

Abstract:

Conflict in Africa poses a major challenge to African Union's efforts to ensure regional peace, socio-economic prosperity and human rights for its entire people. To a very large extent, political power, ethnic supremacy, religious intolerance and resource acquisition have been the drivers of conflicts as opposed to more traditional causes of conflicts, such as territorial disputes, secessionist struggles and irredentism, which were more prevalent during the Cold War. The AU's conflict management strategies have not fully succeeded in mitigating these conflicts in the continent. This research is a descriptive analysis of the OAU/AU in conflict resolution in Africa and in particular its role in the Darfur conflict. During the Cold War, the OAU did not have any institutionalized forum to solve conflicts between member states and mainly relied on ad hoc mediation committees. The study shows that the continental body, except for its successes in Africa's decolonization and anti-apartheid struggles, was ill-oriented to resolve conflicts due to its primary mandate which was to protect state independence by adhering to the policy of sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs of member states. In the post Cold War period, Africa's conflict became more protracted, vicious and mainly intra-state. The OAU/AU had to strategize its-conflict resolution mechanism to keep with the changing conflict dynamism and challenges of the post Cold War world. The adoption of peacekeeping operations as a conflict resolution strategy by the continental body had its challenges especially in a multi-functional peace mission scenario, in countries such as ORC and Darfur. The study argues that whereas extra-military issues are important in determining the outcome of peacekeeping missions, intra-military factors equally plays an important role. The study seeks to identify intra-military weaknesses inherent in African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) that contributed to its failure to stabilize the security situation in Darfur. This study asserts that Darfur conflict was diverse and complex, and was therefore not within AMIS operational capability to successfully bring peace to the region. AMIS faced major obstacles, arising mainly from a weak mandate and other intra-military factors, which have been examined in detail in this study.