



## **ANINTERGOVERNMENTALIST APPROACH TO REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN AFRICA: THE EFFICACY OF THE AFRICAN UNION (AU)**

**Dr. Sheriff Ghali Ibrahim\*, David Ogbeidi\*\* & Adams J W\*\*\***

Department of Political Science and International Relations, University of Abuja,  
Abuja-Nigeria

### **Abstract:**

*This paper focuses on the African Union (AU) and attempts to appraise the extent to which the traditional theories of regional integration explain African integration. It has two main sections: the descriptive and the theoretical. The first section traces the origin and formation of the AU, examines the rationale for regional integration, its membership, objectives, organs, as well as the successes and weaknesses of the AU. In the second section, it proceeds to probe the existence and outcome of integration in Africa by exploring the explanatory and predictive propositions of the federalist, functionalist, neo-functionalist and intergovernmentalist approach. The paper argues that although the Constitutive Act creating the AU, came closer to what could be considered a constitution-like treaty, African states are weary of transferring their sovereignty to a supranational body. It finds theoretical gaps in the applicability of federalism, functionalism, and neo-functionalism. The paper however makes the case that although there is no grand theory of integration; intergovernmentalism aptly explains the African experience of integration. The findings, taken in contexts with the poor level of integration and slow implementation pace of AU's lofty objectives, indicate that integration in Africa is best explained by the intergovernmentalist approach (including their newer versions). The paper argues that the intergovernmentalist approach, which puts the state at the epicentre of the integration process, explains why African states guard their sovereignty jealously despite their avowed profession to shed it. It accounts for the low level of intra-African trade and the elusive spillover, marked by some utopian gravitation towards a political union. As initially proposed by Stanley Hoffmann and redefined by Andrew Moravcsik, intergovernmentalism suggests that governments control the level and speed of integration. Thus, the paper concludes that since the most important decisions of the AU are taken by the member states, they will try to control the integration process according to their own interests and African states are unlikely to surrender their hard earned sovereignty for an uncertain union of African states. It is recommended, inter alia, that the AU should re-examine its realities within the inter-governmentalist approach to determine the attainability of its lofty goals and re-clarify before them before it becomes irrelevant from incapacity and delusion.*

### **Introduction:**

The African Union (AU) was established in 2002 as the successor to the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), established in 1963. Since the transition from the OAU to the AU, Africa is increasingly focusing on regional integration as a strategy for achieving sustainable socio-political and economic development (Adeniji and Agaba, 2014: 102). A consensus among its member states exist that by merging its economies and pooling its capacities, endowments and energies, the continent can overcome its daunting developmental challenges (Adeniji and Agaba, 2014: 102). Hence, the African Union is premised on the idea that a process of integration within the African continent may enable African states to coordinate and intensify cooperation for development. The Africans believe that:

*we regard our independence as meaningless unless we are able to use that freedom that goes with it to help other African people to be free and independent, to liberate the entire continent of Africa from foreign domination and ultimately to establish a Union of African States (Nkrumah, 1957: 164; Mazrui, 1993: 122; Cited in Birmingham, 1998:2)*

Particularly, the expectation is that deeper integration would allow sustained and robust political and economic development and ensure poverty alleviation, enhanced movement of goods, services, capital and labour, socio-economic policy coordination and harmonization, infrastructure development as well as the promotion of peace and security within and between the regions (Adeniji and Agaba, 2014: 102; Gabriel 2011:16 - 17). The paper has two main sections. The first section traces the origin and formation of the AU; examines the rationale for regional integration; its membership; its objectives; its organs as well as the major achievements and weaknesses/failures of the AU. In the second section, the paper attempts to appraise the extent to which the traditional theories of regional integration explain the existence and outcome of integration in Africa, while making a case for the explanatory and predictive propositions of the intergovernmentalist approach.

By using the AU to point at the deficiencies of federalism, functionalism and neofunctionalism, it will become clear as the analysis progresses that the study is situated within the framework of intergovernmentalism. Succinctly, intergovernmentalism takes member states and their governments as the principal agents driving integration and policy-making to protect their geopolitical interests and the economic concerns of their constituencies (Hoffmann 1982; Taylor 1991; Moravcsik 1991; Moravcsik 1998). The theory, initially proposed by Stanley Hoffmann and redefined by Andrew Moravcsik suggests that governments control the level and speed of integration (Rosamund, 2000). The theory emerged during the 1960's as a critique of neo-functionalism and federalist predictions that the European Community was *en route* to becoming a state in its own right. Intergovernmentalism argues that "European integration is driven by the interests and actions of nation states (Hix, 1999: 15). Before examining the major issues, it is imperative that we clarify the concept of regional integration.

### **Regional Integration: A Conceptual Clarification:**

What is regional integration? Several scholars have attempted with a fair degree of objectivity and perhaps, acceptability, various definitions of the term regional integration. David L. Sills sees integration as "a process whereby the quality of relations among autonomous social units (Kinship groups, [ethnic groups], cities, trade unions, trade associations, political parties etc.) change in such a way as to erode the autonomy of each other and make it a part of a larger aggregate" (Sills, 1986: 285). For Ernest B. Haas, regional integration is:

...the process whereby political actors in several distinct national settings are persuaded to shift their loyalties, expectations and political activities toward a new centre, whose institutions possess or demand jurisdiction over pre-existing national states. The result...is a new political community, superimposed over pre-existing ones (Hass, 1958: 16).

Elsewhere, Hass reinforces this position by introducing the element of pacific relations between integrating units. He defines regional integration as “the tendency towards the creation of larger political units, each of which self consciously eschews the use of force in relations between the participating units and groups” (Hass, 1971: 3). Thus, it is the coming together of separate units for the purpose of mutual interdependence and common benefit through peaceful means. Hass’ in his most commonly cited definitions adds another definitional element of “voluntary participation” in the integration process. In his exact words, regional integration can be defined as “the process through which national states voluntarily mingle, merge and mix with their neighbours so as to lose the factual attributes of sovereignty while acquiring new techniques for resolving conflicts among themselves (Haas, 1971:3). To De Lombaerde and Van Langenhove (2007), regional integration refers to a worldwide phenomenon of territorial systems that increases the interactions between their components and creates new forms of organization, co-existing with traditional forms of state-led organization at the national level. According to Van Ginkel and Van Langenhove, (2003:9), regional integration is the process by which states within a particular region increase their level of interaction with regard to economic, security, political, or social and cultural issues.

The common thread in these definitions is that there is a merger of separate institutions and communities within a specific geographical region leading to loss of whole or part of state sovereignty. In fact, Lindberg asserts that integration involves the shifting of expectation to a new center (Lindberg 1963: 23; Lindberg and Scheingold, 1971:3). From the foregoing, we can agree that the AU represents Africa’s effort at forming and consolidating on regional integration.

#### **The Origin of the African Union (AU): The African Integration Trajectory:**

The origin of, what is today called, the AU can be traced back to 23 November 1958 with formation of the first regional organization, Union of African States (UAS) (Howe, 1959: A4), from where it evolved. The UAS, which was open to all African states, however had a membership of only three West African states– namely, Ghana, Guinea, and Mali – as no other state joined between 1958 and 1963 when it ceased to exist (Kihss, 1966: 12). By 1963, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) was established by 31 newly independent African states in a spirit of pan-Africanism that aimed to promote economic unity, collective security (Zweifel 2006:147), with a gradualist approach to political unity (Adeniyi, 2011: 132). The charter of the OAU, which was signed on May 25, 1963, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, reflected the compromise between the radicals (Casablanca Group) and the moderates (Monrovia Group) (Adejo, 2001: 130).

At its formation, the OAU charter provided for a loose confederation or association of states whose members undertook the process of coordinating and harmonising their general policies through cooperation in the political, diplomatic, economic, communication, health, sanitation, nutritional, scientific and technological spheres as well as in defence and security. The scope of regional integration of the OAU was further enhanced by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), which was established by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations (UN) in 1958 as one of the UN’s five regional commissions. ECA’s mandate was to promote the economic and social development of its member States, foster intra-regional integration, and promote international cooperation for Africa’s development. As far back as the mid-1960s, following the birth of the OAU, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) had emerged as the champion of regional integration, proposing the division of Africa into regions for the purposes of economic development. At the end of

1973, the OAU comprised 42 states and by 1980, the expansion of the OAU meant that African leaders were gradually gravitating towards deeper integration. Thus, the Lagos Plan of 1980 (Akinsanya and Abegurin, 1985: 70 – 86) was launched as a special integration initiative by the OAU, promoted by the ECA.

The Lagos Plan of 1980 envisaged three regional arrangements aimed at the creation of separate but convergent and over-arching integration arrangements in three sub-Saharan sub-regions. While West Africa would be served by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), a Preferential Trade Area (PTA) was established in 1981 to cover the countries of East and Southern Africa, which was eventually replaced in 1993 by the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) (Akinsanya and Abegurin, 1985: 76). For Central Africa, the treaty of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) was approved in 1983. Together with the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) in North Africa, these arrangements were expected to lead to an all-African common market by the year 2025 (Mukisha and Thompson, 1995: 56). The Lagos Plan was followed up in 1991 by the Abuja Treaty, re-affirming the commitment of the OAU's Heads of State to an integrated African economy (Akinterinwa, 2005:58).

Sadly, intra-African trade remained low and Africa became a theatre of fratricidal and unending of conflicts. While the OAU had a poor record in the area of conflict resolution and management, as well as financial and logistical problems, its Coordinating Committee for the Liberation of Africa however succeeded in forging a consensus in support of liberation struggle and the fight against apartheid (Thompson, 1969: 41-47). In the dying years of the 1990s, most African states numbering about 55 states (including Western Sahara) had achieved independence and by 1994, the apartheid regime in South Africa had been dismantled. At this point, African leaders believed that the visions of the former Ghanaian President, Kwame Nkrumah, for the liberation of the continent from colonialism and white minority rule and had been accomplished by the OAU and it was time for the establishment of a more integrated union of African states. Besides, the OAU appeared moribund after the liberations were achieved but underdevelopment, poverty, diseases and conflicts persisted in the continent. Furthermore, the need to rebrand the organisation, which had been dubbed the dictators club by international media, gave vent to the strident calls for an African Renaissance in the late 1990s (Danso, 1993: 101-118).

Consequently, on September 9, 1999, the Fourth Extraordinary Session of OAU Heads of State and Government under the leadership of President Muammar Al-Gaddafi adopted the resolution for the establishment of the African Union in Sirte, Libya (Browne, 2005: 2). The Sirte Declaration calling for the establishment of the AU was followed by the Lome Summit of 2000, which adopted the Constitutive Act of the African Union as well as the Lusaka Summit of 2001, which adopted the implementation plan of the AU (Adejo, 2001:133). The Constitutive Act was ratified on 28 April 2001 by 36 of the 53 African States (2/3 majority) in Abuja (Ogbu, 2015: 32) and was formally launched by its first president, Thabo Mbeki on July 9, 2002, in Durban, South Africa.

#### **The AU: Rationale for Integration:**

Following the birth of the AU in 2002, a curious mind would want to know why African states opted for regional integration under that continental body. One response that readily comes to mind is captured in the views of Rosamund (2000: 140), who points out that, "governments seek integration as a way of solving problems that they have in common." This is very true for the African continent. African states rose in

response to the growing need for cooperation in resolving the myriads of socio-economic problems such as regional conflicts, bad governance, poverty, illiteracy and diseases that bedevilled Africa by the late 1990s. A deeper form of integration was perceived to be the route to control, manage and prevent regional conflict and to deal with non-traditional security threats (Okolo, 1985) as the OAU's strategy of "non-intervention" and "peaceful settlements of disputes" had failed (Murray, 2004:118). Furthermore, the AU was formed in hopes of further improving the objectives to secure Africa's democracy, human rights, sustainable economy. Ultimately, it was believed that automaticity of functional spill over would drive economic integration towards political integration. Currently, the AU has eight (8) Regional Economic Communities (RECs) (AU, 2015), namely:

- 1) The Community of Sahel Saharan States (CEN – SAD)
- 2) The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)
- 3) The East African Community (EAC)
- 4) The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)
- 5) The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)
- 6) The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)
- 7) The Southern Africa Development Community (SADC)
- 8) The Arab Maghreb Union (UMA)

These sub-regional economic blocs would be the basis for gradual economic integration of the entire continent, driven by free and open market and the expansion of intra-African trade.

Another factor that triggered the birth of the AU is the pursuit of Pan – Africanist aspirations. The AU project (just like its predecessor, the OAU) is a collective ambition of African states that is rooted in the notion of Pan-Africanism (Maluwa, 2003: 161). Pan-Africanism, which may be racial-universal or Afro-continental, refers to the feeling of solidarity and shared ancestry among Africans. The coming together of Africans within and outside Africa is key to the formation of the AU. Under the AU, Diasporan Africans are expected to play a more visible role by contributing to the development of the continent. However, the major challenge that Pan-Africanism has encountered in the course of its history has been how to institutionalize the idea of Pan-Africanism (Walter, 1986:340). African states have always interpreted Pan-Africanism in ways that suit their national interest. This explains why the tripartite ideological divide emerged (Cervenka, 1977:1-3) during the formative years of the OAU.

The need for a common defense policy to rid Africa of conflicts has been a veritable rationale for African integration. Through the Peace and Security Council (PSC), we observe that the AU seeks the creation of the African Standby Force (ASF) made up of strictly African soldiers whose responsibility, among others, is to intervene in member states where crimes against humanity. With 53 African states as members of the AU, the added features of intervention, independence, checks and balances, and monitoring make the AU potentially a "more effective, democratic, and autonomous organization" (Zweifel 2006:148).

The Constitutive Act empowers states to intervene where countries fail to protect their citizens from internal conflicts. Specifically, Article 4(h) of the Constitutive Act provides "the right of the Union to intervene in a Member State pursuant to a decision of the Assembly in respect of grave circumstances, namely war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity." It was believed that by joining forces, in line with the principles of collective security, crises would be better managed in Africa.

Unlike the Charter of the OAU, it was envisaged that the aforementioned provisions of the Constitutive Act is not to be impeded by excuses of sovereignty, which were used to avoid responsibility and action in past instances where intervention would have saved millions of lives.

In addition, the concern that Africa is not left behind in the wave of integration propelled African leaders to move decidedly towards the formation of the AU. Since the 1990s, regional integration processes have gained momentum in most regions of the world, and African leaders thought it was inevitable for Africa to respond to the global trend. As graphically captured in the words of Former Nigeria President, Olusegun Obasanjo (2001:64):

“...the developed countries of Europe, North America, Latin America and the Asia-pacific regions are moving steadily towards political and economic integration. The European Union is expanding and the North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA) has, at a ... summit in Canada, decided to establish a free Trade Area of the Americas. The association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Asia- Pacific Economic Forum, are both examples of the growing global trend towards economic regionalism, Africa cannot afford to be left behind.”

The reasons for integration cannot be complete without mentioning that the African Union evolved mainly as a product of interests from regional powers such as Nigeria, South Africa, and Libya etc. This leads us to the question: who are the integrating partners in the AU project?

**Membership of the AU:**

With the notable exception of Morocco, which unilaterally withdrew its membership on the grounds that Western Sahara was admitted as a state member of the African Union (AU), all African States are members of the AU. Currently, the AU is made up of fifty – four (54) African states, which are tabulated below.

Algeria	Chad	Gabon	Libya	Nigeria	South Sudan
Angola	Comoros	Gambia	Madagascar	Rwanda	Sudan
Benin	Democratic Republic of Congo	Ghana	Malawi	Sahrawi Arab Democratic	Swaziland
Botswana	Congo Brazzaville	Guinea	Mali	Sao Tome & Principe	Tanzania
Burkina Faso	Djibouti	Guinea-Bissau	Mauritania	Senegal	Togo
Burundi	Egypt	Ivory Coast	Mauritius	Seychelles	Tunisia
Cape Verde	Equatorial Guinea	Kenya	Mozambique	Sierra Leone	Uganda
Cameroon	Eritrea	Lesotho	Namibia	Somalia	Zambia
Central African Republic	Ethiopia	Liberia	Niger	South Africa	Zimbabwe

Source: Wikipedia. 2015

It is interesting to note that in 2012, the AU granted Haiti a Member Observer status, after which it formally applied for associate membership. Other Member Observer states include, Latvia, Palestine, Kazakhstan, Serbia and Turkey while the Central African Republic has been suspended due to the violent overthrow of President Francois Bozize by the Seleka rebel coalition in 2012 (Wikipedia, 2015).

**Objectives of the AU:**

The rationale for integration, as earlier discussed, and aspirations of the founding fathers of the AU are well reflected in the organization's stated objectives. Omoiya (2005: 389 – 390) notes that the objectives of the AU as contained in Article three (3) of Constitutive Act are as follows:

- 1) Achieve greater unity and solidarity between the African countries and the peoples of Africa;
- 2) Defend the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of its Member States;
- 3) Accelerate the political and socio-economic integration of the continent;
- 4) Promote and defend African common positions on issues of interest to the continent and its peoples;
- 5) Encourage international cooperation, taking due account of the Charter of the United Nations and the Declaration of Human Rights;
- 6) Promote peace, security and stability in the continent;
- 7) Promote democratic principles and institutions, popular participation and good governance;
- 8) Promote and protect human peoples' rights in accordance with the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and other relevant human rights instruments;
- 9) Establish the necessary conditions, which enable the continent to play its rightful role in the global economy and in international negotiations;
- 10) Promote sustainable development at the economic, social and cultural levels as well as the integration of the African economies;
- 11) Promote cooperation in all fields of human activities to raise the living standards of African peoples;
- 12) Coordinate and harmonize the policies between the existing and future Regional Economic Communities for the gradual attainment of the objectives of the Union;
- 13) Advance the development of the continent by promoting research in all fields, in particular in science and technology; and
- 14) Work with relevant international partners in the eradication of preventable diseases and the promotion of good health on the continent.

**Organs of the AU:**

Professor Solomon Ogbu in his critical paper, "*The African Union (AU): Matters Arising*," examined the principal organs of the AU (Ogbu, 2015: 35 - 37). Relying on his analysis, the nine (9) organs of the AU, as provided for in Article 5 of the Constitutive Act are:

- 1) The Assembly of the Union;
- 2) The Executive Council;
- 3) The Pan-African Parliament;
- 4) The African Court of Justice;
- 5) The AU Commission;
- 6) The Permanent Representatives Committee;
- 7) The Specialized Technical Committee;
- 8) The Economic, Social and Cultural Council; and
- 9) The Financial Institutions

**The Assembly of the Union:**

The Assembly of the Union is the supreme organ of the Union as all other organs of the Union are bound by the decisions of the Assembly. It is composed of the Heads of States and Government or their duly accredited representatives (Ogbu, 2015: 36). It meets biannually or at least once a year. Two-thirds (2/3) of the total membership of the Union forms a quorum of any of its meetings, including extra-ordinary meetings. On non-procedural matters, decisions are taken by consensus or, failing which by a two-thirds majority of the member states of the Union (Ogbu, 2015: 36). A simple majority decides all procedural matters.

The Chairperson of the AU rotates among the five (5) regions of the AU – North Africa, Southern Africa, East Africa, West Africa and Central Africa – once every year. With the exception of Nigeria's former president Olusegun Obasanjo, who chaired the Assembly of the Union for two years (between 6 July 2004 to 24 January 2006), the tenure of all other chairpersons of the Assembly have elapsed after a year. The current Chairman is Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, whose tenure will end on January 29 2016 (Wikipedia, 2015).

**The Executive Council:**

The Executive Council is composed of ministers designated by the government of member states. It decides on matters such as foreign trade, social security, food, agriculture and communications. It is accountable to the Assembly, and prepares material for the Assembly to discuss and approve. Mr. Shawn Makuyana of Zimbabwe is the current chairperson of the Executive Council (Wikipedia, 2015).

**The Pan-African Parliament:**

The Pan-African Parliament (PAP) is the legislative organ of the AU. It currently has 230 Members and its permanent seat is in Midrand, Johannesburg, South Africa (AU, 2015). The ultimate aim PAP is to evolve into an institution with full legislative powers, Members are elected by universal adult suffrage.

**The African Court of Justice:**

Article provides for a judiciary to rule on disputes over interpretation of AU treaties. A protocol to set up the Court of Justice was adopted in 2003 and entered into force in 2009 (Wikipedia, 2015).

**The AU Commission:**

Also known as the AU Authority, the AU Commission is the Secretariat of the AU. It is composed of ten (10) commissioners and supporting staff and headquartered in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. It is responsible for the administration and co-ordination of the AU's activities and meetings (Wikipedia, 2015).

**The Permanent Representatives Committee:**

The Permanent Representatives' Committee consists of nominated representatives of member states. The Committee prepares the work for the Executive Council (Wikipedia, 2015).

**The Specialized Technical Committee:**

The Specialized Technical Committee is made up of African ministers to advise the Assembly on rural economy and agricultural matters; monetary and financial matters; trade, customs and immigration; industry, science and technology; energy, natural resources and environment; transport, communications and tourism; health, labour and social affairs; education, culture, and human resources. However, they have never been set up (Wikipedia, 2015).



### **The Economic, Social and Cultural Council:**

This is an advisory organ composed of professionals and civic representatives similar to the European Economic and Social Committee (Wikipedia, 2015).

### **The Financial Institutions:**

The AU aims at achieving a single currency, *the Afro*, as well as harmonized monetary policies that will be managed through its financial institutions. The financial institutions, which are three (3) namely, African Central Bank, Abuja, Nigeria; African Investment Bank, Tripoli, Libya; and African Monetary Fund, Yaoundé, Cameroon are yet to be established (Wikipedia, 2015).

Finally, it is also instructive to note that the Peace and Security Council, composed of fifteen (15) members which was proposed at the Lusaka Summit in 2001, was established in 2004 under a protocol to the Constitutive Act in 2002. Its role is to harmonise defence policies for the purpose of conflict prevention and management in Africa.

### **Major Achievements of the AU:**

The major achievements of the AU since its formation in 2002 include:

- 1) Through the activities of the AU Peace and Security Council, the number of civil wars in Africa has decreased since the creation of the AU from eight (8) in 2002 to four (4) in 2012 (Paterson, 2012: 3). This has further reduced as Northern Mali conflict has also been recently resolved with the signing of a peace accord in 2015 with the Azawad rebels. AU Peace-keeping operations have been deployed to Burundi and Somalia
- 2) The AU has successfully discouraged unconstitutional changes of government in Africa such that military intervention in Africa politics has become anachronistic. Between 2003 and April 2013, 11 coups d'état, took place in Africa. The AU suspended Mauritania, Guinea, Niger, Madagascar, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Guinea-Bissau, and CAR from its membership between 2008 and 2013 (Paterson, 2012: 3). Today, all these countries but Central African Republic have returned to democracy.

### **Major Challenges of the AU**

Since the formation of the AU in 2002, the organisation has recorded a number of challenges too. These include:

- 1) The pace of implementation of AU programmes such as the NEPAD has been to say the least, lethargic. Others such as the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) and the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) were both established in 2003 in support of NEPAD's work. By January 2013, 33 countries had joined the APRM, which sets and investigates standards of governance. The voluntary mechanism has sought to address democratic deficits and to oversee important tax and electoral reforms – 17 countries have undertaken its review process. However, compliance with the mechanism has been hampered by the nonbinding nature of its findings and capacity constraints at the national level (Paterson, 2012: 2- 3).
- 2) Low rates of intra-African trade continue to be exacerbated by poor infrastructure, high tariffs, unwieldy customs procedures, and a lack of diversity in production (Paterson, 2012: 3).
- 3) The AU has been criticised for only sanctioning military coups and not extensions to presidential term limits. It is paradoxical that the AU, which seeks to promote democratic ideals, has as its symbolic head Robert Mugabe who has been in power in Zimbabwe since 1980.

- 4) The AU inherited the problem of states such as funding through the annual subvention and the unwillingness to shed their sovereignty. Since the implementation of the AU policies relies on the voluntary compliance of states, lack of cooperation by states will continue to undermine the AU.

**The AU: A Theoretical Appraisal:**

In this section, attempt to attach theoretical rigour to the evolution and outcome of integration in Africa is the main concern. Here we shall examine the theories of federalism, functionalism, neo-functionalism and intergovernmentalism, while using them to appraise the AU.

**Federalism:**

Federalism, as an approach to integration, refers to the tendency by states to create a supranational entity to which they relinquish their sovereignty – in parts or in whole – for collective gains. It refers to the degree of power sharing between a supranational entity and states within a region. Such federal set-ups are distinct from those within the state, for instance Nigeria or the US. According Elazar (1993: 190), “federalism should be understood both in its narrower sense as intergovernmental relations and in its larger sense as the combination of self-rule and shared rule through constitutionalized power sharing in a noncentralized basis.”

The notion of a politically united, federal European structure of government emerged through the writings and activities of the federalist scholars, chief among them Altiero Spinelli. Others include Burgess, D.J. Elazar, William Riker and K.C. Wheare etc. Thus the creation of political the European Defence Community (EDC) and the European Political Community (EPC) in the post-war period were pointers that Europe was drifting into power sharing between supranational entities and the states. In fact, the institutional set-up created in the Treaty of Rome in 1958 was a reflection of federal aspirations by Community leaders (Koslowski, 1999).

**Key Theoretical Propositions:**

The prescriptions of Federalism can be summarized as follows:

- 1) Federalism proceeds with the basic assumption that regional integration derives from the need for a regional cohesion anchored on unity in diversity rather than the existence of different competing states (Spinelli, 1972: 68; Burgess, 2009: 26).
- 2) The states have lost their proper rights since they cannot guarantee the political and economic safety of their citizens (Spinelli, 1972: 68).
- 3) The federalists place emphasis on the ideal of continental unity as a political goal (Loughlin: 1996: 142)
- 4) The states could exercise local autonomy in appropriate fields of policy within its territory (Pentland, 1975: 12; Riker, 1964, 11).

Perhaps, many analysts of the pan-Africanism persuasion may naively argue that the formation of the AU was to form the United States of Africa or some sort of a supranational entity as envisaged Nkrumah and later championed by Gadhafi. Of course, there are indicators or the existence of certain supranational characteristics of the AU, which suggest that the AU is, or in the near future may emerge as, the central government of Africa. They include:

- a. The Constitutive Act (a constitution with more political, economic and legal power than its predecessor, which shifts power away from the states to an international centre);

- b. The Assembly of Heads of States or Government as the supreme organ of the Union;
- c. The Pan-African Parliament (PAP) (the legislative arm of the AU will make binding laws for all of Africa, and the institution's members are elected by universal adult suffrage);
- d. African Court of Justice (ACJ); and
- e. The African Standby Force.

This is suggestive of "sovereignty-sharing" between the supranational entity called the AU and African states. The question that is paramount in the analysis is: despite the federalists' guarantee of the autonomy of each government in its own sphere, why is that the African states are yet to surrender their sovereignty to a central authority (in this case, the AU)? In fact, from its time as the OAU, African states have stressed the need for respect of state sovereignty and this has dovetailed into the post-AU era, thereby impeding the organization's federal authority in many significant respects (Olivier and Olivier, 2004: 43). Many are doubtful that the African ruling elites will voluntarily commit political class "suicide" by surrendering their quasi-sovereign states for a continental union governmental project (Aleme 2011:62).

The reality as shown in the discussions of the successes and failures of the AU in the preceding section is that – on the balance of analysis –the pace of integration has been rather very slow. Some of the organs such as the Pan-African Parliament, the Financial Institutions *inter alia* are yet to take off. Gabriel (2011:41) correctly identifies the reason for lack of integration in Africa by noting that in addition to the issue of monocultural economies between African countries there is the saliency of African leaders' refusal to cede sovereignty to a supranational institution. It clearly vitiates the theory of federalism because the representatives of African states that assembled in Sirte in 1999 could not have converged to create a supranational entity to which they relinquish their sovereignty.

#### **Functionalism:**

Functionalism emerged in the World War II years, with the writings of David Mitrany, who published, *"A Working Peace System: An Argument for the Functional Development of International Organizations"* in 1943 (Cited in Dinan, 2000: 245). He argued that the basic rationale for the existence of any community is welfare and security; and once a moderate sufficiency of what people want and ought to have is given them; they will keep the peace (Mitrany, 1975: 13). He therefore emphasized the commencement of integration focusing on social and economic issues such as trade, communication, health, sanitation, nutritional, scientific and technological spheres. By this proposition, the functionalists argue that a peaceful international society is more likely to emerge through doing things together in workshop and market place rather than by signing pacts in chancelleries (Mitrany, 1966:25). Thus, sovereignty should be transferred to the new authority, which performs functional tasks. In this way, all the units of the integration arrangement gain and they are therefore encouraged to display commitment (Aworawo, 2009: 26). Thus, incentives for benefits from cooperation outweigh the incentives to act alone (Aworawo, 2009: 26). As Ben Rosamond (2000: 33) has pointed out, the functionalists see states as an impediment to the functional organization of human activity. Hence:

To regard the state as a given, was to impose an unnecessary inflexibility when it came to thinking about how the requirements of human beings could best be

served. Thus, it followed that some needs would be best served by ignoring the conventions of national territories.

Clearly, the functionalists challenges the state-centric worldview, and is concerned with whether nation-states are the optimal form (most functional) of an organization to fulfill human needs. Thus, state-like entities such as supranational bodies should not drive the integration process.

### **Key Theoretical Propositions:**

The prescriptions of functionalism can be summarized as follows:

- 1) Classical functionalism proceeds with the basic assumption that regional integration ought to evolve gradually from disparate technical, social and economic spheres rather than political spheres because “form” follows “functions”(Dinan, 2000: 245). Hence, there should be no deliberate act to create a supranational entity to drive integration.
- 2) International organization arranged according to the requirements of the task could increase welfare rewards to individuals beyond the level obtainable within the state; that the rewards would be greater if the organization worked...from small beginnings... the functional approach could eventually enmesh national governments in dense network of interlocking cooperative ventures(Aworawo, 2009: 26).
- 3) The major result of functional integration is that man is weaned away from his loyalty to the state by the experience of fruitful international cooperation in technical and functional areas.

One scholar attributed the issue of non-integration in Africa to the economic conditions of African states, and the abundance of non-functional regional bodies (Gabriel 2011:45 - 48). This view appears to argue that functional regional bodies are key to African economic integration. The chief architect of functionalism, David Mitrany (1966:27), averred that authority should be linked to a specific activity so that the traditional link between authority and a definite territory can be broken. Functionalism belongs to the theoretical class of Wilsonian idealism, collectively called utopianism. The state remains the key actor in African international relations and will not deliberately transfer sovereignty to functional groups, if it is not in its interest. Hence, a more neo-liberal supranational entity, such as the OAU, and AU have always emerged to integrate the continent as their neofunctionalist cousins argued.

In addition, the functionalist argument that international economic and social cooperation is a prerequisite to the ultimate solution of political conflicts and the elimination of war seems to be contradicted by the existence of about nine (9) ‘functional’ regional groupings in Africa. In the West African-sub region, for instance, which has begun a process in economic integration since 1975, warfare and all sorts of fratricidal internecine conflicts have emerged within states and often between states.

### **Neofunctionalism:**

The prefix, “*neo*” means “a revival of” or “a new version” of an old or classical phenomenon. It follows therefore, that neo-functionalism is a revival or refining of (or new version of) functionalism as espoused by David Mitrany. Thus, Ernst Haas, the founder of neo-functionalism, took as his starting-point a criticism of David Mitrany’s functionalism from the 1940s (Dosenrode, 2010: 21). Neofunctionalism later developed in the 1950s and 1960s by Ernst B. Haas and Leon Lindberg as a response to the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1951 and the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1957. While Mitrany’s functionalism challenges the

state-centric worldview, focusing more on functions rather than forms, the neofunctionalist seeing the utopian nature of classical functionalism, reinstated political agency into the integration process (Rosamond, 2000: 55).

Thus, neo-functionalism focus more on the interdependence of, and the increasing demand for, cooperation between states to explain regionalism (Hurrell, 1995: 331 - 358). The most innovative aspects of the neofunctionalist theory is the spill-over effect, which Haas defined as a situation where the creation and deepening of integration in one economic sector would create pressures for further economic integration in other sectors of the economy (Haas 1968, 283-317). The first problem with this definition as Arne Niemann has correctly argued is the possibility to discern different logics of spill-over (Niemann, 2006). The open-ended nature and infinite spiraling of spill-over into some other areas is best captured in the views of Leon Lindberg:

Spill-over refers to 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 (Lindberg, 1963: 10).

#### **Key Theoretical Propositions:**

The key propositions of neofunctionalism are as follows:

- 1) Neofunctionalism proceeds with the basic assumption that the integration process is as political, as it is functional or technocratic (Dosenrode, 2010: 22). Hence, states should integrate modestly in areas of "low politics" which are at the same time "strategic economic sectors" (Rosamond, 2000: 51-52; Hass, 1958).
- 2) States should therefore create a supranational body to drive integration and supervise the integration projects for common interest rather than the interest of individual member states (Dosenrode, 2010: 22; Rosamond, 2000: 51).
- 3) States are not exclusive actors and may not longer be the predominant actors in the regional/international system (Dosenrode, 2010: 24)
- 4) A central concept of neofunctionalism is 'spill-over.' It means that the integration of particular economic sectors across states will create functional pressures for the integration of related economic sectors. The consequence is the gradual entangling of national economies.
- 5) Increased interdependence between member-states in one functional or issue area will lead to interdependence in other issue areas. Eventually, their citizens will begin shifting more and more of their expectations to the supranational entity and satisfying them will increase the likelihood that economic-social integration will 'spill-over' into political integration" (Dosenrode, 2010: 23; Rosamond, 2000: 51-52.)

The fact remains that in Africa, neofunctionalism theories do not empirically explain the growing role of the states, their overprotection of their sovereignty and territoriality despite the desire to forge a continental union. In addition, the market integration model (i.e. the African Common Market), which it relies heavily on anticipates that the integration process would follow a linear route from a free trade area to a political union, as an idea, is dead on arrival (DOA) because the continent's share of intra-regional trade has historically remained low. In the words of John Ravenhill (1980):

Benefits from the creation of free trade areas arise only when tariffs have been a major impediment to inter-territorial trade. Among most LDCs, and in Africa in particular, this is rarely the case. The problem is not so much a matter of tariff barriers but of the inability of states to produce the goods, which satisfy the import needs of their neighbours (Cited in Østergaard, 1993: 33).

Crucially too, since popular participation in the AU elections is pending, African leaders are not willing to limit their national sovereignty in favour of regional interests (Østergaard, 1993: 35-39). Furthermore, the former French colonies, since their independence, have maintained their monetary union with France. Only Guinea and Mauritania left the CFA franc currency while Mali left temporarily. They also trade and cooperate more with France to derive greater benefits than with the rest of Africa. Thus, they are more extra-continentially integrated.

An assessment of the relevant literature reveals that of the afore-discussed integration theories, none aptly captures the essence of African integration; understandably due to their uniquely Eurocentric origins. Unlike the European Union that has undergone series of historical processes of integration from the European Coal and Steel Community (1951) through the European Economic Community (1958) and then European Community (1993) up to its present form, African integration has remained a top –to – bottom approach or what one may call integration from above. Thus, while through bottom–to– top approach, the European continent has been able to develop a single market, relaxation of passport control within the Schengen Area and generally experienced the so-called “spillover” effects via enactment of common foreign and security policies, “spillover” is largely an elusive phenomenon in African integration. Even the ECOMOG experiment can be regarded as Nigeria’s interventionism since spillover does not explain growing weight of Nigeria within ECOMOG.

#### **Intergovernmentalism:**

Intergovernmentalism emerged with the propositions of Stanley Hoffmann, who argues that the transnational logic of integration had not replaced nation states and national interests (1964: 94-95). The theory is influenced by neo-realism, which is a classical international relations theory. Neo-realism rests on realist thinking that international politics is about the interaction of self-interested actors in an anarchic environment without an over-arching authority. According to Kenneth Waltz (cited in Rosamond, 2000:132), intergovernmentalism arises from an international system characterized by anarchy, composed of units that are formally and functionally equal. Thus, international organizations are forums for the continuation of power politics. The key proponents of neorealism/intergovernmentalism are Stanley Hoffmann, Andrew Moravcsik, Kenneth Waltz, John Mearsheimer, etc.

#### **Key Theoretical Propositions:**

As captured by Rosamond (2000), the key propositions of intergovernmentalism are as follows:

- 1) Intergovernmentalism proceeds with the basic assumption that power in international organizations is possessed by the member-states and decisions are made by unanimity. Hence, any increase in power at supranational level results from a direct decision by governments.
- 2) It is the integration of unequal partners and its benefits are polarized.

- 3) The theory rejects the concept of 'spill over' effect that neo-functionalism proposes. Thus, integration, driven by states is based on their interests as well as the domestic political and economic issues of the day.
- 4) It also rejects the idea that supranational organizations are on an equal level or higher (in terms of political influence) as states.

In applying intergovernmentalism to the African integration process, it is evident that in addition to the former Libyan leader, Col. Muammar Gaddafi, "the prime movers for the reform of the OAU into the AU were President Thabo Mbeki of South African and Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria" (Biney, 2008: 147). Thus, the AU (like its predecessor the OAU) was birthed by strong national leaders, seeking benefits through integration or even unification, while hiding under the ideology of Pan-Africanism.

We see clearly that the processes that led to the formation of the AU had in the first place been initiated by states and it was unlikely that they would abandon their lead. This view is supported by the fact that neo-realists accept that within the anarchic international system there is potential for order and international co-operation as a means of state survival and that the AU as an institution can reduce anarchy. This means that despite the formation of integration institutions, African states will continue to steer the process of integration in the direction of their national interests. Chief among these interests being their national survival and safeguarding of their sovereignty. There is even doubt in some quarters that on account of this, the AU will not "significantly enhance the project of uniting Africa or strengthen the capacity of states to respond to peace and security issues on the continent" (Francis, 2005:30).

There are indications that much of the OAU's failure was due to its policy of non-interference in states' internal affairs, which weakened its ability to prevent and manage conflicts, especially civil wars. According to Abdalla Bujra (2002: 1), the OAU struggled to enforce its decisions and its lack of an army made it difficult to intervene in civil wars and countries struggling with colonialism. It however appears that the policy of non-interference in the affairs of Member States, which restricted the OAU in achieving its goals, have been addressed by the AU Constitutive Act. Specifically, Article 4(h) of the Constitutive Act provides for "the right of the Union to intervene in a Member State pursuant to a decision of the Assembly in respect of grave circumstances, namely war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity." Would African states allow for interference in their internal affairs, even where the state has failed to provide security for its people? For instance, whereas xenophobia was antithetical to African integration, the South African government failed to protect the human rights of other Africans in its territory in a spike of recurrent xenophobic attacks, which claimed the lives of several immigrants in April 2015. Rather than activate the provisions of the Article 4 (h) of the Constitutive Act to nip the violent crime against humanity in the bud, African states helplessly watched on and at best quietly repatriated the citizens.

Even within the sub-regions, states integrate in their best interest by forming a multiplicity of regional groupings where member states are equally members. For instance, in 1989, Mauritania became a founding member of the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) and more recently, it withdrew from ECOWAS when its interest was no longer served in West African integration. This has tended to slow the progress of integration in that sub-region. Intergovernmentalism also explains why Morocco unilaterally withdrew its membership of the AU when the continental body took decisions that were antithetical to its national interest by recognizing the disputatious Sahrawi Arab Democratic as an independent state.

**Conclusion:**

So far, we have examined the origin and formation of the AU, rationale for regional integration, its membership, objectives, organs as well as AU's major achievements and weaknesses/failures since 2002. Furthermore, attempt has been made to explain the processes and outcome of integration in Africa relying on the traditional integration theories, essentially probing the extent to which it correctly explains the evolution and inner workings of the AU. On the balance of analysis, we find that the AU has achieved more drawbacks than successes. Furthermore, we find that the reasons for its challenges are rooted in the obscurity of clear explanatory pathway that will enable it understand the limits of integration in Africa. It finds theoretical gaps in the applicability of federalism, functionalism, and neofunctionalism. The paper however makes the case that although there is no grand theory of integration; intergovernmentalism aptly explains the African experience of integration. The findings corroborate the views of Rosamund (2000: 139) that intergovernmentalism, as a theory of integration argues that power in international organizations is possessed by the member-states and decisions are made by unanimity.

The paper also finds that although the Constitutive Act creating the AU, came closer to what could be considered a constitution-like treaty, African states are weary of transferring their sovereignty to a supranational body. It is therefore argued that it is utopian to believe that African states will cede their sovereignty to a supranational body as the federalists, for instance, have argued. The states (in so far as their interests will be best served by such cooperation) may be willing to delegate power to such the AU. Intergovernmentalist therefore suggests that whilst sovereignty resides with individual member states within the AU, it may be in the states' interests to pool their sovereignty and delegate certain powers to regional institutions.

The AU is an intergovernmental institution pursuing their national interests, within the integration frame. National interest, which is the main driving force behind integration, is apparently cloaked in Pan-Africanism. We can therefore say that African integration is attributed to the role of national leaders seeking gains through integration. Since the most important decisions of the AU are taken by the member states, they will try to control the integration process according to their own interests and African states are unlikely to surrender their hard-earned sovereignty for an uncertain union of African states.

**Recommendations:**

From the discussions so far, the paper makes the following recommendations:

- 1) The AU should re-examine its realities within the intergovernmentalist approach to determine the attainability of its lofty goals and re-clarify before them before it becomes irrelevant from incapacity and delusion.
- 2) The AU should foster exchange programmes among students, academics and policy makers with a view to promoting African integration and cross-fertilization of ideas on solutions to the problems of the AU.
- 3) The AU should adopt measures such as sanctions to discourage unending presidential term limits in Africa.
- 4) The AU, in furtherance of good governance should adopt the Mo Ibrahim indices as a standard for measuring good governance in African states and publish its annual rankings.



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