

ABSTRACT

This study critically assesses the effectiveness of the quest for Pan-Africanism by examining the transformation from the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to the African Union (AU). It reviews the objectives as well challenges faced by the continental body during the institutionalization of Pan-Africanism with the intent to explore and critically analyze its continental effort towards a common goal; that of unity in progressive development among African countries. In so doing, it invokes the importance of unification as a key pathway to the achievement of greater prospects that would ultimately steer the continent towards prosperity. The transformative stages are explained using a two dimensional theoretical approach; the realist theory was applied to delineate the events preceding the failure of the OAU that was attributed to inherent weaknesses in the institution, specifically the sovereignty principle and states selfseeking interests that became a barrier to the African unification dream. In an attempt to revamp the defunct OAU and address the reasons that led to its failure, African leaders across the continent adopted a structurally defined approach in line with the constructivism theory that lay emphasis on the importance of dedicated structures, albeit heavily borrowed from the European Union (EU) model, to guide the functionality of a continental body, the result of which was the creation of the AU to better articulate and steer forth the African unity dream. The selected methodology for the study involved the use of quantitative and qualitative techniques as well as review of relevant documentation and literature on the subject area. The study addressed emerging issues, including the relevance of Pan-Africanist debates within the context of the twenty-first century quest for Pan-Africanism, the pre-requisite conditions for the unification of the continent and highlighted key findings including financial constraints, challenges faced by the regional economic communities (RECs) in strengthening the regional integration processes in the continent and neo-colonial tendencies that have continued to negatively affect realization of the unity dream for Africa. Based on this premise, the study recommends key remedial actions including the adoption of stronger policies and frameworks as well as the much needed political will from African leaders that would impact future debates revolving around the Pan-African agenda.