

SIX DECADES OF AFRICAN INTEGRATION: SUCCESSSES AND FAILURES

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Abstract. The African Union (AU), with antecedent Organisation of African Unity (OAU), is now six decades old, and its sub-regional affiliates, such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the East African Community (EAC), up to four decades old. There is a need to inquire into why their problems have been so persistent. This exploration is based on desktop research into some of the scholarly literature, the media, and the findings and recommendations of AU commissions. It is informed by constructivism and Pan-Africanism.

The AU and its affiliates are nonetheless arguably more successful than their comparative peers in the Global South. Yet it is usually criticized in the literature, and organs such as the Pan-African Parliament meet with media derision. The AU's notable successes include establishing its agency in global governance. It has coordinated African states' voting on the UN Security Council and established an embryonic diplomatic corps with representation on major regional and global organisations and at the two world powers, the USA and PRC. Scholars should also note the continental and multi-lateral activities strengthening African integration that occur outside the AU, through a variety of NGOs, QUANGOs, and business sectoral organisations.

This article finds that only the European Union has been more successful, in part because it has a supranational dimension, plus two orders of magnitude more staff, and a budget two orders of magnitude larger. Further, many of the persistent problems of the AU and the RECs are problems of their member state governments, extraverted upwards into the continental and sub-regional structures.

Keywords: African Integration, OAU, AU, AfCFTA, institution-building, inter-governmental, supranational

DOI: 10.31132/2412-5717-2024-67-2-24-39

Acknowledgments: The author acknowledges the helpful suggestions of the three anonymous peer reviewers. Any faults remaining are solely the author's responsibility.

For citation: Gottschalk, K. (2024). Six Decades of African Integration: Successes and Failures. *Journal of the Institute for African Studies*. № 2. Pp. 24–39. <https://doi.org/10.31132/2412-5717-2024-67-2-24-39>

INTRODUCTION

The central questions posed by this article are: what have been the degrees of successes and failures in African integration during the six decades since the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) was founded. It seeks to enquire, where possible, into the reasons for its successes, and also for its protracted failures. We also need to enquire into the extent to which African integration is occurring inside the African Union (AU), or outside its structures.

The methodology of this article is qualitative. It is desktop research into some of the scholarly literature, media, and AU publications. Its theoretical underpinnings are constructivism and Pan-Africanism.

The structure of this article is to examine first the successes of African integration, and then its failures. It attempts to seek the reasons for these, where possible. This is followed by a brief comparison of the African Union with other continental organisations. The article ends with some provisional conclusions.

1. SUCCESSES OF AFRICAN INTEGRATION

1.1. Institution-building

The Organisation of African Unity, the OAU, started in 1963 with solely three entities: a Council of (foreign) Ministers meeting twice annually to finalise the agenda for the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, plus a modest secretariat. Today, the African Union, or the AU, has 85 organs, specialised technical commissions, institutions, and affiliates [Okumu, Atta-Asamoah 2023: 28].

Further, outside the AU, there is steady incremental growth of multilateral QUANGOs, NGOs, and business associations, summarised in Section 1.5 below. Regional and continental parliaments and courts (see 1.8 below) are the most startling of these, because their implicit logic requires them to ultimately evolve into acquiring supra-national powers, however far in the future that may still be.

1.2. Norm-setting

Two of the most potentially far-reaching examples of this are:

The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, also known as the Banjul Charter, was passed in 1981 and entered into force in 1986, espousing liberal values. It reaffirms the values of African culture which inspire the conceptualization of human rights and peoples' rights. This charter also set up the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. Two decades later, it proposed an African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights¹. The African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Good Governance, 2007, entered into force in 2012. This affirms the rule of law and human rights².

While there are no yet any effective mechanisms of enforcement, these two charters do set out standards against which all African governments may be judged and criticised. They

¹ African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. *AU / OAU*. https://au.int/sites/default/files/treaties/36390-treaty-0011_-_african_charter_on_human_and_peoples_rights_e.pdf (accessed: 03.06.2024)

² African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance. *AU*. <https://au.int/en/treaties/african-charter-democracy-elections-and-governance> (accessed: 03.06.2024)

also refute one of the justifications of dictators: that democratic values are Western and foreign to indigenous African culture. By signing these charters, the African governments implicitly acknowledge the right of the AU to comment on, and intervene, in their domestic politics. They imply, but have not yet realised, the need for supranational authority.

1.3. Peace-making Operations

It is sobering to note how many publications on the AU have been produced not by institutes of African Studies, or university departments of international relations, but by institutes of conflict resolution or security studies.

The OAU, founded in 1963, established a Commission of Conciliation, Mediation, and Arbitration (CCMA) – which was never operationalised. Forty years later, two years after the AU entered into force, it in 2003 launched its Peace and Security Council, inspired by the precedent set in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The PSC runs on a shoestring: it lacks translators and law experts and has only one secretary, one administrative assistant, and four professional staff [Joshua, Olanrewaju 2017:7].

Successful peace-keeping operations include AMIB in Burundi (2003–2004), AMIS in Sudan (2004–2007), AMISEC in the Comoros (2006–2007), and AMISOM being blue-hatted to become a hybrid UN mission in Somalia [Ndzendze. Adunimay 2023: 235]. Unsuccessful interventions are covered in Section 2 of this article.

Despite only some AU peacekeeping missions succeeding, it is noteworthy that the AU's PSC has undertaken PMO on a scale far beyond anything attempted or even contemplated by the League of Arab States, ASEAN, and other regional organisations of the Global South.

1.4. Global Governance

Unlike the OAU, the AU has weight as an agency in global governance. No state accredited ambassadors to the OAU. In contrast, over fifty states, including all the world powers, have accredited ambassadors to the AU, and the AU in turn has diplomatic missions to half a dozen states and key regional organisations.

This is reflected in its impact on scholarship. In its almost four decades, the OAU resulted in barely more than two books in the Anglophone literature. The AU and its sub-regional affiliates attract more than that many studies per year. As late as 2009, a U.S. 500-page undergraduate textbook on international relations did not even mention the AU in its index, and Wikipedia had no entry for the AU. Today, there is a *Journal of African Union Studies* and an independent *AU Yearbook* published by Brill.

The AU has evolved procedures to try to ensure that its members vote as a bloc in the UN General Assembly, the Security Council, the World Trade Organisation (WTO), and other global forums. For example, the AU Peace and Security Council organises an annual high-level seminar to prepare the three elected African members (the A3) of the UNSC. The PSC also briefs the A3 before the UNSC votes. The PSC wants regular reports from the A3 to the PSC on how they champion decisions of the AU. Its success is that the A3 now vote together 79% of the time [Brosig, Lecki 2022: 261].

The Kagame reforms include the proposal that whenever there are summit meetings between the continent and a country such as China, India, Japan, Russia, Turkey, and the

USA, Africans should not be represented by all fifty-five presidents and prime ministers but only by the AU and the chairs of the Regional Economic Communities [Bischoff 2023: 315]. This would help prevent bilateral deals, which undermine continental unity and exploit the asymmetry of power.

1.5. Outside the AU: Continental and Multilateral Projects

Major continental and multilateral institutions operate outside the AU family of organisations. The African Development Bank (AfDB), founded one year after the OAU, is a major success story of continental multilateralism, loaning capital for a variety of infrastructural projects. It includes several wealthy non-African member states, to increase its capital available for lending³.

The Afreximbank, established in 1994 in Cairo, focuses on financing intra-African trade and also sponsored the Pan-African Payment and Settlement System, mentioned below⁴.

The African Security Exchanges Association (ASEA), whose full members are 26 of African stock exchanges, has as its flagship project the African Exchanges Linkage Project (AELP), launched with the support of the African Development Bank, the AU, and the AfCFTA Secretariat. At this stage, AELP covers 7 exchanges in 14 countries. These include not only the largest stock exchange on the continent, the Johannesburg Stock Exchange, but also regional stock exchanges, such as the BRVM (La Bourse Régionale des Valeurs Mobilières), based in the Côte d'Ivoire. The AELP aims to enable investors in one African state to seamlessly buy shares in companies in other African states.

ASEA and the PAPSS have signed a memorandum of understanding to avoid the use of foreign correspondent banks outside the continent and their forex⁵. This lowers the cost of business transactions.

OHADA, the Organisation for the Harmonisation of Business Law, is adhered to by 17 member states. This multilateral organisation includes almost all the francophone states in Africa, plus a Portuguese-speaking and Spanish-speaking state. Founded in 1993, its organs include its Court of Justice and Arbitration, the CCJA, and the Accounting Standardisation Commission⁶. OHADA is a typical example of many organisations that are never in the news headlines, but whose daily work is weaving the fabric of a multilateralism, which strengthens African integration.

The African Airlines Association (AfRAA) is typical of the continental business sectoral organisations. Founded in 1968 in Accra, it includes 50 airlines comprising all the major intercontinental African operators, and the Association's members represent over 85% of the total international traffic carried by all African airlines⁷.

Continental NGOs for the professions also span the alphabet. Even when they falter, they are revived. It is appropriate for this article in this journal to single out the African

³ African Development Bank. <https://www.afdb.org/en> (accessed: 03.06.2024)

⁴ African Export Import Bank. <https://www.afreximbank.com/> (accessed: 03.06.2024)

⁵ Zwane T. Deal will aid African bourses. *Business Day*. 16.05.2023. Pp.1–2

⁶ OHADA. Achievements. <https://www.ohada.org/en/achievements> (accessed:03.06.2024)

⁷ AfRAA. <https://www.afraa.org/about-afraa> (accessed:03.06.2024)

Association of Political Science, AAPS⁸. The Pan-African Lawyers' Union, PALU, does human rights litigation in the continental courts⁹.

The African Network of Centres for Investigative Reporting plays a vital role in exposing corruption and repression¹⁰. It is worthy of being singled out because many AU members do not have freedom of the press.

Another quango that will become increasingly important in future decades is the Forum of Energy Pools in Africa. These include both regional pools, such as the Southern African Power Pool, and the Association of Power Utilities in Africa¹¹. They facilitate trading electricity across borders.

1.6. African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)

Africa is deeply embedded in the global economy. Many African states export primary products, which are at the roots of international value chains. But these value chains fail to build linkages between African economies, even adjacent countries. This characterizes the continental integrative and disintegrative dynamics of African trade and investment.

The Abuja Treaty of 1991 envisages the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) as a step towards a future continental customs union, to ultimately culminate in the African common market called for by Nkrumah. The AfCFTA treaty was signed in 2018 [Nkala 2023: 313], and the first South African goods being exported under its framework in 2024 – simultaneously with Botswana and Namibia placing an embargo on imports of South African vegetables¹².

This symbolises the two steps forward, one step backward, reality of attempts at African economic integration. Realistically, the AfCFTA will take at least the remainder of this decade to be substantially implemented, but will ultimately bring significant benefits. For example, a continental market will encourage automotive and other manufacturers to invest in Africa and set up supply chains within the continent.

1.7. Pan-African Payment and Settlement System (PAPSS)

Africa's 55 states have over 40 separate currencies. So far, the only mergers of currency are those dating from colonial times in West Africa, Central Africa, and Southern Africa. All attempts by independent states to merge their currencies in East Africa and elsewhere have so far failed, moving from postponement to postponement. As the next best method, the states have formed the Pan-African Payment and Settlement System.

Any business transaction between different currencies used to involve dollar charges both ways. The PAPSS system is based on direct payment between each currency, which

⁸ AAPS. <https://www.ipso.org/profile/african-association-political-science> (accessed:03.06.2024)

⁹ Pan-African Lawyers' Union. <https://www.lawyersofafrica.org/> (accessed:03.06.2024)

¹⁰ African Network of Centres for Investigative Reporting. <https://investigate.africa/#about> (accessed: 03.06.2024)

¹¹ Infrastructure Consortium for Africa. <https://icafrica.org/en/topics-programmes/energy/regional-power-trading/> (accessed:03.06.2024)

¹² Majola G. Namibia & Botswana should ease their current restrictions on SA vegetables. *Agbiz. Cape Times*. 30.01.2024. P. 10.

requires them to be fully and freely convertible. PAPSS' de-dollarisation of international transactions saves \$5 billion per year in intra-African trade charges¹³.

In Southern Africa, banks charge migrant workers and the diaspora up to 15% to send remittances across national African borders. To obviate this, individuals pay 5% to long-distance bus drivers to physically deliver remittances. Mobile phone companies have started apps to transfer money across borders with lower costs; for example, MTN now charges 4% fees on such transactions, while the industry average is about 10%¹⁴.

1.8. Partial Success: Continental and Regional Courts

Established in 1998, the African Court of Human and Peoples' Rights commenced formal operations in 2006, initially located in the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa before permanently relocating to Arusha in 2007.

Less than 10% of the hundreds of decisions handed down by the African Court during its 17 years of operation have so far been implemented by the respondent states, according to the African Court's incumbent President, Judge Imani Aboud.

The records accessible on the African Court's website indicate that, to date, the court has successfully resolved 212 out of the 353 petitions submitted by individuals and civil society organizations, rendering 374 judgements and orders in cases related to civil rights¹⁵.

ECOWAS, the East African Community (EAC) and OHADA also have courts and arbitration tribunals.

One failure was the Southern African Development Community's treatment of its SADC Tribunal. When the Tribunal ruled for the Zimbabwean claimants against having their farms seized without compensation, the Zimbabwe president led lobbying at the SADC summit, until the SADC effectively terminated its Tribunal. The Zimbabwe government was not prepared to share its sovereignty with a regional court [Nathan 2013]. The sticking point was what Alvarez noted in a general observation:

“The treaty provisions establishing these African institutions anticipate international organisations charged with discharging the kinds of plenary executive, legislative, and even judicial powers once associated exclusively with national governments” [Alvarez 2005: 116].

1.9. Partial Success: African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM)

Scores of states have undergone an African peer review, but governments are slow and reluctant to implement recommended changes, and in some cases, they have watered down the report and shown a backlash against the recommendations. For example, the South African President denied the draft report's warning that xenophobia existed – until a year later, when the 2008 *pogrom* occurred. The South African Government applied lots of pressure to get criticisms in the report on its country removed or watered down [Herbert, Gruzd 2008: 264]. There has also been a corruption scandal at the APRM¹⁶.

¹³ Magubane K. Afreximbank's free trade dream. *Sunday Times Business Times*. 25.06.2023. P. 5.

¹⁴ Gavaza M. Vodacom has plan to win Africa's remittance market. *Business Day*. 20.11.23. P. 10.

¹⁵ Ncube S. Court Judge Criticises Member States Over Human Rights Verdicts. *AllAfrica*. 27.10.2023. <https://allafrica.com/stories/202310270378.html> (accessed:03.06.2024)

¹⁶ Ramata S. Who Audits the Auditors: Scandal at the Heart of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). *Think Africa Press*. 09.04.2014. <https://allafrica.com/stories/201404101502.html> (accessed: 03.06.2024)

That said, it must be noted that there is no equivalent to the APRM in other regional inter-governmental organisations. Even in the APRM's antecedent in the OECD, this includes only technical economic issues and not political issues on which incumbent governments will always be sensitive.

2. FAILURES OF AFRICAN INTEGRATION

2.1. Peace-Making Operations

Some peacekeeping missions have been successful, as summarised in 1.3 above. Some have failed: Libya's civil war, which started in 2011, has so far culminated in the country being divided for over a decade between two rival administrations. This has also exposed the North African Regional Capability as only existing on paper. The Sudan's latest civil war started in 2023, with no mediation being so far successful. The eastern provinces of the DRC continue to suffer from decades of civil war and roadside extortion. Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger have suffered unconstitutional changes of government through coups¹⁷.

In 2020, the AU declared the African Standby Force to be fully operational "despite the fantasy involved in such a statement" [Okumu 2023: 114]. The ASF suffers from corrupt procurement and has a lack of logistics, especially strategic airlift capability [Okumu 2023: 116].

2.2. Unconstitutional Changes of Government

Schmidt noted that by 2023, there had been 108 successful and 108 failed coups in Africa since 1950¹⁸. Since then, there have been further coups in Niger and Burkina Faso¹⁹.

The suspension of membership in the AU or ECOWAS, and economic sanctions, have failed to deter military officers from persisting in staging coups. There has not been a single case where the AU or RECs have militarily intervened to overthrow a coup, arrest the putschists, try them for treason, and sentence them to life imprisonment. Only this would act as an effective deterrent to future coups in other countries.

2.3. Revenue-raising

This problem is often superficially stated as donor dependency. That should more analytically be assessed as one result of there being no serious consequences for the majority of AU member states who fail to pay their agreed annual dues on time.

The Kagame reforms of 2018 include the Donald Kaberuka proposal that all AU members should pay an annual fee of 0.2% of their imports. The precedents for this are the ECOWAS and the EAC. This was agreed to as the most painless mode for states to raise their AU annual membership fees. But initially, only 12 states paid up their import fee, thus perpetuating the culture of non-payment that had crippled the OAU throughout its thirty-eight years and threatened the newly formed AU. The penalties for failure to pay only start with a state more than six months in arrears, and it takes a full two years

¹⁷ The Russian Federation recognizes the new authorities of these countries (*Editor's Note*).

¹⁸ Schmidt M. Changing face of coups in Africa. *Business Day*. 06.09.2023. P. 3.

¹⁹ The Russian Federation recognizes the new authorities of these countries (*Editor's Note*).

for all sanctions to be applied – in contrast to the standard commercial banking practice that anyone in default by two months will get their house repossessed.

Cautionary sanctions are applied to member states that do not pay 50% of their assessed contributions within six months. Such states will be deprived of their right to take the floor or make any contribution at the meetings of the African Union.

Intermediate sanctions apply to members who are in arrears for one year. In this instance, the member states concerned shall be suspended from being members of a Bureau of any organ of the Union; host any organ, institution, or office of the Union; lose the right to have their nationals participate in electoral observation missions and human rights observation missions; will not be invited to meetings organized by the Union, and further, such states will not have their nationals appointed as staff members, consultants, volunteers, or interns at the African Union.

Under the comprehensive sanctions, which kick in after a member state defaults on its payments for two years, such states are liable for the cautionary and intermediary sanctions, and their right to participate in the meetings of the Union will be suspended²⁰. As of October 31, 2023, only 31 out of 55 had paid 100% of their annual contributions²¹.

Clearly, the AU is overdue in applying standard commercial bank procedures to debtors – that substantive sanctions kick in for more than a two-month lapse in payment of annual fees: “Whatever costs might be imposed for non-compliance are much lower than the enormous price of doing nothing, which all Africans have been paying for far too long.” [Kagame 2017].

This problem is replicated in most of the regional economic communities. For example, the Economic Community of West Africa States is overwhelmingly dependent on Nigeria paying for all fifteen members [Adebajo 2008].

2.4. Competence and Capacity: Implementing Decisions

It is sobering that the most serious problems of the AU date all the way back to its antecedent, the OAU. The “strictly confidential” Adu Report of 1972 spelt out major problems [Adu 1972]. An international organization must have staff demonstrating loyalty to it alone. But the OAU had instances of some staff members lobbying their own country’s ambassador or head of state [Wolfers 1976: 89]. By the 1970s, managerial authority had declined. The Secretariat had “poor control” over such basics as stores and handling post. The Secretariat was unable to discipline staff for unpunctuality and absenteeism [Wolfers 1976: 88–89]. Such problems remained three decades later. The 2008 AU Audit Report, chaired by Adedeji, found the AUC is characterized by “internal institutional incoherence and disarray with a dysfunctional working and managerial culture at all levels.” It recommended that only the AUC President and Vice President

²⁰ African Union strengthens its sanction regime for non-payment of dues. *AU*. 27.11.2018. <https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20181127/african-union-strengthens-its-sanction-regime-non-payment-dues> (accessed: 03.06.2024)

²¹ Kinkoh H. New champion could drive home African Union reforms but faces stern financial, coordination challenges. *Daily Maverick*. 21.03.2024. <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2024-03-21-new-champion-could-drive-home-african-union-reforms-but-faces-stern-financial-coordination-challenges/> (accessed 04.06.2024)

should be elected by the heads of state, but all other officers should be selected solely on merit²². The Chair of the African Union complained in 2007 of:

“...inadequacy of financial resources, limited and ambiguous mandates and incongruity of portfolio content and inadequate human resources” [Adejumobi, Olukoshi 2008: 12–13].

The AU Audit flagged organizational and managerial issues from top to bottom. The AUC Chair, Deputy Chair and Commissioners’ relationship “can best be described as dysfunctional.”²³ The eight commissioners who were appointed to office in September 2003 did not meet until September 2005. After that, in contrast to most state executives having weekly cabinet meetings, they averaged only one meeting per three weeks where substantive issues were “hardly ever discussed,” The Chair and Deputy “hardly attended”, and on average, five out of ten Commissioners failed to attend each meeting as they preferred to travel and reap over-generous *per diems*. The minutes of these meetings were untranslated from their original language and not circulated for over a year. There was no consistent attempt to bring directors together who consequently had a silo approach²⁴. Five of the thirteen directors appointed in 2001 had resigned by 2004:

“...a failure to accept or articulate a chain of command, poor to non-existent internal communication strategies and ineffective accountability mechanisms are central to the disempowerment and demoralization among staff.”²⁵

There was no initial induction of staff, no performance-based system; staff trying to claim benefits and payment were blocked when the Administrative Tribunal was not convened for four years. Qualified staff left for better remuneration at other inter-governmental organizations²⁶. Some members of the Permanent Representatives Council pressured the AUC to hire their relatives or fellow-citizens, or applied themselves, and when rejected, this increased tensions²⁷. An analyst noted:

“A number of unhelpful and bureaucratic practices developed and became entrenched in the OAU, which hindered the professionalism and effectiveness of the organization – these practices create obstacles for the AU.” [Mohammed 2008: 61].

The AU is also hurt by the same difficulties as the UNO:

“The AU is understaffed and, like many such bureaucracies, suffers from a surfeit of the incompetent, lazy, or indifferent. As with many multilateral organizations, sacking the corrupt or inefficient is extraordinarily difficult and runs into political objections from member states [...] Stronger mechanisms for accountability are needed that allow for the investigation and removal of senior officers if they are guilty of malfeasance or other misdemeanours.” [Mohammed 2008: 64, 72]. The 2008 Adedeji Audit made 159 specific recommendations. Many were not implemented [Udombana 2023: 88].

²² Handy P.-S. Competing Pan-Africanisms. *The African.org*. Issue 18 (April–May). 2021. P. 16. <https://iss-africa.s3.amazonaws.com/site/files/documents/Issue18%20April-May%202012.pdf> (accessed: 03.06. 2024)

²³ Audit of the African Union. Report. Adebayo Adedeji et al. *African Union*. Addis Ababa, 18.12.2007. P. 44. <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/RO%20Audit%20of%20the%20AU.pdf> (accessed:03.06.2024)

²⁴ *Ibid.*, P. 48.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, P. 47.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, P. 52.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, P. 59.

A decade later, the Kagame Report confirmed that these problems persisted uncorrected during 2017, and also highlighted

- The AU is highly fragmented, with too many focus areas;
- the AU's complicated structure and limited managerial capacity leads to inefficient working methods, poor decision-making, and a lack of accountability;
- the AU is neither financially independent nor self-sustaining, relying instead on partner funding for much of its financing – donor dependency;
- coordination between the AU and the RECs is limited²⁸.

In the three years, 2021–2023, 93% of African Union decisions have not been implemented [Staeger, Fagbayibo 2024]. A major reason for this is that AU resolutions are ghost-written by contracted NGOs, and the AU heads of state who vote for them have not even had time to read their executive summaries [Tieku 2017: 8, 14]. When the consequences of their vote dawn on them, non-implementation is a given. Tieku elsewhere gives variant statistics on this issue. Only 15% of AU decisions since 2001 have been fully implemented at the state level [Tieku 2019:14]; over 80% of AU decisions are not yet integrated into national legislations, agendas, and policies [Tieku 2019: 18].

These problems in the continental organisations are replicated at the sub-regional level.

Rob Davies, a former South African minister of Trade and Industry, criticised “the proclamations of customs unions or common markets that simply do not exist in reality” [Davies 2023: xiii].

Zondi finds the Southern African Development Community institutionally weak and inefficient as early as 1993. Its secretariat was inadequately and inappropriately staffed and underfunded. It has weak strategic management and administrative systems and weak implementation capacity [Zondi 2023: 95-99]. It had only two posts for trade lawyers.

Akokpari and Ampomah note of the Economic Community of West African States that “widespread bribery and corruption among customs officials” increase the costs of doing business [Akokpari, Ampomah 2023: 127].

Matlosa concludes of the East African Community's major protocols: “In general, these are impressive and progressive instruments, but they hardly ever reflect the situation on the ground” [Matlosa 2023: 283].

One reason for these incompetencies might be that they are all prevalent in the bureaucracies of the national governments that are AU members. This lack of capacity is extraverted upwards into the RECs and the AU.

2.5. NEPAD – AUDA

NEPAD, the New Partnership for African Development, started life as an elaborate plan for economic development, complete with its own continental agency. However, instead of incrementally acquiring executive functions, it shrank to become a mere shopping list of infrastructural projects periodically proposed to donors. After its renaming as the AU Development Agency, AUDA only saw its flagship proposals, such

²⁸ Overview of Institutional Reforms. *African Union*. <https://au.int/en/aureforms/overview> (accessed: 03.06.2024)

as the Grand Inga hydroelectric power project²⁹, being postponed by half a century to Agenda 2063 – beyond the term of office of any incumbent who might be held responsible for implementing it. This must be assessed as a partial failure.

2.6. Partial Failure: Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC)

ECOSOCC has a great potential importance, which is not yet realised. Its statute includes NGOs as members, both from the continent and also the African diaspora. This is the only AU mechanism to include the diaspora. It is also, alongside the PAP, the only AU mechanism to include civil society and broaden out inclusion in the AU beyond the very elitist current dispensation of heads of state and foreign affairs ministers.

While initially 20 diaspora NGOs were selected, plus NGOs from the continent, the whole ECOSOCC project flagged and sagged after 2012 [Maloka 2019: 227, 233]. This is connected to a withering away of support from the AU Commission.

2.7. Partial Failure: Pan-African Parliament

The Pan-African Parliament, like the European Parliament during its first two decades, remains limited to indirect election from national parliaments. This severs any linkage between the grassroots voters and this continental entity and is reflected in, at best, the media ignoring its activities apart from scandals concerning the greed of individual executive members.

In addition to evolving to direct universal franchise, there are two further reforms where the PAP is behind the EP. The PAP needs to acquire veto power over the AU's annual budget – the core power of legislatures against their executives. It also needs to evolve from the senate principle of equal representation – five MPs per country – regardless of the different sizes of member states, to the degressive proportionality formula in its composition, used by the EP. In this respect, the ECOWAS Parliament has already moved ahead of the PAP by reconstituting itself on the principle of degressive proportionality.

The PAP has had partial successes – it has sent election monitoring teams to observe various national elections, which have not shrunk from public criticisms. It has also been involved in negotiations of peacemaking operations.

2.8. The Removal of Foreign Military Bases and Forces from Africa

Anti-imperialist calls in the 1960s for an end to foreign military bases in Africa culminated in the OAU 1977 Convention on the Elimination of Mercenarism in Africa. Since then, the situation has regressed, with an increasing number of foreign powers establishing in Africa military bases, drone airstrips, and logistics depots for their deployed armed forces.

Peace-making has led to the establishment of some of the foreign military bases in Africa. In April 2016, the AU's Peace and Security Council called on member states to be 'circumspect' when 'entering into agreements' that would lead to the establishment of foreign military bases in their countries.

²⁹ The Grand Inga Project is a series of seven proposed hydroelectric power stations at the site of the Inga Falls, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. If realised, the 40–70 GW project would be the largest power-generating hub in the world.

There are at least 27 known U.S. military outposts across Africa, which has set up Africom to coordinate its military interventions on the continent. At least eleven states from outside Africa have a military presence, including China and the UAE³⁰. Numerically, the largest are 7 550 French military personnel, followed by 6 000 US military personnel at 27 outposts³¹. Russia's military presence was estimated at 5 400 soldiers of the Africa Corps, formerly called the Wagner Group³².

In the colonial epoch, foreign military bases underpinned imperial rule in Africa. Even in the post-colonial half-century, scores of French military bases and interventions saw the overthrow of some Francophone rulers. Today, foreign military bases are in Africa as negotiated, and pay rent to the host governments, but their potential to undermine national and continental sovereignty always remains.

Here, we must note that there are vastly fewer instances of foreign military bases or troops in the Organisation of American States (OAS), the League of Arab States (LAS), the Southern Asia Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC), the Association of South-East Asian Nations, or Mercosur (South American Cone) states.

3. CONCLUSIONS

The doyen of inter-governmental organisations in the post-WW2 world is the United Nations Organisation. Its Charter, in Article 2(7), specifies that it shall not intervene in matters that are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state.

The inter-governmental organisations the LAS, SAARC, ASEAN, and MERCOSUR are all regional organisations but not continental. The OAS is bi-continental. The only attempts to further continental cooperation amongst states, regardless of their ideologies, are the European Union (EU), the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), and the United States-Mexico-Canada (USMCA, formerly named NAFTA).

UNASUR is, to date, stillborn owing to ideological differences amongst its member governments³³.

The USMCA, formerly named NAFTA, has been successful since 1994 but strictly limits itself to trade issues and avoids broadening its mandate to diplomatic and political issues. The EU is the only example of a regional organisation has acquired some supra-national powers in addition to its inter-governmental dimension. It is now two orders of magnitude larger than the AU for both its budget and its staff establishment³⁴.

The AU is the only other example of a continental entity that is operational. In terms of both its institutional growth and its operational activities, including the AfCFTA, it stands second to only the EU in success.

³⁰ Atta-Asamoah A. Proceed with caution: Africa's growing foreign military presence. *ISS Today*. 27.08.2019. <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/proceed-with-caution-africas-growing-foreign-military-presence> (accessed: 04.06.2024)

³¹ Turse N. US plans to cement its African bases. *Mail & Guardian*. 30.04–07.05.2020. P.14.

³² Cordall S. Under new general, Russia's Wagner makes deeper inroads into Libya. *Al Jazeera*. 25.02.2024. <https://aljazeera.com/news/2024/2/25/under-new-general-russias-wagner-makes-deeper-inroads-into-libya> (accessed:03.06.2024)

³³ UNASUR: from Magical Regionalism to Pragmatic Regionalism. *Latinoamerica 21*. <https://latinoamerica21.com/en/unasur-from-magical-regionalism-to-pragmatic-regionalism/> (accessed: 03.06.2024)

³⁴ European Union. https://european-union.europa.eu/index_en (accessed 03.06.2024)

Equally important are all the Pan-African and multi-lateral endeavours that are outside the AU but play a role in continental integration, including the corporate, professional, and civil society NGOs summarised earlier in 1.5.

To judge the successes and failures of African integration, one must first decide if the AU should be judged as a supranational organisation, as was the Pan-African vision of Nkrumah and Gadhafi, or as an inter-governmental organisation, as is its operational reality.

The UNO is almost always paralysed during crises by the veto power of each of the five permanent members of its Security Council. The AU summit, and its Peace and Security Council, are constitutionally ahead of the UNO by not granting vetos to any member. It operates by majority vote, or a two-thirds majority, and so is rarely dead-locked.

The other regional inter-governmental organisations of the Global South have tended to expand their functions to include regional parliaments or free trade zones over the past three decades, but few have gone as far as the AU.

The AU's supranational protocols and constitutive act mean that it is severely criticised for failing to live up to such standards. However, even the EU's supranational powers are incessantly challenged by some member states and nationalist politicians. If the AU is judged as an inter-governmental organisation, it has as many successes as failures.

Where problems with the AU remain protracted, this is probably rooted in the same problems occurring at the national level in member states. This author inclines to agree with Okumu and Atta-Asamoah that the AU could do better by not more resolutions and institutions but by “a collective resolve to stay the course of action until the agreed goals are achieved” [Okumu, Atta-Asamoah 2003: 386].

While the AU and its associated institutions have been unable to implement their supranational provisions, it has grown to become a significant intergovernmental organisation, surpassing most of its peers in the global south. Like BRICS+, its agency is part of the global evolution towards a multipolar world. Scholars should also not underestimate how much African integration is occurring outside AU structures, through business associations and other quangos and NGOs.

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ШЕСТЬ ДЕСЯТИЛЕТИЙ АФРИКАНСКОЙ ИНТЕГРАЦИИ: ДОСТИЖЕНИЯ И НЕУДАЧИ

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Аннотация. Панафриканская интеграция, воплощением которой является Африканский союз (АС), преемник Организации африканского единства (ОАЕ), насчитывает уже шесть десятилетий. Немного меньше региональным организациям, таким как Экономическое сообщество государств Западной Африки (ЭКОВАС), Сообщество развития Юга Африки (САДК) и Восточноафриканское сообщество (ВАС). Несмотря на столь впечатляющую многолетнюю историю, многие проблемы АС и региональных экономических сообществ Африки сохраняются и стали чуть ли не хроническими.

В основе данного исследования – анализ научной литературы, средств массовой информации, а также выводов и рекомендаций комиссий АС. Теоретической матрицей исследования послужили конструктивизм и панафриканизм.

По сравнению с аналогичными структурами в других странах «глобального Юга», Африканский союз и региональные организации оказались более успешными. Хотя АС критикуют в литературе, а Панафриканский парламент нередко подвергается насмешкам в средствах массовой информации, только Европейский союз добился большего успеха, отчасти благодаря наднациональному характеру, а также внушительному преимуществу в части ресурсов. К числу заметных успехов АС можно отнести факт утверждения им своей роли в глобальном управлении. Он координирует голосование африканских государств в Совете Безопасности ООН, а также создал прообраз дипломатического корпуса, который представляет его в крупных региональных и глобальных организациях и в двух мировых державах, США и КНР. Исследователи также должны учитывать те процессы континентального и многостороннего характера, положительно воздействующие на африканскую интеграцию, которые происходят за рамками АС, благодаря деятельности различных негосударственных структур и отраслевых объединений. Что же касается проблем АС и региональных экономических сообществ, то многие из них по сути являются проблемами правительств стран-членов этих организаций, транслированными на уровень субрегиональных и континентальных структур.

Ключевые слова: Африка, интеграция, ОАЕ, АС, региональные экономические сообщества, институциональное строительство, межправительственный уровень, наднациональный уровень

DOI: 10.31132/2412-5717-2024-67-2-24-39

Благодарности: Автор выражает признательность трем анонимным рецензентам за полезные предложения. Ответственность за все оставшиеся недостатки лежит исключительно на авторе.

Для цитирования: Готтшалк К. Шесть десятилетий африканской интеграции: достижения и неудачи. *Ученые записки Института Африки РАН*. 2024. № 2. С. 24–39. <https://doi.org/10.31132/2412-5717-2024-67-2-24-39>