers' Association put forward a 'Declaration by Concerned Stakeholders' in which they explained which demands they had going into the negotiations. Not only did these organisations want the removal of all quotas and tariffs by the EU, but they are also wanted more stable and reasonable health and safety standards for their products and help meet these standards, as they were oftentimes unable to meet the EU's high requirements. Moreover, they want to keep protective measures to ensure the influx of cheap, subsidised European product will not distort the local market (The Namibian, 2004). The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), South Africa's largest trade union, was also against signing the interim EPA and regional EPA. Their biggest concern was opening the market to European products. According to them, not only were their products not ready to compete with European product, but it would also negatively affect regional trade. They were convinced that signing the agreement would harm the regional integration efforts by the region itself (Magagula & Sibongil, 2009).

The lobby of the different interest groups in the region resulted in the following formulations of national preferences by the Southern African governments. Firstly, South Africa's Minister of Trade Davies

explained that the government was in favour of the EPA, as it would increase the country's access to the European market for products such as sugar, ethanol and wine (Medupe, 2016). Namibia took a more hesitant stance towards the EPA at first, but eventually, the government expressed its interest in maintaining its relationship with the EU and continuing its exports to the European market under favourable circumstances (Star Africa, 2016). During the negotiations, Botswana's government primary focus was the access of its beef products to the European market. Consequently, Botswana's trade minister Makgato-Malesu expressed his interest in signing the EPA and obtaining improved access to the European market (Kwa et al., 2014). While all countries favoured improved market access to the EU, no statements could by the national governments be found about their stance towards opening up the domestic market.

Now that the different preferences of interest groups and national governments have been analysed, the table below will summarise them before moving to the testing of the propositions. First, an overview will be given of the interest groups on the regional level. Then, national interest groups will be stated for each of the countries. Finally, following summaries of the national interest groups, the outcomes are shown: the governments' national preferences.

<u>Name interest group</u>	<u>Type of interest group</u>	<u>Access to EU market</u>	<u>Liberalisation national market</u>
<u>Regional</u>			
Association of SADC Chambers of Commerce and Industry	Export industries	In favour	Under conditions
	Domestic farmers	-	-
Southern African Christian Initiative	NGOs	Indifferent	Against
Southern Africa People's Solidarity Network	NGOs	Indifferent	Against
Third World Network	NGOs	Indifferent	Against
Southern African Trade Union Coordination Council	Trade unions	Indifferent	Against
<u>National – Botswana</u>			

Botswana Exporters and Manufacturers Association	Export industries	In favour	Indifferent
	Domestic farmers	-	-
	NGOs	-	-
Botswana Federation of Trade Unions	Trade unions	Indifferent	Against
	National government	In favour	No preference formulated
<u>National – Namibia</u>			
Meat Corporation of Namibia Ltd	Export industries	In favour	Indifferent
Namibian Fishing Associations	Export industries	In favour	Indifferent
Grape Growers Association	Export industries	In favour (unless compensated financially)	Indifferent
	Domestic farmers	-	-
	NGOs	-	-
Namibian Agricultural Trade Forum	Trade associations	In favour	Against (unless protective market mechanisms are allowed)
	National government	In favour	No preference formulated
<u>National – South Africa</u>			
Agri South Africa	Export industries	In favour	Under conditions
	Domestic farmers	-	-
	NGOs	-	-
Congress of South African Trade Unions	Trade unions	Indifferent	Against
	National government	In favour	No preference formulated

Table 2: Overview of the preferences of interest groups and countries in Southern Africa

The most prominent interest groups in EPA negotiations in Southern Africa were the export industries, trade unions and NGOs, but the latter group only on the regional level. As reflected in the table, all three countries sided with the exporting industries and prioritised obtain favourable access to the

European market by signing the EPA. Exporting industries lobbied both on the regional and national level, so it is hard to say with certainty which of the two influenced the governments the most. As the export industries were slightly more active on the national level, it can be said that the intergovernmental proposition explains the EPA negotiations in Southern Africa somewhat better than the neofunctionalist proposition.

5.3 The role of regional institutions

In this subchapter, the next two propositions will be tested. This time the role of the regional institutions will be analysed in West Africa and Southern Africa. The liberal intergovernmentalist proposition is: *Regional institutions are promoting the agendas of member states and do not influence the outcome of the negotiations.* The neofunctionalist proposition is: *Regional institutions influence the outcome of the negotiation process, putting forward their own integration agenda autonomously.*

5.3.1 West Africa

At the start of this subchapter, ECOWAS and the UEMOA will be briefly introduced. Then the negotiation structure during the EPA talks will be explained and ECOWAS' role in this process. This will be done by looking into ECOWAS' demands in the negotiation and its relationship with the regional hegemon Nigeria. Finally, a conclusion will be drawn on which of the two propositions is most suitable to explain the role of ECOWAS during the negotiation process.

ECOWAS was founded in 1975 as a regional institution to enhance economic integration. The institution has fifteen members. At the helm of ECOWAS the Authority of Heads of State and Government, which, as the name suggests, comprises the member states' national leaders. The other institutional bodies are the Commission and the Community Parliament. The Commission is the institution's main body and the "engine room of all ECOWAS programmes" (ECOWAS, n.d.). Another important regional institution in West Africa is the Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest Africaine (UEMOA). This monetary union's membership overlaps with ECOWAS in the sense that all former French colonies in the area are members except Guinea and with the addition of the former Portuguese colony Guinea Bissau (Piccolino, 2016).

As mentioned earlier, the ECOWAS Commission was mandated to negotiate on behalf of the West African countries. The Commission installed a team of Chief Negotiators who received support from the UEMOA Commission's President. On a secondary negotiation level, the Senior Officials' group headed by the Deputy Executive Secretary for Policy Harmonization of ECOWAS. Below them is a team of Technical Experts comprising the institutions' directors of trade (Nwoke, 2009). Once the agreement was finalised, the Authority of Heads of State and Government had to endorse the final text before the document went to national governments for signature (ECOWAS, 2015).

The ECOWAS Commission played a substantial role in forming the EPA Development Programme, in French abbreviated to PAPED. The PAPED was not part of the EU's initial EPA proposal but rather the result of ECOWAS' and the EU's attempt to continue the negotiations for the West Africa EPA. With the LDCs having a non-reciprocal Everything-But-Arms (EBA) trade agreement to fall back on and Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana having an interim EPA, the region felt they had a minimal benefit in signing a regional EPA. Therefore, as an incentive to continue negotiations, additional funding through the PAPED was included. The aim was for the funds to help cover the transitional costs of liberalising their markets, primarily the loss of import tariffs. The ECOWAS Commission estimated the amount needed to cover the costs, and the institution would be in charge of the fund's distribution (Apiko et al., 2019). Their initial request was a development package of €15 billion (ATPC, 2018).

The ECOWAS Commission had an active role in the negotiations with the EU. In 2011 their Final Communiqué, ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and gave an overview of the Commission's demands in the EPA negotiations. Firstly, they wanted the ECOWAS Community Levy and the UEMOA Community Solidarity Levy kept in place. Both types of levies are imposed on imports and form essential independent sources of income for the regional institutions. Secondly, they requested financial support from the EU, later referred to as PAPED. Thirdly, they wanted to ensure the countries kept enough policy space by removing the MFN clause from the agreement. Lastly, ECOWAS stated they were willing to liberalise at most 70 per cent of countries' markets over 20 to 25 years (ECOWAS, 2011). A more minor, personal request from the ECOWAS Parliament was that their officials would obtain visa-free access to the EU (Kwa et al., 2014). The first and last demands were purely for the benefit of ECOWAS as an institution, and the PAPED also showed ECOWAS' role in the negotiations.

Furthermore, what is interesting to analyse in this chapter is the link between Nigeria and ECOWAS. In the beginning, Nigeria was the driving force behind ECOWAS' establishment and further integration in the region (Vanheukelom, 2017). Still, to this day, Nigeria alone is responsible for 40,5 per cent of ECOWAS' financial budget, which is significantly more than the 17,5 per cent provided by Ghana and the 12 per cent by Côte d'Ivoire. It is even more than the 12 LDCs combined, accounting for only 30 per cent (Premium Times, 2020). What is important to note is that the EU is unwilling to sign a West African EPA which does not include Nigeria. The reason is that the regional hegemon accounts for 72 per cent of the region's GDP and 52 per cent of its population. This means that if Nigeria does not sign the EPA, Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana will maintain their interim EPA. As a result, Ghana will start eliminating import tariffs in September 2018 and Côte d'Ivoire in 2016, which is considered another nail in the coffin of West African regionalisation. The reason being that neighbouring countries will have to impose import tariffs on these two countries to avoid European products from entering the region tariff-free through Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire and thus indirectly opening their own market (Berthelot, 2018). Nigeria had already expressed its intention to prevent this by blocking goods from countries with an interim EPA (Modern Ghana, 2007).

Throughout the negotiation process, ECOWAS expressed its interest in the rapid conclusion of the regional EPA. For this reason, the ECOWAS Commission's President has tried, with the support of member countries, to sway Nigeria towards signing the EPA by amplifying the necessity of the country's collaboration for the future of the region's custom union and market integration. Furthermore, the Chief Negotiators announced that they would install a committee to address Nigeria's concerns regarding the EPA (Roquefeuil, 2014). This committee successfully discussed Nigeria's problems with the agreement and got the country to approve the final EPA text (ICTSD, 2014). There is no information available over what concessions were made during these meeting to get Nigeria to agree on the final text. Also, ECOWAS was not as successful with the agreement's ratification since Nigeria has still not joined the agreement to this date.

Now that an overview is given of ECOWAS' role in the negotiation process, it is time to look at the propositions again. It is apparent that ECOWAS had a substantial role in the West African negotiation process. To some extent, ECOWAS observably pushed forward its own regionalisation agenda during negotiations, especially regarding the levies. ECOWAS' influence in the inclusion of the PAPED also reflected this interest, as the fund provided an incentive to continue the talks. Moreover, ECOWAS' interest in more regionalisation could be seen in the establishment of a committee to convince Nigeria to join the EPA. Despite Nigeria being the regional hegemon and primary funder of ECOWAS, the Commission went against its wishes, as Nigeria's refusal to sign the EPA was considered harmful for the region's integration process. The fact that ECOWAS influenced the outcome of the EPA negotiations while pushing for further regionalisation makes that the neofunctionalist proposition has considerably more explanatory relevance for the role of regional institutions in the West Africa EPA negotiations than the liberal intergovernmentalist proposition.

5.3.2 Southern Africa

This subchapter will start by briefly introducing the SADC and the SACU. Then negotiation structure during the EPA will be explained and the SADC's role within this structure. Afterwards, SADC' influence during the negotiations will be analysed, and a conclusion will be drawn on which of the two propositions is most suitable.

The leading regional institution in Southern Africa is the Southern African Development Community (SADC). In the 1980s, the idea for the SADC came to life, and in 1992, the institution was officially established. The SADC has fifteen members, of which only seven are included in the SADC Group EPA. For this reason, some scholars prefer to call it the SACU+ EPA, as five of the countries are part of the Southern Africa Customs Union (SACU). The member countries are Botswana, Namibia, Eswatini, Lesotho and South Africa (Southern Africa Trust, 2019). The SADC, headed by the Secretariat, has a strong interest in enhancing regional integration for economic purposes. Therefore,

the SADC Secretariat strives to form a customs union with all fifteen countries and establish a free trade area (ECDPM, 2006).

The negotiations between the SADC Group and the EU took place on three different levels. Firstly, there was the ministerial level which was led by Botswana's Minister of Trade and Industry Moroka as regional coordinator. Secondly, there was the senior official level, led by a chief negotiator. Thirdly, at the technical level, there was the EPA Unit of the SADC Secretariat (ECDPM, 2006). Despite being called the SADC Group EPA, the SADC was only part of the negotiations through the EPA Unit. The EPA Unit was not mandated any negotiation power by its member states. Instead, the purpose of the EPA Unit was essentially to provide technical support for the negotiation process. Thus, SADC Secretariat was not actively involved in the negotiation positions of the Southern African countries (McCarthy et al., 2005). Consequently, SADC Secretariat did not formulate its preference on the specific issues of the EPA nor included its own requests. The same held for the SACU Secretariat, who expressed they had multiple concerns regarding the EPAs potentially negative impact on the customs union. However, a SACU Secretariat's representative also mentioned that in the end, it were "decisions by sovereign state" (SACU, 2008). Thereby, they admitted their lack of influence in the negotiations.

The fact that member states were in charge of the negotiations was also reflected in the SADC-EC Joint Roadmap designed to guide the negotiation process. In this roadmap, each country was given the responsibility to negotiate on a specific topic. For example, Lesotho was in charge of the negotiations on the Rules of Origin. All relevant issues were equally distributed among the Southern African countries (McCarthy et al., 2005). Moreover, the limited role of the SADC Secretariat was confirmed by the fact that the EU Trade Commissioner, de Gucht, met directly with the heads of state during individual visits in 2011 when the EU wanted to speed up the negotiation process (Julian & Dalleau, 2011).

Now that an overview is given of the SADC's role in the negotiations, it is time to have another look at the propositions. What can be concluded is that despite the SADC actively pursuing regional integration in other areas, the institution did not have a major role in the EPA negotiations. Consequently, the SADC was unable to influence the outcome of the EPA. Instead, the member countries took the negotiations into their own hands, leaving little room for the EPA Unit to get involved. As the institution could not influence the outcome of the talks nor put forward its own regionalisation agenda due to lack of capacity, the neofunctionalist proposition serves no explanatory purpose in this subchapter. The member states and their agendas dominated the negotiations. Therefore, the liberal intergovernmentalist proposition best explains the role of the SADC in the negotiation process.

5.4 The negotiation process

The last two propositions will be tested in this subchapter with regards to the negotiation processes in West Africa and Southern Africa. The liberal intergovernmentalist proposition is: *The negotiation process is dominated by member state bargaining, states speaking with a single voice, and their asymmetric interdependence.* The neofunctionalist proposition is: *Governments and interest groups are both important actors in the negotiation process on the regional level*

5.4.1 West Africa

To assess the negotiation process between countries, first, a more detailed explanation of the national preferences of three influential countries in the region will be given. For West Africa, these countries are Nigeria, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire. Then the demands of the LDCs will be briefly stated, and the role of interest groups will be examined. Afterwards, the negotiation points of ECOWAS to the EU will be displayed. This will be followed by an analysis of the countries' need for the successful conclusion of the EPA negotiations. At the end, an overview will be given in a table of each of the demands, ECOWAS' negotiation points to the EU and the outcome of the negotiation process. The information in the table serves to support the assessment of which of the two proposition is most explanatory for the EPA negotiation process in West Africa.

In the subchapter national preference formation, countries' interests regarding market liberalisation on behalf of the EU and their domestic market were mentioned. This paragraph adds several specific demands by governments during the negotiation process that were not, or to a lesser degree, addressed by the interest groups. Côte d'Ivoire was highly in favour of the EPA and further expressed its interest in the developmental dimension of the agreement. The country's Prime Minister Duncan mentioned the importance of the financial support pledged by the EU, better known as the EPA Development Programme or its French abbreviation PAPED (Kwa et al., 2014). Meanwhile, Nigeria's President Buhari's main argument for not signing the EPA was to maintain policy space. By not signing the EPA, he primarily wanted to protect the countries infant industries from European competition, for which they were not ready, according to him. This way, the government wanted to secure employment opportunities for Nigerian Youth (Odunsi, 2018). On the other hand, Ghana did not formulate any specific issues to be changed in the agreements, except for mentioning that they favoured a regional EPA to enhance the regional integration process of West Africa (Kwa et al., 2014).

The LDCs had a significantly different position in the EPA negotiations. The ECOWAS region is expected to export an additional \$9.1 billion worth of products to the EU by 2040 if the EPA is implemented. However, the non-LDCs would account for 96 per cent of these extra incomes and only in agricultural sectors such as meat, rice and sugar (ATPC, 2018). This unequal distribution of gains is the result of LDCs having different economies than the three non-LDCs. For the Gambia, West Africa's smallest country, import revenues are one of its primary sources of income. Consequently, market liberalisation would be detrimental to its economy (Bakare, 2009). Sierra Leone is almost entirely

dependent on income from its mining activities, such as diamonds. Due to these valuable natural resources, a trade agreement with Sierra Leone is more important to the EU than the other way around (Aranda, 2017). Another unequal relationship can be found in Togo. Togo's small economy relies on petroleum oils, cacao products and other agricultural products, primarily to the United Arab Emirates and other West African countries. Togo already has a wide trade deficit, which is expected only to widen further after the EPA comes into force (ATPC, 2018). Niger finds itself in the same position, with exports almost solely reliant on uranium while highly dependent on imports. Also, West African countries, predominantly Nigeria, were a more important export destination for Niger than the EU (Ousmane, 2014). One of the LDCs main demands during the EPA negotiations was to keep the option open for further regional integration. Regional integration is regarded as a solid approach to enhance their economies, which is more challenging now that the ECOWAS member countries face different tariffs when trading with the EU (CONCORD, 2015).

In addition to the national governments stating their demands during the negotiation process, several interest groups joined the negotiations on the regional level. More than once did West African interest groups surpass their national governments, lobbying directly at the regional level. For example, in the joint CSO statement led by Economic Justice Network Ghana, mentioned in the previous subchapter, the CSOs directly called upon the elected representatives of the ECOWAS Parliament to take action against the ratification of the agreement (TWN Africa, 2014). They were particularly concerned about the EU's demand to include the MFN clause, as this would significantly limit the region's trading opportunities with rising economies in the Global South, such as India (Kasirye, 2014). Also, the farmers' network ROPPA wrote a letter to congratulate the Nigerian president Buhari for resisting the EU by not signing the EPA. Furthermore, they called upon him to convince other state leaders why they should not ratify the EPA (Gabriel, 2016). Besides that, several CSOs were invited by the ECOWAS' Trade Ministers to join the negotiations on the regional level in support of the Technical Experts. They played an instrumental role in ensuring the EU held up its promise to include a developmental dimension in the agreement. The CSO representative of the negotiation team, Mr Dieye, continuously emphasised the help countries needed to develop their industries while liberalising their markets. An independent observer of the negotiations stated: "over time, CSOs have proved to be a source of reliable, flexible and independent expertise while being able to speak on issues officials cannot afford". (Agazzi, 2011).

As mentioned in the previous subchapter, ECOWAS decided to negotiate the following three demands to the EU: the maintenance of institutional levies, financial support of €15 billion through the PAPED, removal of the MFN clause (ECOWAS, 2011).

Another critical aspect of the negotiation process is the countries best alternative to the EPA, which is linked to the necessity countries had for the successful conclusion of the EPA negotiations. As

mentioned in the introductory part of this chapter, all countries had preferential access to the European market under the Cotonou agreement, which was non-reciprocal, but this was no longer possible under the new WTO regulations. Out of the 16 West African countries, 12 are considered least developed countries (LDCs). Even without the EPAs in place, LDCs have tariff- and quota-free access to the European market under the Everything-But-Arms (EBA) agreement. Importantly, these agreements are non-reciprocal. The three West African countries not covered by the EBA agreement are Nigeria, Ghana, and Côte d'Ivoire (Ramdoo, 2014). As a result, the LDCs were far less dependent on the outcome of the EPA negotiations than the LDCs.

However, to speed up the finalisations of EPAs, the EU set a negotiation deadline at the end of 2007. After this deadline, non-LDCs would move to the less beneficial Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP). Instead, the EU offered country's the option to sign interim EPAs on an individual basis, that allowed these countries to maintain their access to the EU as under the Cotonou agreement while waiting for the regional EPA agreement to be finalised (Kwa et al., 2014). Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire took the EU's offer and signed interim EPAs with the EU, which allowed them to maintain their favourable market access. At the same time, Nigeria did not and faced its experts faced higher tariffs as the country moved to the GSP (Ramdoo, 2014). However, what has to be taken into consideration is that nearly 95 per cent of Nigeria's exports are in oil and gas, and these products are already free from the EU's import tariffs, making the country less dependent on the EPA (Onyekwena et al., 2017). With the interim EPA, Côte d'Ivoire will have to liberalise 85 per cent of its market over 15 years starting from 2016 (European Union, 2020). Ghana will have to liberalise 78 per cent of its market over 13 years with their interim EPA (European Union, 2020b).

The outcome of the EPA negotiations was that West Africa would get full access to the European market. At the same time, the region's countries would have to liberalise 75 per cent of their market over 20 years (Nilsson et al., 2021). With regards to the demand from ECOWAS to exclude the institutions' levies from tariff liberalisation, the EU decided to allow these levies to remain in place until another source of income was established (Ramdoo, 2014). Additionally, some of the demands made by West African countries are reflected in the final agreement. Firstly, an EPA Development Programme (PAPED) of €6.5 billion divided over five years will be made available to help countries transition to liberalised markets and cover the adverse effects on their economies due to loss in tariff revenue (Ramdoo, 2014). Secondly, as the only ACP region, West Africa can still implement temporary trade protection mechanisms, such as anti-dumping and customs duties, to protect infant industries (Nilsson et al., 2021). Thirdly, the highly contested Most Favoured Nation (MFN) clause makes an exception for trade agreements made with other African and ACP countries. Additionally, the automaticity condition of the MFN clause was also removed, meaning that the preferential trade agreements extended to other countries would have to be reviewed before being applied to the EU as

well (Ramdoo, 2014). Despite emphasising the EPAs goal to further regional integration, no specific concessions were made on the part of the EU on this aspect (Ramdoo, 2014).

To be able to assess the negotiations further and draw a conclusion on which proposition best explains the negotiation process in West Africa, an overview is provided below of the four main demands of each of the countries and the regional CSOs. The demands will be compared to the stance in the negotiations taken by ECOWAS and the outcome of the final EPA text.

	Include development dimension	Maintain policy space/ Remove MFN clause	Regional integration	Institutional levies
Nigeria		Priority		
Côte d’Ivoire	Priority			
Ghana			Priority	
Least Developed Countries			Priority	
Interest groups	Priority	Priority		
ECOWAS to the EU	Priority	Priority		Priority
Outcome	€6.5 billion over 5 years	Temporary protection mechanisms allowed & Removed for ACP countries & not automatic	No specific outcome	Allowed until another source of income is established

Table 3: Overview of demands during the negotiations in West Africa

As shown in the table, the negotiation process in West Africa reflects a diverse set of interests being represented on the national level. In line with the intergovernmentalist proposition, traces of interstate bargaining can be witnessed as the table shows that the demands from Nigeria, Côte d’Ivoire and interest groups are reflected in ECOWAS’ position to the EU. However, the fact that interest groups played an essential role in the negotiations and could influence ECOWAS’s negotiation points to the EU is in line with neofunctionalist theory. Still, the fact that they lobbied on issues similar to those of governments does not reflect neofunctionalist expectation that these interest groups surpass the state. Furthermore, there is an apparent asymmetry in the interdependence between the West African countries with non-LDCs at risk of losing preferential access to the European market while LDCs have little to gain for agreement. However, the interim EPAs substantially reduced Ghana and Côte d’Ivoire’s dependence on the outcome of the negotiations on the regional level. Still, the regional EPA had more favourable

conditions than their interim EPAs. The three countries being most affected by the EPA clearly dominated the negotiations, as ECOWAS' showed little interest in the needs of the LDCs. The strongest member states taking control of the negotiations, even with ECOWAS being mandated, while pushing for their national interests on the regional level, makes that the intergovernmentalist can be considered a better explanation of the EPA negotiation process in West Africa than the neofunctionalist proposition.

5.4.2 Southern Africa

To analyse the negotiation process in Southern Africa, the same will be done as for West Africa in the previous subchapter. First, a more detailed explanation of the national preferences of South Africa, Botswana and Namibia will be given. Then the same will be done for the LDCs. Next, the role of interest groups will be examined. Afterwards, a brief overview will be given of the region's negotiation points to the EU. This will be followed by an analysis of each of the countries' need for the successful conclusion of the EPA negotiations. At the end, each of the national demands, the regional stance towards the EU and the outcome of the negotiation process shown in a table. This table will serve to support the conclusion of which of the two proposition is most explanatory for the EPA negotiation process in South Africa.

South Africa, Botswana and Namibia were all in favour of gaining preferential access to the European market. At the same time, they did have several points they wanted to be included or changed before accepting the EPA, also beyond the topics discussed by interest groups. As mentioned earlier, South Africa was at first an observer to the EPA but eventually joined the EPA to obtain improved access to the EU, especially for its fish sector, and so that there would be a common tariff regime for all SACU countries (Beranger et al., 2016). While joining the negotiations, South Africa voiced its concern about the EU's request to include an automatic MFN clause. Also, the government wanted more flexible Rules of Origin for its products, as now the product has to be entirely sourced from a specific country (ICTSD, 2009). On the other hand, Namibia emphasised the need for export taxes to keep the production process of raw materials within the country because of South Africa's much stronger economy. Export taxes are one of the only protectionist measures still allowed under SACU regulations. However, the EU is requesting that this measure be removed with the EPA's implementation for further regional integration. Furthermore, the country is concerned about the MFN clause of the EPA and wanted to be able to implement agricultural safeguards, such as quotas on agricultural imports (Rumpf, 2008). For Botswana, market access for its beef sector was the most prominent demand during the negotiation process. Besides that, the country's only request was to include the clause on agricultural safeguards (Botswana Guardian, 2013).

The region has three LDCs: Angola, Lesotho and Mozambique. The countries had opposing interests regarding the EPA. Angola firmly stated it was not interested in gaining access to the European market

as it had no products yet to sell. Therefore, the country first wanted to strengthen its domestic industries before joining the trade agreement (Kwa et al., 2014). Lesotho did see some potential for its textile sector under the EPA. Their primary demand was more flexibility for the Rules of Origin (L.C.N., 2011). Namibia, on the other hand, saw in the EPA an opportunity to strengthen its export industries. Their requests during the negotiation process were to keep export taxes in place and the inclusion of an agricultural safeguards clause (Kwa et al., 2014).

Interestingly, civil society organisations and other interest groups did not have a role during the negotiations on the regional level whatsoever. This lack of involvement is surprising as the EU considers the participation of civil society a priority during its negotiation processes with ACP regions. Nevertheless, no platform was given to the organisations throughout the process. Also, the interest groups did not organise themselves either, which was unexpected as they were persistent in voicing their opinions towards the national governments in the early stages of the negotiations. As a result, no demands on their part were discussed during the negotiation process (Martens et al., 2016).

Overall the Southern African countries had significantly different demands during the negotiation process on the regional level. These differing interest of national governments eventually led to the following points being negotiated towards the EU: market access of agricultural products to the EU, the continued use of export taxes, the MFN clause, the Rules of Origin standards, and the inclusion of an agricultural safeguard clause (Ramdoo, 2014). An overview of the national negotiation points and how they were reflected in the regional demands towards the EU will be presented in the table below. The outcome of the negotiations will also be explained below.

First, it is important to know which alternative trade agreement each of the countries had if no deal would be reached on the EPA. Officially South Africa is not part of the ACP countries due to its relatively strong economy and former apartheid regime and thus not covered by the Lomé and Cotonou agreements. Consequently, South Africa established their own trade agreement with the EU called the Trade, Development and Cooperation Agreement (TDCA) (Draper, 2007). Under the TDCA, 90 per cent of South African products can enter Europe tariff-free until 2012 (Van den Bosch, 2009). Having the TDCA gave the country a strong position during the negotiation. Who also had a strong alternative were the LDCs, Lesotho, Angola and Mozambique, who call all fall back on their EBA agreement. The other three countries, Namibia, Botswana and Eswatini, were at risk of moving the less favourable GSP without the EPA (Botswana Guardian, 2013). In June 2009, Botswana, Mozambique, Lesotho, and Eswatini signed an interim EPA. Namibia initially expressed its interest in signing an interim EPA as well. However, the country later reconsidered this decision, despite risking losing preferential access, as they saw too many underlying problems with the document (ICTSD, 2009). With the interim EPA, Botswana, Lesotho, and Eswatini had to liberalise 86 per cent of their market in 10 years and Mozambique 81 per cent (Bilal & Ramdoo, 2010).

The SADC Group EPA's negotiation process was also impacted by Botswana, Lesotho, Eswatini, Namibia and South Africa being part of the Southern African Customs Unions (SACU). As a result of the customs union, the TDCA impacted not only South Africa's economy but also the economies of the four other SACU countries. One of the effects is that the whole region loses out on substantial income from tariffs. As part of the SACU regulations, there is a tariff revenue-sharing component. In practice, this means that the other four countries are heavily subsidised by the income South Africa gets from tariffs imposed on imported products. Consequently, South Africa reducing its tariffs towards the EU affects all five countries financially (Draper, 2007). Moreover, South Africa had become a transit country for products from and to the EU. Therefore, with South Africa liberalising its economy through the TDCA, the other SACU members also indirectly opened their economy to European products. Thus, the liberalisation aspect of the EPA would have less impact on them than it has on other ACP countries (Draper, 2007).

Now that situation of the negotiations has been described, it is time to look at the outcome. The SADC Group EPA negotiations resulted in Southern African countries receiving full access to the European market, except for South Africa who gets access to 98 per cent of the industrial market and 60 per cent of the agricultural market. In return, the five SACU countries will have to liberalise 86 per cent of their market and Mozambique 74 per cent over 15 years (ICTSD, 2016). With regards to the demands from individual countries, several were included in the final agreement. Firstly, the EU allowed all countries, except for South Africa, to apply export taxes if they would contribute to the country's industrial development (Ramdoo, 2014). Secondly, the Rules of Origin part of the agreement has been made more flexible, allowing for products to partly originate from other ACP countries, referred to as accumulation of origin (Beranger et al., 2016). Thirdly, Southern Africa could not fully convince the EU to remove the MFN clause from the agreement but did ensure that the clause was no longer automatically applied. Lastly, a clause was included that allowed for agricultural safeguards on six products (Ramdoo, 2014).

Before moving the propositions, the table below will summarise the countries' demands, the regional negotiation points to the EU and the outcome of SADC Group EPA negotiations.

	Market access agricultural goods	Maintaining export taxes	Extended Rules of Origin	Exclude Most Favoured Nation clause	Include agricultural safeguard clause
South Africa	Priority		Priority	Priority (at least not automatically)	
Namibia		Priority		Priority	Priority

				(not automatically)	
Botswana					Priority
Angola	-	-	-	-	-
Lesotho			Priority		
Mozambique		Priority			Priority
Interest groups	-	-	-	-	-
Regional negotiation points to the EU	Priority	Priority	Priority	Priority	Priority
Final agreement	100% access (South Africa 60%)	Allowed except for South Africa	More flexibility	MFN clause included but not automatically	Allowed for six products

Table 4: Overview of demands during the negotiations in Southern Africa

In Southern Africa, there was a diverse range of interests regarding aspects of the EPA as well as differences in the need for an agreement altogether. The most important part of the table above is the row stating the regional negotiation points to the EU. As shown, the regional negotiation points to the EU reflect demands from all the participating countries. These demands are then also included in the final text of the EPA. These different demands being included are in line with the intergovernmentalist assumption of interstate bargaining. Another argument for intergovernmentalism is that no interest groups got involved in the negotiations and, thus, the states speaking with a single voice. Furthermore, with the SACU countries being affected by South Africa's TDCA, there was a higher need for them to successfully conclude the EPA, resulting in asymmetric interdependence. All these different arguments make that the liberal intergovernmentalist proposition provides a significantly better explanation for the EPA negotiation process in Southern Africa than the neofunctionalist proposition.

6. Discussion

Now that the negotiations have been analysed thoroughly using the propositions deduced from liberal intergovernmentalism and neofunctionalism as a guide, this chapter will first discuss the findings and compare the two regions by going more in-depth into the two regional integration theories. Afterwards, the outcome will be compared to earlier research on the topic to see whether it aligns with previous results.

In the analysis, it became apparent that liberal intergovernmentalism has a higher explanatory value for the EPA negotiations in West Africa and Southern Africa than neofunctionalism. When looking at SADC Group EPA, the liberal intergovernmentalist propositions best explained the situation in all three negotiation stages. In West Africa, the theory explains the national preference formation and the negotiation process. However, neofunctionalism has more explanatory relevance to ECOWAS' role in the negotiations.

Despite a large number of interest groups being discussed in this research, it is hard to tell whether the governments based their preferences on the regional interest groups or the national interest groups. Still, it can be concluded that in all countries except for Nigeria, the economic interest of exporting industries prevailed, who primarily lobbied on the national level. Therefore, the liberal intergovernmentalist assumption that commercial interest groups dominate states' national preference formation has the highest explanatory value for the process that took place in both countries. Furthermore, neofunctionalism's explanatory relevance was weakened by the absence of regional alliances of interest groups shifting their loyalties to the regional level. According to the theory, if these interest groups believe their interest will be better served regionally, they will lobby for more integration to strengthen their position. However, even though there were numerous regional alliances during the EPA negotiation, a shifting of loyalties could be seen in neither of the regions. This could be caused by the contradicting information provided to interest groups on whether an EPA would actually benefit regional integration processes or harm it.

Regarding the role of the SADC in the EPA negotiations, the conclusion can be drawn that the Southern African countries did not see the added value of involving the regional institution in the negotiations. Liberal intergovernmentalism says that states will only pool as much authority as needed on the regional level. Their decision differs from that of West Africa who gave the ECOWAS a substantial role by mandating the Commission to discuss with the EU on their behalf. Instead, the countries decided to negotiate with the EU directly at the governmental level. At the same time, the SADC Secretariat only had a sparse role on the technical level through the EPA Unit. This is most probably related to the SADC countries being divided into separate EPAs. Also, with half of the countries being non-LDCs and the four SACU countries being affected by South Africa's TDCA, the national preferences of countries were already slightly more compatible than in West Africa, except for some minor individual

demands. Therefore, there was less need to involve the SADC to ensure countries would not defect on the agreement once signed.

West Africa found itself in a different position than Southern Africa, as the demands of the West African countries were less compatible. Some aspects of ECOWAS' role in the negotiations can be explained by liberal intergovernmentalist theory. Most especially, in the sense that Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana saw it as their best chance to establish a regional EPA by mandating ECOWAS. With 12 of the countries being LDCs and having little to gain for the EPA, it would be unlikely they would all come to an agreement if they negotiated on government-level the way Southern Africa did. This reflects the intergovernmentalist arguments of asymmetric interdependence between 'big states' and 'small states' and their goal of locking in agreements through regional institutions. Still, the role of ECOWAS was better explained by neofunctionalist theory. In many regards, ECOWAS reflected the preferences of its member states while lobbying with the EU. However, the ECOWAS Commission added several demands to the EPA that were purely in favour of the institution itself and UEMOA. This argument can be best seen in the request to exclude the institutions' levies from the tariff liberalisations. Moreover, as expected by neofunctionalists, the Commission influenced the outcome of the EPA by repeatedly looking for ways to continue the negotiation process. Especially, ECOWAS lobbying for the PAPED to progress the negotiations and obtain their goal of further regional integration, rather than to serve the interest of the region's LDCs, can be seen as an action by a supranational institution. Furthermore, ECOWAS continued to strive to complete the EPA, while this was not the position taken by its regional hegemon and primary funder, Nigeria. The regional institution even went as far as installing a committee to sway Nigeria to sign the final agreement. These autonomous supranational actions can only be explained by neofunctionalism.

The negotiation processes in Southern Africa and West Africa mainly resembled arguments for liberal intergovernmentalism. In West Africa, interest groups were active during the negotiations, directly addressing ECOWAS, which is in line with neofunctionalism. On the other hand, in Southern Africa, the countries clearly spoke with a single voice. Still, liberal intergovernmentalism has more explanatory power in both regions, as the negotiations were dominated by interstate bargaining and asymmetric interdependence. In West Africa, Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire had most to gain from the EPA. Usually, liberal intergovernmentalists would consider, therefore, that they have a weaker negotiation position regionally. However, the interim EPAs took away this vulnerability. Signing the interim EPAs also showed their willingness to proceed without the rest of the region, which would be detrimental to the regional integration process the LDCs were in favour of. On the other hand, Nigeria continuously put its national interest above the region's interest throughout the negotiation process. In Southern Africa, the countries' differing demands were included in the SADC Group EPA. Despite having different reasons to sign the EPA, all the countries weighed the outcomes and decided through interstate

bargaining that it was better to sign the agreement. Throughout the negotiations, the Southern African states were the unitary authority negotiating with a single voice, as expected by intergovernmentalists. Still, neither of the theories were able to explain all aspects of the negotiations fully. First of all, liberal intergovernmentalists expect the outcome to be the lowest-common-denominator, while neofunctionalists say that regional integration could benefit all parties involved. In the case of West Africa, there would be no agreement expected by both theories, as the EPAs were not beneficial for the 12 LDCs. The money of the PAPED would not be enough of an incentive to sign. The fact that West Africa still came to an agreement on the EPA was attributed to LDCs interest in regional integration. However, whether would the EPAs would benefit regional integration was not determined. Instead, what was certain is that the EU's giving the option to sign interim EPAs did harm regional integration, resulting in the LDCs needs for a regional EPA. Another argument could be that both regions signed the EPA as a result of the neofunctionalist idea of path-dependency. The EPA builds upon three earlier agreement which most probably resulted in the ACP countries' exports being oriented towards the European market. Therefore, even though a reciprocity aspect was added to the EPA, the countries still joined the agreement as their economies already depended too much on the EU. In both arguments, the dependence of African countries on the European market is a central aspect that the theories fail to consider. Furthermore, the two theories fail to explain why countries' national preference in the regional negotiation process went beyond the arguments raised by interest groups. What can be expected is that these interest groups had insufficient resources or lacked information to form opinions on the EPA beyond the reciprocal liberalisation aspect, something that is much less likely to occur in Europe.

Now that the two cases have been compared to each other, it is time to compare the findings to earlier research on the subject. As explained in chapter 3.3, there are few studies applying intergovernmentalism to the African context. However, in the literature review, it was shown that various scholars believed national governments are in charge when it comes to regional integration and are unlikely to give up sovereignty. This argument is in line with intergovernmentalist theory. In the analysis, it became apparent that despite the ECOWAS Commission's active role, the national government dominated the negotiations. Therefore, this research agrees with Krapohl (2017) that liberal intergovernmentalism is more applicable than neofunctionalism. However, the role of ECOWAS was clearly not only a way to lock in the agreement made between West African countries, but instead, the Commission had an active part in the negotiations. Thus, despite previous research questioning neofunctionalist theory's applicability to the African context, it can explain some aspects.

Moreover, as Jiboku (2015) pointed out, African interest groups could not effectively organise themselves on the regional level, especially in Southern Africa. While several regional alliances were formed, they did not manage to influence the negotiations. Lastly, scholars, such as Börzel and Risse, claim that the main weakness of regional integration theory is its overemphasis on regional

interdependence and its failure to capture extra-regional dependence. This research has shown that there is indeed more extra-regional dependence on the EU than there is regional interdependence between African states, which makes the theories unable to explain the entire EPA negotiation processes. Overall, despite having its limits, liberal intergovernmentalism has the most explanatory relevance when analysing the EPA negotiations in West Africa and Southern Africa. Therefore, this theory can provide a valuable contribution when analysing regional integration in Africa.

7. Conclusion

This thesis conducted a congruence analysis on the cases of the EPAs negotiations between West Africa and Southern Africa, and the EU. The theories that were being tested with this analysis were liberal intergovernmentalism and neofunctionalism. The purpose of this research was to find out which of these two theories had the most explanatory relevance for regional integration processes in West Africa and Southern Africa with regards to the EPA negotiations. In line with previous literature on the subject, this research found that the regional integration theories developed to explain the European Union could not fully explain the situation in West Africa and Southern Africa. Especially when it came to the higher degree of African economies dependence on the European market for their export products than regional economic interdependence.

Still, liberal intergovernmentalism provided explanations for a large part of the negotiations. Therefore, it can be considered the best regional integration theory to explain different approaches taken by West Africa and Southern Africa when negotiating with the EU. Firstly, governments based their national preference on the demands of national economic interest groups. Secondly, the dominant states in West Africa saw it in their best interest to involve ECOWAS in the negotiations to lock in a regional EPA. At the same time, with only six SADC member countries being part of the SADC Group, the countries saw little need for the institution's involvement and decided to lobby on the government level. Thirdly, the regional EPA negotiations were dominated by national governments, asymmetric interdependence and interstate bargaining.

However, one theory cannot fully explain the negotiation processes. Liberal intergovernmentalism has explanatory relevance for all three aspects of the SADC Group EPA negotiations, while both theories partly explained the West Africa EPA negotiations. The role of ECOWAS in the West Africa EPA negotiations strongly resembled neofunctionalism in many respects. The regional institution influenced the outcome of the negotiations with the EU by adding self-serving demands, such as the institutional levies, to the agreement. Furthermore, ECOWAS continuously pushed for the conclusion of the EPA while its most influential member, Nigeria, was not in favour of an agreement and while most of its members had little to gain from the EPA. To conclude, the two regional integration theories, liberal intergovernmentalism and neofunctionalism, are to a certain extent applicable to African cases, such as the EPA negotiations. Therefore, the theories have proven to provide a valuable contribution to the academic debate on the theorisation of regional integration in Africa, mainly liberal intergovernmentalism.

7.1 Limitations

The EPAs are a highly complex trade agreement. They result from a long history of trade agreements between the EU and the ACP countries which influenced the negotiations. Also, numerous issues were

discussed during the negotiation process that could not all be included in this text due to the limited scope of the research. To include all aspects of the EPAs, for example, trade in services, substantially more time and words would be necessary. While a more thorough evaluation of the EPA itself and its context would have added to the research, it was not required to test the two theories.

More importantly, the research was significantly limited by the unavailability of first-hand documentation on the negotiation processes. Studying the regions West Africa and Southern Africa added a challenge for obtaining the necessary data for the analysis, as few records were kept throughout the 10-year timeframe of the negotiations. Primarily on a country- and institutional level, there were few records available describing their role in the negotiation process and their demands. Consequently, some gaps in the empirical observations can be found, especially in the subchapter on the negotiation processes. Nevertheless, this research has strived to include all relevant positions of interest groups, countries and regional institutions to the best of its abilities with the available information at hand.

7.2 Further research

For further research, it is recommended to assess the role of the EU in the EPA negotiations. The majority of the studies about the EPAs are on the agreement's effect on the ACP countries. The research on the EU's need for the EPAs is scarce. It would be interesting to evaluate the role of the EPAs within the EU's foreign policy goal of enhanced regionalisation globally. On another note, but even more relevant, it would be compelling to find out how Africa's dependence on Europe influences the continent's integration process in situations such as the EPA negotiations. Throughout this research, it became apparent that the regional talks were heavily influenced by African countries' dependence on the European market for their export products. A better understanding of this dependence and its impact on regional integration processes could help African countries during their integration efforts.

Moreover, it would be recommended to apply the liberal intergovernmentalist and neofunctionalist theory to more case studies on the African continent, especially involving regional institutions such as the SADC and ECOWAS. More studies using these theories would further strengthen the academic debate on theorizing regional integration in Africa and help predict future developments supporting a successful integration process. For example, the ratification process of the EPA in West Africa with Nigeria blocking the agreement would provide an interesting case study.

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