

**THE QUEST FOR A SUPRANATIONAL ENTITY IN WEST AFRICA: CAN THE ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES ATTAIN THE STATUS?****JO Lokulo-Sodipe\*****AJ Osuntogun\*\*****SUMMARY**

To reflect the growing trends in the international scene and in furtherance of the objective of its Revised 1993 Treaty, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) summit in December 2006 revolutionised the structure of ECOWAS by re-designating the Executive Secretariat into a quasi-independent commission headed by a President with a Vice President and seven commissioners. The rationale behind the revision was to make ECOWAS a supranational entity. This article considers whether or not a supranational system is essential for the attainment of ECOWAS' objectives. It asks if the conditions for an effective supranational system are in place in the West African sub-region which could provide a solid foundation for its success and why the quest for a supranational system has not yielded any fruitful result in West Africa. It argues that a retreat from the quest for supranationalism and a return to an inter-governmental system would be a retreat rather than the way forward, and expresses the need for the course of action to be sustained courageously till the impact of integration begins to emerge, and the disguised, patriotic impulse of states to protect their national sovereignty gives way to the full manifestation of ECOWAS as a supranational entity.

**KEYWORDS:** Regional integration; ECOWAS Commission; Supranational entity; Intergovernmental organisation; Community Court of Justice

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