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The causes of the voluntary withdrawal of African states from their sub-regional community

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Africa has seen several voluntary withdrawals from its sub-regional community, one of the most striking and surprising of which was that Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger jointly withdrew from the Economic Community of West African States in 2024. An African sub-regional community is an organization bringing together several African states to collaborate, cooperate, and find solutions together to aspire to desirable development for both their states and their populations. The aim of this article, then, is to highlight the causes of the voluntary withdrawal of African states from their sub-regional community in Africa. Because these causes are diverse, and because previous research has not highlighted them all, having dealt only with the consequences of the withdrawal of these States from their sub-regional community, and because of their lack of public awareness. A specific study on the causes of voluntary withdrawal of African states from their sub-regional community is also lacking. Several qualitative research approaches (triangular approach) have been used to address the subject of the causes relating to the voluntary withdrawal of African States from their sub-regional community. Among these causes are: the will of the people and the choice of African states resigning from non-compliance with the re-establishment of constitutional order, rules and decisions of the sub-regional community; the sub-regional community sanctions against resigning African states and the lack of credibility of the sub-regional community according to resigning African states; the sense of self-sufficiency and responsibility of African states resigning from the sub-regional community. Finally, the article proposes ideas that could help African sub-regional community to prevent and avoid the deliberate withdrawal of some of their member states, and to spare the African Continent from being so divided that states turn on each other.

KEYWORDS

sub-regional community, international cooperation, African states, real causes, voluntary withdrawal

1 Introduction

The voluntary withdrawal of an African state(s) from an African sub-regional community to which it belonged, or even of which it was one of the founders, is a commonplace act that can be taken without hesitation by that state, notwithstanding the consequences for security, economic cooperation and the free movement of people that this entails (Houngès, 2024).

From the study reported in this article, it emerges that several African states have freely left their sub-regional community, without experiencing fear or apprehension, regret or remorse. However, this kind of voluntary withdrawal is provoked by several reasons that can justify such an act, depending on the case.

African states that have voluntarily withdrawn from their sub-regional community include Burkina-Faso, Mali and Niger. These three (03) countries, Burkina-Faso, Niger and Mali, decided to leave ECOWAS on January 28, 2024 (Fakabasissoko et al., 2024).

There's also the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), which was abandoned by Lesotho and Mozambique in 1997, Tanzania in 2000, Namibia in 2004 and Angola in 2007 (General Information Organization Portal to Egypt, 2023), to join the Southern African Development Community (or SADC) (Southern African Community, 2022).

So, what are the reasons why African countries are voluntarily withdrawing from their sub-regional communities?

According to the study made by this article, the causes of the withdrawal of African States from their sub-regional community are of various natures, among these causes are: the will of the people and the choice of the African States resigning from the failure to respect the re-establishment of constitutional order, rules and decisions of the sub-regional community, the sanctions of the sub-regional community against the African States resigning and the lack of credibility of the sub-regional community according to the African States resigning, the feeling of self-sufficiency and responsibility of the African States resigning from the sub-regional community. The article will thus provide more elements to answer the question of the voluntary withdrawal of African States from their sub-regional community and will put forward ideas as solutions to the deliberate withdrawal of these States, and solutions to prevent division within Africa, so that African States are not enemy States.

2 Methodology

To conduct a scientific study, there are three approaches: qualitative research, quantitative research or mixed research (i.e., the combination of qualitative and quantitative research).

For the analysis of this study on the causes of the voluntary withdrawal of African States from their sub-regional community, qualitative research was used as the approach to arrive at the results presented in the article. A triangular qualitative approach was used, including non-participant observation, research and documentary analysis. This triangular approach can be defined as the fact of apprehending a research object from at least two different points of view and provides a supreme guarantee of seriousness and scientific (Caillaud and Flick, 2016), which is why it was used to conduct the present study.

The quantitative research approach, while having its advantages, has not been used because of its statistical and empirical character, requiring the systematic collection and analysis of numerical data. But also, because quantitative research requires a large sample and is incapable of exploring complex social phenomena (Redaction Team, 2023). Both discerning the causes of the voluntary withdrawal of African states from their sub-regional community can be seen as a complex social phenomenon that is difficult to understand.

As for the mixed research approach (qualitative and quantitative), its choice to carry out this study was discarded, even though it abounds in several advantages such as strengthening the interpretation of results or deepening the findings (Hanimann, 2022), because it requires among other things a significant investment in resources and also sometimes in skills (Hanimann, 2022) or even that it combines research methods that individually are time-consuming (Aldebert and Rouzies, 2014).

In contrast, the qualitative research approach was chosen as the methodological approach because its purpose is to describe impressions, clarify facts and agree on the meaning of the elements observed (Constant and Lévy, 2015), which corresponds perfectly to this article's study of the causes of the voluntary withdrawal of African states from their sub-regional community, because the study demonstrates the reasons that drive these states to do so through the non-participant observation, research and documentary analysis carried out as part of this study. But also, because the qualitative research approach makes it possible to understand the why behind the results, and above all because it focuses on collecting precise data to understand facts, behaviors, and phenomena (Compilatio, 2024).

2.1 Materials and methods

To arrive at the results presented in this article, non-participant observation was first used and focused specifically on YouTube channel videos, more specifically, channel videos from international newspapers, including Medi 1 TV Afrique, Africa 24, RTB (Radiodiffusion Télévision du Burkina), TV5 MONDE, AJ + français, africanews, VOA Afrique, France 24, AFO Média. The videos highlighted the issue of the voluntary withdrawal of the states of Burkina-Faso, Mali, and Niger in 2024. The videos also featured journalists such as Alain Foka and Heads of State such as Ibrahim TRAORÉ, as well as experts, including political scientists, historians, and political authorities, expressing their views on the voluntary withdrawal of the states concerned from their sub-regional community.

Finally, regarding the literature search and analysis, the literature search focused on thirty-four (34) documents, both written and electronic, published between 2007 and 2025. These documents include seven (7) scientific articles published in scientific journals, one (1) memento and twenty-five (25) press articles available on official and credible websites. Then, all thirty-four (34) documents, those related to the theme and subject of the article, were consulted by reading and reflection in all objectivity, sticking to the facts to draw out the maximum amount of important information justifying the reasons for the voluntary withdrawal of African States from their respective SubRegional Communities.

2.2 Analysis procedure

To analyze the results presented in this article, the non-participant observation of videos, visual observation and listening enabled us to identify the various reasons for the voluntary withdrawal of states from their sub-regional community. The focus was on the comments made and debated by the various speakers on the question of the withdrawal of the Sahel Alliance states (Burkina-Faso, Mali and Niger) from ECOWAS.

In other words, it consisted in knowing all the motivations and reasons behind this voluntary withdrawal, and then applying the law of causality, "expressing a relationship between a cause and its effects, between an event (or absence of an event) and its consequences."

As for the research and documentary analysis methods, keywords such as "Morocco's withdrawal," "Burkina-Faso, Mali

and Niger's withdrawal" and "the causes of these states' withdrawal" were typed into the Google and Google Scholar search engines.

The documents obtained were then sorted according to their relevance and direct link with the subject of the article, to focus more on those that expose the causes of the withdrawal of the States concerned by this study, and after a process of reading reflection, the causes of this type of voluntary withdrawal were deduced (Figure 1).

3 Results and discussion

3.1 The will of the people and the choice of African states resigning from the non-respect of the restoration of constitutional order, the rules and decisions of the sub-regional community

The people or populations of the States leaving their sub-regional community have a share in the decision for this voluntary departure. In fact, according to a joint communiqué dated January 28, 2024 from Burkina Faso, the Republic of Mali and the Republic of Niger, read by the Minister of State for Communication, Culture, Arts and Tourism, spokesman for the Government of Burkina Faso, the Spokesman of the Government of Mali and the Spokesman of the Government of Niger, that it is in response to the expectations, concerns and aspirations of their populations, that they have decided in all sovereignty to withdraw Burkina-Faso, the Republic of Mali and the Republic of Niger from ECOWAS without delay (TV5MONDE Info, 2024).

But also, according to Aka (2025), there were demonstrations against ECOWAS, with thousands of people marching through the Nigerien capital, Niamey, and other major cities, to celebrate Niger's withdrawal from ECOWAS, with slogans such as "No to ECOWAS" and "Long live the Confederation of the Alliance of Sahel States (AES)" on banners (Figure 1). This demonstrated the role played by the people of Niger in the country's voluntary departure from ECOWAS.

In addition, Malians and Burkinabè expressed their satisfaction that their respective states, Mali and Burkina-Faso, had left ECOWAS (Sovo, 2024). This satisfaction, sought by the people according to their own will, may then justify one of the reasons for the voluntary withdrawal of African states from their sub-regional community.

But there is also the choice of states that refuse the restoration of constitutional order and the failure of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger to respect the rules and decisions of the sub-regional community. According to Actu (2025), the current political situation in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger remains a source of grave concern. Indeed, these three nations are currently governed by military regimes, which considerably complicates the process of returning to constitutional order. At a recent meeting with the Chairman of the African Union Commission and the foreign ministers of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, he firmly underlined the crucial importance of restoring democracy to this key region of the continent (Actu, 2025).

However, it appears that the current priority of these military regimes is not an immediate return to constitutional order. For example, in Burkina Faso, Captain Ibrahim Traoré granted himself a five-year mandate without going through an electoral process; in Niger, General Abderrahmane Tiani came to power without seeking the popular vote (Diallo, 2025); and in Mali, recent recommendations seem to favor the extension of military mandates, all in a context of progressive marginalization of traditional political parties (Actu, 2025). However, for Burkina Faso, the mandate was granted in accordance with the transition charter amended at the Assises Nationales of May 25, 2024, in Ouagadougou, and this new charter,



FIGURE 1
Supporters of the Alliance of Sahel States waving flags of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger celebrate the departure of the AES from ECOWAS. Source: https://www.jeuneafrique.com/1534557/economie-entreprises/retrait-de-lacedeao-pourquoi-bamako-et-ouagadougou-tentent-une-sortie-sans-delai/.

accepted by the Burkinabe, allows Captain Traoré to continue his leadership without taking the oath of office (Roly, 2024). In the case of Niger, the mandate was granted following the conclusions of the National assemblies, which gave rise to the Charte de la refondation, a key document defining the broad outlines of Niger's political transition. It also sets the duration of the transition at 5 years, renewable, depending on developments in the security situation and the priorities of the Alliance des États du Sahel (AES) Confederation. As for Mali, Assimi Goita's mandate was granted after Mali's military-appointed legislative body passed the draft law on an unlimited presidential mandate and was signed by Assimi Goita, Military Chief of the Transition in Mali (Africanews, 2025).

Thus, it can be said that these various mandates were not obtained through a demonstration of the will of all the citizens of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger, because the National Conferences were organized by the supreme authority of the military regime. This was the case in Niger, where, according to Niger Inter (2025), the president of the National Council for the Safeguarding of the Homeland (CNSP), the military body leading the transition in Niger, signed a decree appointing the members of the commission in charge of setting in motion the work of the forthcoming National assemblies.

It also appears, according to Agence France-Presse or AFP (2023), that transitions to democracy have stalled in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, where the junta has also rejected ECOWAS demands for the immediate restoration of constitutional order and a transition period of up to three (03) years (Agence France-Presse, 2023). Thus, the African states that deliberately left ECOWAS did so because they did not want to restore constitutional order and refused to respect the rules established by ECOWAS, a sub-regional community whose objective, according to The Patriot (2011), is to promote democracy and good governance in the sub-region. This is why, in 2001, ECOWAS member states adopted the Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, which complements the Protocol on the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security.

Thus, the will of the people and the choice of African States to adopt non-compliance with the re-establishment of constitutional order, rules and decisions of the sub-regional community can be seen as causes of the voluntary withdrawal of African States in general, and particularly those of West Africa (Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger), from their sub-regional community.

3.2 The sub-regional community sanctions against the resigning African states and the sub-regional community lack of credibility, according to the resigning African states

Sub-regional community sanctions against African states that voluntarily resign are also a cause of voluntary withdrawal by these states. For example, ECOWAS sanctions against the coup d'état regime in Niger are at the root of their decision to leave ECOWAS. According to Alwihda Info (2023), these sanctions include the closure of air and land borders between Niger and WAEMU countries; a ban on overflight of airspace for any aircraft flying to or from Niger; the suspension of all commercial and financial transactions between WAEMU countries and Niger, including those involving petroleum products, electricity, goods and services; the suspension of all financial transactions between WAEMU countries and Niger; the freezing of the financial and monetary assets of the State of Niger at the Central Bank of West African States and in the commercial banks of WAEMU countries; the freezing of the financial and monetary assets of public and semi-public companies of Niger at the CBWAS and in the commercial banks of WAEMU countries, etc.

But in response, Niger points out that its sovereign decision to leave ECOWAS, taken in solidarity and unity with Burkina Faso and Mali, was carefully considered in the light of the sanctions imposed by ECOWAS, including the irresponsible way in which Niger was illegally and unfairly sanctioned, and the desire to undertake military intervention (ActuNiger, 2024). So, all these sanctions also acted as grounds for Niger's voluntary withdrawal from ECOWAS.

In any case, all these decisions may seem fair to the states concerned, as a personal analysis of ECOWAS texts and WAEMU's actions shows that these texts are designed to combat coups d'état, interruption and political and economic instability, This can be understood through the additional protocol A/SP1/12/01 on democracy and good governance or the 2001 ECOWAS protocol, and the endorsement of ECOWAS sanctions by WAEMU, such as the freezing of financial assets, including economic and financial sanctions (The Africa Point with AFP, 2022). In other words, it guarantees the durability of the democratic system as an internationally recognized mode of governance that can be far more advantageous for both individuals and the state.

However, despite the UEMOA sanctions, these three (03) States have not yet decided to leave the UEMOA, perhaps because they are heavily dependent on the CFA Franc currency and have no other alternatives to prevent them from remaining there, which is different from their situation with ECOWAS where these States consider themselves in a position of strength and have left.

Sanctions imposed by the sub-regional community are therefore the cause of the voluntary withdrawal of the member states concerned.

According to Dramane Traoré (2023), ECOWAS has maintained sanctions against Burkina Faso, Mali (and Guinea), countries ruled by the military following coups d'état, and has decided to impose a travel ban on members of the government of these countries and other senior officials of the three countries, according to the final communiqué of the Conference of Heads of State of the Community, held on the sidelines of the 36th ordinary session of the African Union in Addis Ababa. The ECOWAS summit was convened to review progress in the transition processes in Dramane Traoré (2023).

However, it may be that ECOWAS is also entrusted with this repressive mission, because it appears that the States Parties, meeting within the ECOWAS bodies, can impose sanctions against States that have committed breaches, as summarized in Table 1. In other words, the Member States adopted a series of texts including the Protocol relating to the mechanism for the prevention, management, resolution of conflicts, maintenance of peace and security, on December 10, 1999, in Lome, this protocol is supplemented by the additional protocol A/SP1/12/01 on democracy and good governance. Thus, sanctions against States are based on the breakdown of democracy through military coups. Military coups violate the principle of prohibiting any unconstitutional change of government and this prohibition of government is enshrined in the 2001 ECOWAS protocol in these terms: "Any unconstitutional change is prohibited as is any undemocratic method of accessing or maintaining power." (NigerInter, 2022), which then justifies all ECOWAS sanctions against all States having violated its sacrosanct principles.

Added to this is the loss of confidence felt by states voluntarily leaving their sub-regional community, forcing them to voluntarily

TABLE 1 List of some sanctions provided for by ECOWAS against its member states in the event of certain violations of its sacrosanct principles.

Number of sanctions	Sanctions provided
(1)	Refusal to support candidatures submitted by the Member State concerned for elective positions in international organizations;
(2)	Refusal to hold any ECOWAS meeting in the Member State concerned;
(3)	Suspension of the Member State concerned from all ECOWAS bodies; during the suspension, the sanctioned State continues to be required to pay the contributions for the period of suspension.

Source: Article 45 of Additional Protocol A/SP1/12/01 of 21 December 2001 on democracy and good governance; https://agenda40-45.com/chronique-1-la-cedeao-etles-sanctions-economiques/.

withdraw, which, according to them, is no longer credible as an organization meeting the criteria of a true sub-regional community.

Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger, according to The Africa Point (2024), believe that ECOWAS is under the influence of foreign powers, that it is betraying the founding principles of the community and is becoming a threat to them. Indeed, it is clear from non-participant observation of the official televised speeches of the heads of state of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger, after personal analysis, that sub-regional community such as WAEMU and particularly ECOWAS, are led by foreign powers and would not protect the interests of member states altruistically, especially in times of need. These heads of state (from Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger) cited as an example that ECOWAS, after so many years, is still not able to help them combat terrorism which, according to them, benefits these foreign powers with the complicity of certain African member states of ECOWAS.

It can therefore be considered that remaining within ECOWAS for them would be a mistake to be avoided in the future. Especially since, according to Le Dauphiné Libéré (2023), France is increasing its support for ECOWAS through the visit to Nigeria of Foreign Minister Catherine Colonna, who announced that France wishes to increase its support for ECOWAS, with the aim of restoring democracy in the region. Unlike Burkina Faso, Mali, and more specifically Niger, which are asking France to leave, demanding the immediate departure of the 1,500 French soldiers present on Nigerien territory (The World Time, 2023).

Thus, ECOWAS's external relations, such as those with France, or those with the United States, which decided to provide aid to ECOWAS to stimulate West African economies through the United States Agency for International Development or USAID (Dossou, 2024), lead states that have deliberately left ECOWAS to believe that the Community does not control them and is under their control, and this represents one of the reasons that pushed them to voluntarily withdraw. However, this has not prevented these same states (Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger) from having relations with Russia at the same time, as it appears from West Africa Maps (2025) that Wagner, now called Africa Corps, is very active in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, playing a key role in supporting transitional governments, which, although presented as a private military company, operates in close coordination with the Russian state.

3.3 The feeling of self-sufficiency and responsibility of African states resigning from the sub-regional community

African states that voluntarily withdraw from their sub-regional community often consider their weight, their capacity, and their assets to do so. Indeed, non-participant observation has made it possible to note, for example concerning the states that form the AES, notably Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, which represent the great reserve of mineral resources of ECOWAS, and that ECOWAS, by losing them, loses its vital force, because Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger make up a market of 70 million consumers also forming the Liptako-Gourma area with 370,000 km^2, which is one of the richest areas in terms of reserves and terms of future potential for ECOWAS. Furthermore, nonparticipant observation has made it possible to note from an economic point of view that the voluntary departure of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger from ECOWAS impacts the economy of the states that are still members of the community. Indeed, according to this non-participant observation, these three (03) States constitute an indispensable clientele that ECOWAS member states cannot do without, because States like Senegal, Benin, Ivory Coast, and Togo have invested heavily in their ports because of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger. From a security point of view, Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger have the best armies on the African continent. Indeed, that of Mali is considered 4th out of 15 in the 2023 ranking of Global Firepower (an American firm specializing in defense), and that of Niger and Burkina Faso respectively, ranked 5th and 6th. This may seem motivating for these States to withdraw from the ECOWAS sub-regional community. From these facts, African states, particularly Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger, are withdrawing unilaterally, out of self-sufficiency or autonomy, which engenders in them a sense of responsibility. Moreover, to ensure the security future of their various states, they have decided to create a "joint anti-terrorist force" for shared security, a central objective for their states and their valiant populations, according to the Chief of Staff of the Nigerien army (AJ+ French, 2024).

Furthermore, in terms of natural resources, gold represents, along with cotton and cattle, one of the most important sources of foreign currency in Burkina Faso (Katja Werthmann, 2007), the same is true for Mali, which is the third largest gold producer on the African continent (Ménard, 2013), and Niger, which in 1981 was already considered the fourth largest uranium producer in the world, after the United States, Canada and South Africa (Pallier, 1984).

Thus, all these circumstances, making these African states autonomous in their natural resources and beyond all the factors that give them a position of strength, give them a sense of self-sufficiency and a sense of responsibility, and this creates conditions for them to voluntarily leave their sub-regional community (ECOWAS). Moreover, the sense of responsibility in the name of sovereignty has pushed these states to opt for the adoption of a common currency.

Indeed, it involves moving from the military and territorial sovereignty aspect to the economic, financial, and monetary aspect of their sovereignty through a Sahel monetary fund and a central bank responsible for managing a common currency backed by a commodity currency such as gold and/or other raw materials with liberating power and adopted by common agreement (Fabregat, 2024).

4 Limitations and future research

The limitations of the analysis presented in this article relate to the collection of data resulting from direct interviews and participant observation due to lack of logistical and financial means. Indeed, there is a lack of obtaining data directly from certain actors involved in the voluntary withdrawal of African States from their sub-regional community, in this case the people or populations and the Heads of State of African States having voluntarily withdrawn from their sub-regional community and the main actors of the sub-regional community in certain cases.

Because it would be important to have directly obtained and observed responses from these different actors of the voluntary withdrawal of African States from their sub-regional community. But also, to understand whether, relative to the people, this desire for voluntary withdrawal is shared by all the people and what are the reasons for this desire. But also, to understand whether the Heads of State took into account the consequences or certain advantages in considering a voluntary withdrawal, whether they did so because the sub-regional community are no longer useful to them or for other personal reasons. And finally, to understand whether the sub-regional community have committed prejudicial acts motivating this type of voluntary withdrawal on the part of African States from their sub-regional community.

Therefore, future research could be conducted to obtain results based on qualitative research methods, specifically direct interviews and participant observation, to more accurately understand the true causes of the voluntary withdrawal of African States from their Sub-Regional (or Regional) Community. Because, firstly, direct interviews.

(directive interviews) are suitable for situations where specific answers are necessary (Rouault, 2024), as is the case with the question of knowing what the real causes of the voluntary withdrawal of African States from their sub-regional community are, which is the subject of this article. And that participant observation, according to Soulé (2007), inevitably leads to close relationships, even intimacy with the actors in the field, and the observer mixes with the observed environment, which will allow us to better understand the will of the peoples or populations of African States in their actions to withdraw voluntarily from a sub-regional community.

Therefore, future research could be conducted to obtain results based on qualitative research methods, specifically direct interviews and participant observation, to more accurately understand the causes of the voluntary withdrawal of African states from their sub-regional community.

First, because direct interviews (directive interviews) are suitable for situations where specific responses are required (Rouault, 2024), such as the question of the causes of the voluntary withdrawal of African states from their sub-regional community, which is the subject of this article. And because participant observation, according to Soulé (2007), inevitably leads to close relationships, even intimacy, with the actors in the field, and the observer becomes involved in the observed environment, which will allow for a better understanding of the will of the peoples or populations of African states in their actions to withdraw from a sub-regional community.

5 Conclusion

The analysis presented in this article discusses the causes of the voluntary withdrawal of African States from their sub-regional community, because previous analyses were much more interested in the consequences of the withdrawal of these States from their sub-regional community than in the causes which were at the center of the analysis in this article.

Furthermore, the article also proposes ideas that can help the African sub-regional community to prevent and avoid that some of its constituent States deliberately withdraw and to spare the African continent from being divided to the point that the States turn against each other. Among these ideas, there is the fact that the African SubRegional and Regional Communities are content and use only the contributions that the Member States of the Communities pay in order to avoid any external or foreign influence of States financing or subsidizing the African sub-regional community and to avoid any suspicion coming from some Member States, as is the case between the Alliance of Sahel States and ECOWAS, which doubt whether there is an influence of Europe and the United States on ECOWAS. Then, the sub-regional community must observe and fulfill the rights that each Member State has, not to exaggerate in taking sanctions against a State that has violated a rule or principle of the sub-regional community. For example, instead of taking automatic and immediate sanctions, the sub-regional community can grant reasonable delays before moving on to the application of sanctions.

This could thus help prevent and avoid the deliberate withdrawal of certain states from sub-regional community. It would also be an opportunity to strengthen understanding, complicity, cooperation, and collaboration among African states belonging to a sub-regional community. Consequently, this could prevent the African continent from being divided, thus promoting rapprochement and development among these States.

Regarding the analysis presented in its entirety in this article, it can be considered a research study with shortcomings, both in form and substance; furthermore, it did not impede compliance with ethical rules and research principles. Research on these shortcomings could be conducted to address them, as could research on the most appropriate solutions for reconciliation between African states and their sub-regional community, or studies on mechanisms to prevent the voluntary withdrawal of African states from their sub-regional community.

Data availability statement

The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article/supplementary material, further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

Ethics statement

Ethical approval was not required for the studies involving humans as the studies were conducted in accordance with the local legislation and institutional requirements. The participants provided their written informed consent to participate in this study.

Author contributions

IZ: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Funding acquisition, Investigation, Methodology, Project administration,

Resources, Software, Supervision, Validation, Visualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. AT: Resources, Supervision, Validation, Visualization, Writing – review & editing.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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