

The costs of the porous nature of these borders include their use as major hot-spots for conflict, where they act as warehouses for illicit arms and safe havens for armed rebels. Additionally, they are also the major source of election disputes as they create an avenue to question the nationality of individuals with regards to their voting rights and eligibility to contest elections. For instance, the recent political stalemate that engulfed Côte d'Ivoire relates to issues concerning cross-border nationality. A detailed cost-benefit analysis may show the costs emanating from the haphazard nature of border lines would far outweigh the benefits especially as the businesses or revenue accruing from cross-border transactions are shrouded in corrupt practices, as indicated by the author.

Another relevant point raised by the author was defragmentation and connectivity through the building of regional hard and soft infrastructures. This is relevant considering that the main revised objectives of the Lagos Plan of Action and NEPAD are to promote economic development by boosting regional trade and investment. The book documents a number of successful regional projects and cross-border initiatives especially in intra-regional services in the banking and telecommunication sectors within various RECs, although most of the RECs have not graduated from FTA status to a higher level of integration. For instance, African regional blocs such as ECOWAS and SADC have developed major inter-regional institutions and inter-sectoral projects and these regional blocs are making significant headway in promoting intra-regional trade and investment.

Thus, the evaluation of Africa's regional blocs requires a multi-dimensional or more holistic approach. The assessments should not be limited only to how the RECs meet their linear progression plans (from FTA to EMU) or how they fully or partially implement the EU style of regionalism. This is important as it is also not sufficient to rely on intra-regional trade as a yardstick to measure the effectiveness of the RECs as this may not reflect the true statistics in the case of Africa, considering the high incidence of unofficial trade not captured in the official bilateral trade statistics.

Overall, the book is a one-stop source for students and policymakers on regionalism on the continent, considering its use of both historical and current information. However, a chapter on specific challenges that the RECs face and some possible suggested recommendations on how to deepen and strengthen regionalism would have made the book more complete and also more useful for practitioners and policymakers in the region.

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**The African Union: The First Ten Years** by OMAR ALIEU TOURAY  
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The book, written by a former Permanent Representative of Gambia to the African Union (AU), explores Africa's prime organisation's first ten years of existence (2002–2012). Touray argues that none of the mainstream IR theories can fully capture the AU and hence suggests 'Fusionism', a *mélange* of

inter-governmentalism, institutionalism and constructivism, as a theoretical underpinning of his study. He takes three contexts, 'political change' (covering mainly post-Cold War peace and security issues), 'economic decline' and 'deteriorating social conditions' as starting points of his study and asks how the AU has responded to these challenges. The analysis continues with a brief history of the AU's emergence, thereby pushing the argument that the AU is not the 'brainchild' (p. 37) or 'pet project' (p. 51) of Gaddafi but instead the outcome of an intergovernmental process. He then explores the achievements and challenges the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), the AU's predecessor, faced during its existence (1963–2002) followed by a discussion of African attempts to promote economic growth and human development. This leads to an analysis of the AU's efforts to promote peace and security and to advocate human rights. One of the arguments made in this context is that the AU has 'a strong appetite for peacekeeping operations, [but] the Union's capacity to maintain such operations remained weak' (p. 123). After having engaged in the empirical investigation, the book's last three chapters describe some of the AU's institutions, the Assembly, Executive Council, Permanent Representative Council, Pan-African Parliament, and the AU Commission. It is in this chapter that Touray shares some of his personal insights into the AU's daily work (e.g. pp. 189 and 196).

While there are many convincing and valid points made in the book, particularly with regard to the limited resources available, the AU's lack of autonomy, and the achievements and shortcomings of the AU peace and security architecture, I also found parts of the analysis biased. The treatment of the OAU fails to discuss its failures, such as its inaction during the Rwandan genocide, instead concluding 'that this organization's 'inactivity' was more of a myth than reality' (p. 65). References to eminent scholars such as Colin Legum cannot rescue this argument taking into account that they wrote before the OAU ran into its deep post-Cold War crisis which paved the way for its overhaul. Pointing to the strength of the NEPAD project while omitting to mention that this brainchild of Thabo Mbeki created frictions within Africa as it was perceived as a parallel structure to the AU, while failing to discuss the too often strained relations between the AU and the regional economic communities in security questions, suggests that harmony and unity within the AU prevails – a finding several scholars would challenge. Yet from my perspective the biggest omission is that despite a partly inter-governmental approach the questions regarding how and why African states guard their sovereignty and how authoritarian leaders in particular impact on the AU's policies and development go undiscussed. An exploration of these points would, however, get to the heart of the matter and explain in detail why the AU has not met its high ambitions and not gained much autonomy yet – and is hence difficult to explore from an institutionalist perspective.

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