# The Organisation of African Unity in the 1960s: From Euphoria to Disenchantment

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**ABSTRACTS**

Dieser Artikel greift die Entwicklung der Organisationen der Afrikanischen Einheit (OAU) in den 1960er Jahren auf, die eine Bruchzone der Globalisierung darstellen. Vier Themen werden diskutiert: (1) die politischen Ziele der Organisation, (2) die Rolle der OAU in der globalen Politik und die Frage, wir sie Einfluss auf die Vereinten Nationen, das Commonwealth und die Bewegung der Blockfreien genommen hat, (3) die Entwicklung der zwischenstaatlichen Beziehungen auf dem afrikanischen Kontinent, und (4) die möglichen Gründe für die geringe Performanz der OAU insbesondere in Fällen von gewaltsamen Konflikten in Afrika.

This article revisits the early history of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) which emerged at a critical juncture of globalisation in the 1960s. Four broad topics are discussed: (1) the political aims of the organisation, (2) the continental body's role in global politics and the way independent African states have impacted on the United Nations, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Commonwealth, (3) the development of intra-African relations, and (4) possible reasons for the general underperformance of the OAU's in particular with regard to violent conflict on the continent in those years.

## 1. Introduction

This article revisits the early history of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) which was founded in May 1963 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The long 1960s can be seen as a *critical juncture of globalization*[1] in which a dominant regime of territorialisation, the

1 M. Middell / U. Engel, Bruchzonen der Globalisierung, globale Krisen und Territorialitätsregimes – Kategorien einer Globalgeschichtsschreibung, in: Comparativ 15 (2005) 2, pp. 5–38.

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colonial empire, was replaced by independent nation states which had to find their way in what by then had become a bipolar world order. International organizations played a particular role in this period as they allowed for representation and provided a stage to the newly independent states. This arena become a major site of protest and negotiation for African states; it allowed them to define their own globalization projects.

This article interrogates four broad themes: First, the political ambitions of the OAU will be scrutinized through a content analysis of the OAU Charter and the decisions of both the OAU Heads of State and Government as well as the Council of Ministers in the years 1963 to 1969. Second, Africa's place in the Cold War global order of the 1960s[2] will be discussed from a global history perspective with a view to understand, if and how OAU positions made it into international politics at the level of the United Nations, the Non-Aligned Movement, and the Commonwealth. Politically, the newly independent countries of Africa aimed at positioning themselves globally, in the midst of the Cold War, by adopting the principle of non-alignment. The key topics initially put on the international agenda were the call for complete decolonisation of the continent, the struggle against apartheid in South Africa and support for the Southern African liberation movements, but soon the civil war in Nigeria (1967–1970) and the Arab/Israel war (1967) came to dominate the continent's agenda. Third, the development of intra-African relations will be recaptured, in particular with a view to violent conflicts developing on the African continent and the way the OAU dealt with these conflicts, or not. And, fourth, the reasons for the obvious failure of the continental body to address violent conflict in and between member states, to build-up the capacity of the OAU as well as to develop a strong developmental agenda will be discussed. This analysis is followed by conclusions.

## 2. Political Ambitions

Three African countries achieved independent before 1951 (Liberia, Egypt, and Libya), five in 1956, one in 1957 and two in 1958 (see tab. 2). The "wave of independence", the *wind of change*[3] gained momentum in 1960 when 17 countries received full sovereignty. In the following two years another six states followed. And from 1963 to 1969 nine more African countries gained independence. Fourteen territories, mainly the Portuguese colonies and the European settler regimes in Southern Africa, still had to wait for this moment – some for more than 30 years.[4]

2 O.A. Westad (ed.), Reviewing the Cold War. Approaches, Interpretations, Theory, London 2000; R. van Dijk et al. (eds.), Encyclopedia of the Cold War, 2 vols, New York 2008.

3 This phrase goes back to a speech given by the British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan to the South Africa Parliament on 3 February 1960. SAHO, Speech made to the South Africa Parliament on 3 February 1960 by Harold Macmillan. South African History Online, <https://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/wind-change-speech-made-south-africa-parliament-3-february-1960-harold-macmillan> (accessed 30 December 2019). See R. Ovendale, Macmillan and the Wind of Change in Africa, 1957–1960, in: The Historical Journal 38 (1995) 2, pp. 455–477.

4 Technically speaking, South Africa was an independent country since the formation of the Union in 1910, and

The prehistory of the establishment of the Organisation of African Unity has been described elsewhere; it is based on decades of Pan-African aspirations and, after independence, different visions of continental unity.[5] The Dutch historian Klaas van Walraven has detailed how – from the conference of independent states held in Accra, Ghana, in April 1959 to the preparatory conference of African foreign ministers held in Addis Ababa on 15–21 May 1963 – the positions between "radical" (Casablanca), "conservative" (Brazzaville) and "moderate" (Monrovia) groups of African states have finally been reconciled through the compromise that led to the establishment of the OAU.[6] While the Casablanca group around leftist presidents Gamal Abdel-Nasser (Egypt), Kwame Nkrumah (Ghana), and Sékou Touré (Guinea)[7] favoured a model of regionalism that was based on sovereignty transfers by members states to a political federation, including the establishment of an African High Command for a joint defence policy,[8] the conservative Brazzaville group[9] insisted on the principle of absolute sovereignty of independent countries. These diverging interests were mediated by a group that established itself as "moderates", including Ethiopia and Nigeria. In the end, competing models of regionalism and sovereignty were negotiated, and different ideas of the spatial format "region" were imagined, discovered, and pondered, which led to the emergence of a specific spatial format of regionalism, the Organization of African Unity in which member states kept most, if not all of their newly won sovereignty.[10]

The *Charter of the Organization of African Unity* is a rather lean text that comes in 32 articles on eleven pages.[11] The Heads of State and Government were

Southern Rhodesia had declared "unilateral independence" from the United Kingdom in 1965. Both countries, plus South African-occupied Namibia, were settler regimes.

5 See, for instance, Ghanaian president N. Nkrumah, Africa Must Unite, New York 1963; and the first African president of the UN General Assembly, A. Quaison-Sackey, Africa Unbound: Reflections of an African Statesman, New York 1963, pp. 91–97. On the history of Pan-Africanism see R. Emerson, Pan-Africanism, in: International Organization 16 (1962) 2, pp. 275–290; C. Legum, Pan-Africanism: A Short Political Guide, 2nd edn, New York et al. 1965 [1962]; I. Geiss, The Pan-African Movement, London 1974 (in German 1968); T. Falola, Nationalism and African Intellectuals, New York 2001; and more recently H. Adi, Pan-Africanism: A History, London 2018.

6 K. van Walraven, Dreams of Power. The Role of the Organization of African Unity in the Politics of Africa 1963–1993, Ridderkerk 1996. For documentation and analysis, see Legum, Pan-Africanism. See also A.F. Addona, The Organization of African Unity, Cleveland et al. 1969; S.O. Agbi, The Organization of African Unity and African Diplomacy, 1963–1979, Ibadan1986; Y. el Ayouty, The Organization of African Unity After Ten Years: Comparative Perspectives, New York 1976. See also Moledo in this volume.

7 Other members of the group included Algeria, Libya, Mali, and Morocco. See van Walraven, Dreams of Power, p. 103.

8 T.A. Imobighe, An African High Command: The Search for a Feasible Strategy of Continental Defence, African Affairs 79 (1980) 315, pp. 241–254.

9 The group included the French-speaking countries of Benin (then still: Dahomey), Burkina Faso (then still: Upper Volta), Cameroon, CAR, Chad, Congo (Brazzaville), Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Madagascar, Mauretania, Niger, and Senegal. See van Walraven, Dreams of Power, p. 103.

10 This section is aligned to the analytical vocabulary developed by the Collaborative Research Centre (DFG-Sonderforschungsbereich) 1199, ULR: <https://research.uni-leipzig.de/~sfb1199/?id=7> (accessed: 30 December 2019). See M. Middell, Category of Spatial Formats: To What End?, in: S. Marung / M. Middell (eds.), Spatial Formats under the Global Condition, Berlin / Boston 2019, pp. 15–47.

11 OAU, The Charter of the Organisation of African Unity, 23 May 1963, Addis Ababa. See Z. Červenka, The Organisation of African Unity and its Charter, London 1969. In the original version, the OAU used American English. Later documents interchangeable also use British English. In comparison, the *Constitutive Act of the African Union* is of

*Convinced that it is the inalienable right of all people to control their own destiny,*
*Conscious of the fact that freedom, equality, justice and dignity are essential objectives for the achievement of the legitimate aspirations of the African peoples,*
*Conscious of our responsibility to harness the natural and human resources of our continent for the total advancement of our peoples in all spheres of human endeavour, …*
*Convinced that, in order to translate this determination into a dynamic force in the cause of human progress, conditions for peace and security must be established and maintained,*
*Determined to safeguard and consolidate the hard-won independence as well as the sovereignty and territorial integrity of our states, and to fight against neo-colonialism in all its forms, …*
*Persuaded that the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to the Principles of which we reaffirm our adherence, provide a solid foundation for peaceful and positive cooperation among States, …*[12]

Based on these convictions, as an institution the OAU aimed to:

*(a) To promote the unity and solidarity of the African States;*
*(b) To coordinate and intensify their cooperation and efforts to achieve a better life for the peoples of Africa;*
*(c) To defend their sovereignty, their territorial integrity and independence;*
*(d) To eradicate all forms of colonialism from Africa; and*
*(e) To promote international cooperation, having due regard to the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.[13]

The OAU then spelled out a set of principles that were decisive for the development of the organisation in the coming decades, most importantly the principle of sovereign equality of member states, non-interference in the internal affairs of member states, and respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each member state.[14] In terms of global positioning, the OAU dedicated herself "to the total emancipation of the African territories which are still dependent" and pledged to adhere to the principle of non-alignment "with regard to all blocs" (which were not mentioned by name).[15] Importantly the OAU also decided to settle disputes among member states peacefully by negotiation, mediation, conciliation or arbitration.[16] To this end the OAU established a Commission

the same length and has just one paragraph more. See OAU, Constitutive Act of the African Union, 7 July 2000, Lomé.

12 OAU, The Charter, p. 1.00.

13 OAU, The Charter, §2 (1) a–e.

14 OAU, The Charter, §3 (1–3). See A.B. Akinyemi, The Organization of African Unity and the Concept of Non-Interference in Internal Affairs of Member-States, in: British Yearbook of International Law 46 (1972–1973), pp. 392–400. The OAU also unreservedly condemned, "in all its forms, of political assassination as well as of subversive activities on the part of neighbouring States or any other States". Ibid., §3 (4).

15 OAU, The Charter, §3 (6–7).

16 Ibid.

of Mediation, Conciliation, and Arbitration.[17] Apart from the summit, the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs and the General Secretariat, this was the only "principal institution" of the continental body. Originally, staff size was 18 (1964), but by 1972 already some 288 people worked at the General Secretariat of the OAU.[18]

At the First Conference of Independent African Heads of State and Government, that was held in Addis Ababa from 22 to 25 May 1963, and which led to the establishment of the OAU, ten resolutions were adopted.[19] Read today, the decisions are refreshingly visionary and almost euphoric. On the first agenda item "decolonization" the conference declared:

> *that the forcible imposition by the colonial powers of the settlers to control the governments and administrations of the dependent territories is a flagrant violation of the inalienable rights of the legitimate inhabitants of the territories concerned.*[20]

The regional focus was in particularly on Southern Rhodesia, South-West Africa (Namibia), and African territories under Portuguese domination. It was decided to break-off diplomatic and consular relations between all African states and the governments of Portugal and South Africa. In addition a boycott was introduced on imports from these countries, African ports and airports were closed to their ships and planes, and planes from those two countries were forbidden to overfly the territories or all African states.[21] Furthermore, in support of the liberation movements operating in South Africa and Portuguese colonies a Co-ordinating Committee and a Special Fund were established with headquarters in Dar es Salaam, Tanganyika – the OAU Liberation Committee which initially consisted of Algeria, Egypt, Ethiopia, Guinea, Congo (Léopoldville),[22] Nigeria, Senegal, Tanganyika, and Uganda.[23] On 25 May was declared "African Liberation Day". The OAU member states offered their territories to "nationalists from liberation movements in order to give them training in all sectors and afford young people all the assistance they need for their education and vocational training".[24]

On the second item on the agenda, the issue of "apartheid and racial discrimination", the summit *inter alia* agreed "to grant scholarships, educational facilities, and possibilities of employment in African government services to refugees from South Africa"; to lobby at the UN Security Council (UNSC) and to "co-ordinate concerted measures of sanction against the Government of South Africa".[25] Other decisions were taken on Africa's rela-

17 OAU, The Charter, §19. See T.O. Elias, The Commission of Mediation, Conciliation, and Arbitration of the Organisation of African Unity, in: British Yearbook of International Law 40 (1964), pp. 336–354.
18 Van Walraven, Dreams of Power, p. 166.
19 CIAS, First Conference of Independent African Heads of State and Government. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 22–25 May 1963, Addis Ababa.
20 CIAS, First Conference, CIAS/Plen.2/Rev.2.
21 Ibid.
22 Renamed Kinshasa in 1966.
23 T. Huysmans, The Liberation Committee of the Organisation of African Unity, Nijmegen 1979.
24 CIAS/Plen.2/Rev.2.
25 Ibid.

tions to the United Nations (already introducing the notion of equitable representation in principal UN organs, including the UNSC), disarmament (including declaring Africa a Denuclearized Zone), economic co-operation, etc.

In the 1960s the OAU Assembly discussed a wide range of topics, from Apartheid and Southern Africa to disarmament / denuclearisation, from African border disputes and conflicts to forms of Pan-African cooperation.[26] It also focussed on its own institutional development and relations with international organisations. Finally, the OAU summits pronounced themselves on global matters. While the range of topics was widening in 1964 and 1965, during the following summits one can see a gradual reduction in the scope of topics the OAU has been dealing with (see tab 1). In 1964 at the 1st Ordinary Summit a new, and in later years recurrent item on the agenda was the "Consideration of a proposal for the establishment of a Union Government of Africa", as submitted by the Government of Ghana.[27]

Apartheid, racial discrimination, South Africa, Southern Rhodesia, South West Africa, and the Portuguese occupied territories remained a strong concern during the first years of the organisation. Another area of initial concern was the OAU's own institutional development, with decisions on the future of the organisation (1963), a Union Government for Africa, a Transport and Communications Commission, interim financing of the Secretariat (all 1964), OAU privileges and immunities, the establishment of an OAU executive body, sponsorship of the next Assembly meeting, rules of procedure of the Africa Group at the UN, sponsorship of African positions in the UN system, adjustment of the scale of assessment for membership contributions, and the Pan African News Agency, PANA (all 1965).

On African conflicts and in view of the fact "that border problems constitute a grave and permanent factor of dissention", but at the same time "that the borders of African States, on the day of their independence, constitute a tangible reality",[28] the OAU adopted a decision on African border disputes. In particular it addressed border disputes between Ghana and Upper Volta, and Algeria and Morocco, respectively (both 1964). Among the other conflicts the organisation addressed, are the conflicts between Kenya, Ethiopia, and Somalia (1967), and the Biafra war in Nigeria (1967–1970; see below section 5).

Another major field of discussion have been OAU relations to other international bodies, mainly the United Nations, but also Afro-Asian cooperation. Interestingly, the OAU also pronounced itself on global policy questions, including racial discrimination in the United States (1964) and the Six-Day War between Egypt and Israel (5–10 June 1967,

26 The calendar of activities was not as dense as from 2003 onwards when the African Union started meeting twice a year at the level of Assembly. In the 1960s the summit would be held anytime between May and November. Meetings took far longer than from the 1990s onwards (e.g. in 1965 a Council could sit for almost two weeks, rather than for three as nowadays.

27 OAU, Resolutions adopted by the First Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government held in Cairo, UAR, from 17 to 21 July 1964, Addis Ababa.

28 Ibid.

see below section 4). However, little was actually said by the Assembly or the Council on the effects of the Cold War on OAU member states.

**Tab. 1: Content analysis of OAU Assembly decisions, 1963–1969**

| Issue/year | 1963 | 1964 | 1965 | 1966 | 1967 | 1968 | 1969 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Apartheid and Southern Africa(1) | x | x | x | – | x | – | – |
| Disarmament / denuclearisation | x | x | – | – | – | – | – |
| African border disputes and conflicts(2) | – | x | x | – | x | x | x |
| Pan-African cooperation(3) | x | – | – | x | – | – | x |
| OAU institutional development(4) | x | x | x | x | – | – | – |
| OAU and international organisations(5) | x | x | x | x | – | – | – |
| Pronouncements on global matters(6) | – | x | – | – | x | x | x |

Notes:
(1) Including racial discrimination (1963–1964), apartheid, South Africa, Southern Rhodesia, Portuguese occupied territories (all 1963–1965), territorial integrity of Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland (1964–1965), support to the Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola – Partido do Trabalho (MPLA) in Angola (1964), the OAU Liberation Committee (1963–1965), and support to the South-West African, i.e. Namibian case (1965, 1967).
(2) Including border disputes in general, the dispute between Ghana and Upper Volta (both 1964), the ad hoc commission of the Alegro-Moroccan border dispute, subversion of governments, the problem of refugees (all 1965), mercenaries (1967), on conflict between Kenya and Somalia (1967), and the Biafra war in Nigeria (1967–1969).
(3) Including economic cooperation; health, sanitation and nutrition; social and labour; and education and culture (all 1963), social and economic cooperation (1966), and on assistance to Equatorial-Guinea (1969).
(4) Including the future of the organisation (1963), a Union Government for Africa, a Transport and Communications Commission, interim financing of the Secretariat (all 1964), OAU privileges and immunities, establishing an OAU executive body, sponsorship of next Assembly meeting, rules of procedure Africa Group at UN, sponsorship of African positions in the UN system, adjusting the scale of assessment for membership contributions, the Pan African News Agency, PANA (all 1965).
(5) Including AU and United Nations (1963–1965), financing UN PKOs (1964), the 2nd Conference of African-Asian States (1964), relations between the OAU and the UN Commission for Africa (1965), the World Conference on Trade and Development (1966).
(6) Including racial discrimination in the USA (1964) and – initially without mentioning Israel by name (1967–1968) – on the preventive strike that later was called the "Israeli aggression" (1969) against Egypt, Jordan and Syria.
Sources: CIAS, First Conference of Independent African Heads of State and Government. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 22–25 May 1963, Addis Ababa; OAU, Resolutions adopted by the First Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government held in Cairo, UAR, from 17 to 21 July 1964, Addis Ababa; OAU, Resolutions adopted by the Second Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government held in Accra, Ghana, from 21 to 26 October 1965, Addis Ababa; OAU, Resolutions adopted by the Third Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 5 to 9 November 1966, Addis Ababa; OAU, Resolutions adopted by the Fourth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government held in Kinshasa, Congo, from 11 to 14 September 1967, Addis Ababa; OAU, Resolutions adopted by the Third Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government held in Algiers, [Algeria], from 13 to 16 September 1968, Addis Ababa; and OAU, Resolutions adopted by the Third Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government held in Addis Ababa, [Ethiopia], from 6 to 10 September 1969, Addis Ababa.

How does the picture change when taking into account the OAU Council of Ministers that met twice a year? First of all, the Council has produced considerable more resolutions over time, with the 9th Ordinary Session in 1967 being the most productive one. It has covered all fields of OAU engagement, but with some interesting changes over time. Pronouncements on disarmament and denuclearisation stopped after 1964, and the same goes for references to African border disputes and conflicts after 1967 (see below, section 5). In contrast, the Egypt / Israeli Six-Day War in 1967 prompted the Council in 1968 to take its first decision on global matters[29] – but none, for instance on the war in Vietnam or any other global issue. On the organisation's institutional development, the Council remained ceased with the matter throughout the period under review, while the Assembly stopped taking decisions on this question in 1966. Throughout the Council also remained engaged with Africa's international relations, especially with the United Nations, while the Assembly took its last decision on this cooperation in 1966. In fact, in this respect the division of labour between Assembly and Council remained vague and has been an issue since.

**Tab. 2: Content analysis of OAU Council of Ministers decisions, 1963–1969**

| Issue/year | 1963 | 1964 | 1965 | 1966 | 1967 | 1968 | 1969 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Apartheid and Southern Africa(1) | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Disarmament / denuclearisation | x | x | – | – | – | – | – |
| African border disputes and conflicts | x | x | x | x | x | – | – |
| Pan-African cooperation | – | x | x | – | x | x | x |
| OAU institutional development | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| OAU and international organisations | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Pronouncements on global matters | – | – | – | – | – | x | – |

Note: (1) And other cases of decolonisation such as, for instance and though less frequently, the Comoros.
Sources: OAU, Resolutions and Recommendations of the Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers held in Dakar, Senegal from 2 to 11 August 1963, Addis Ababa; OAU, Resolutions and Recommendations of the First Extra-Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 15 to 18 November 1963, Addis Ababa; OAU, Resolutions and Recommendations of the Second Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers held in Lagos, Nigeria, from 24 to 29 February 1964, Addis Ababa; OAU, Resolutions and Recommendations of the Third Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers held in Cairo, (U.A.R.), from 13 to 17 July 1964, Addis Ababa; OAU, Resolutions and Recommendations of the Second Extra-Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers held in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, from 12 to 15 February 1964, Addis Ababa; OAU, Resolutions of the Fourth Extra Ordinary Ses-sion of the Council of Ministers held in New York from 16 to 21 December 1964, Addis Ababa [note: following the inaugural meeting, this must actually have been the 3rd extra-ordinary session]; OAU, Resolutions and Recommenda-tions of the Fourth Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 26 February to 9 March 1965, Addis Ababa; OAU, Resolutions of the Fifth Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers held in Accra, Ghana, from 14 to

29 OAU, Resolutions adopted by Tenth Ordinary Session the Council of Ministers held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 20 to 24 February 1968, Addis Ababa.

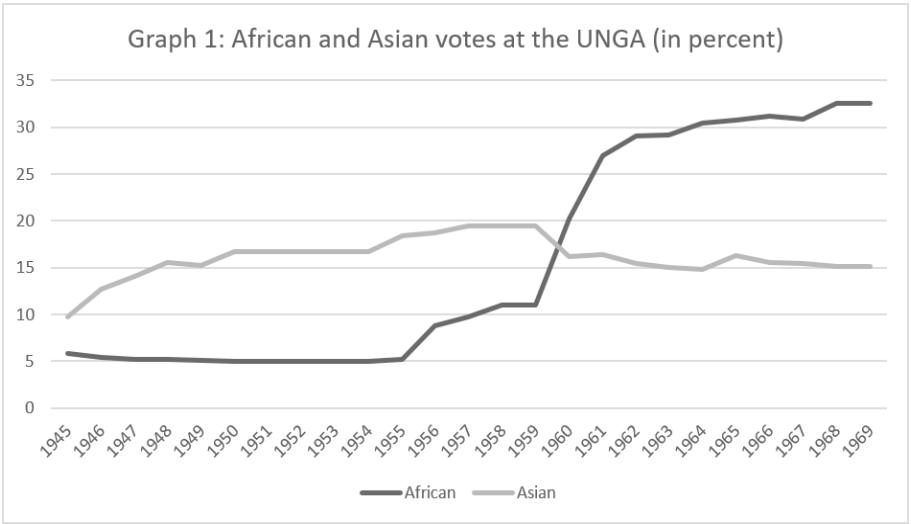
21 October 1965, Addis Ababa; OAU, Resolutions of the Sixth Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 28 February to 6 March 1966, Addis Ababa; OAU, Resolutions of the Sev-enth Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 31 October to 4 November 1966, Addis Ababa; OAU, Resolutions of the Eighth Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers held in Addis Aba-ba, Ethiopia from 27 February to 4 March 1967, Addis Ababa; OAU, Resolutions adopted by the Council of Ministers at its Ninth Ordinary Session held in Kinshasa, Congo from 4 to 10 September 1967, Addis Ababa; OAU, Resolutions adopted by Tenth Ordinary Session the Council of Ministers held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 20 to 24 February 1968, Addis Ababa; OAU, Resolutions adopted by Eleventh Ordinary Session the Council of Ministers held in Algiers, Algeria, from 4 to 12 September. 1968, Addis Ababa; OAU, Declarations, Recommendations and Resolutions of the Council of Ministers['] Meeting in its Twelfth Ordinary Session held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 17 to 22 February 1969, Addis Ababa; OAU, Resolutions adopted by Thirteenth Ordinary Session the Council of Ministers held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 27 August to 6 September 1969, Addis Ababa.

## 3. Global Positioning

As any other independent state, African states made use of international policy arenas to voice their concerns and follow their interests. The most relevant bodies in this respect have been the United Nations (UN), the British Commonwealth, and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). With many states gaining independence in the early 1960s, Africa first and foremost had become a substantial voting bloc in the UN General Assembly. 17 years after the foundation of the United Nations for the first time an African caucus was recognised, the Group of African States at the UN.[30] In 1945 African votes (excluding the Union of South Africa) accounted for 5.88 percent of all the 51 UN founding member states (Asian votes: 9.8%). In 1959, on the eve of the *wind of change*, African states held 10.98 percent of all votes (Asia: 19,51%, the highest thus far).[31] In 1960, and with by now 99 UN member states, this increased to 20.25 percent of African votes, and in 1962 to 29.02 per cent. By the end of the 1960s, African countries controlled almost one-third of the votes in the UN General Assembly (32.45%). In 1969 the Afro-Asian bloc of countries commanded 47.62 percent of all 126 votes (see graph 1). By then it had a become a force in global politics to reckon with.

30 J.H. Spencer, Africa at the UN: Some Observations, in: International Organization 16 (1962) 2, pp. 375–386, at p. 375f. From 1943 to 1961, Spencer, a Professor of International Law and Diplomacy at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, was actually Senior Adviser in Foreign Affairs to the Ethiopian government. See also W. Ellis / J. Salzberg, Africa in the UN: A Statistical Note, in: American Behavioral Scientist 8 (1966) 8, pp. 30–32. Meyers recalls that the Africa caucus was already established in 1958 by Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Liberia, Libya, Morocco, Sudan, and Tunisia. See B.D. Meyers, African Voting in the United Nations General Assembly, in: Journal of Modern African Studies 4 (1966) 2, pp. 213–227, at p. 214.

31 Meyers also reminds us that during the 18th UNGA session there was a division among African states, with some belonging to the Arab caucus (Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Sudan, and Tunisia) and others to the Commonwealth caucus (Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Tanganyika, and Uganda). See Meyers, African Voting, p. 215.




Notes: Zanzibar was a UN member from December 1963 until unification with Tanganyika in April 1964, but is not listed here. Also excluding the Union of South Africa which was a founding member of the UN in 1945.
Source: Based on United Nations, "Growth in United Nations membership, 1945-present", <http://www.un.org/en/sections/member-states/growth-united-nations-membership-1945-present/index.html> (accessed: 30 December 2019).

This had implications for procedural, but also substantive politics: In October 1961 the Africa group managed to prevent South Africa's participation in the UNGA. Writing in 1962, Spencer argues on the general direction of African votes:

> *The record shows that most of the African vote more or less closely with the Western powers on a wide range of issues when they first became independent. As time has passed group pressures, anti-colonialist sentiments, desires to demonstrate complete independence, and an "African view," as well as suasion by external arguments and blandishments have led many of the states to part company with the Western delegations and to vote differently.*[32]

These changes, Spencer holds, can be seen in three broad field: colonial issues, East-West struggles and what he dubs "other questions".[33] With regard to the first issue area, African states' "are quite understandably heated, emphatic, and vigorous show of strength at was is identified against as the colonialist policy or action".[34] And on Cold War issues

> *… divisions have occurred among the African Members. Some have inclined to move progressively in the direction of an Eastward orientation, lining up their votes time and*

32 Spencer, Africa at the UN, p. 376.
33 Ibid.
34 Ibid.

> *again with the Soviet bloc. This has been particularly characteristic of the Casablanca grouping.*[35]

And on the question of bloc affiliation, during the 15th and 16th sessions of the UN General Assembly,

> *voting alignments of Asian and African states on a number of highly political issues seemed to imply that a majority of these states were "pro-Eastern."* But this interpretation can be deceptive.[36]

Indeed, let's look at a more systematic approach to the study of African voting behaviour at the United Nations. In the mid-1960s a comparative foreign policy method was introduced in mainstream (US) political science that systematically analysed voting patterns, called roll-call analysis.[37] Out of the rich literature on UN voting blocs and patterns in the 1950s and 1960s, three articles will be looked at in more detail – Newcombe et al. on "United Nations Voting Patterns", Meyers on African voting at the UNGA, and Russett on "Discovering Voting Groups in the United Nations" –, as they are particularly relevant for at least the first part of the 1960s.[38] The data and interpretation provided would make it worthwhile to follow up on this tradition of research and conduct some roll-call analysis for the second part of the 1960s. It is interesting in itself that this kind of comparative research on African voting patterns has somewhat stopped in the second half of the 1960s and that most of the later research is anecdotal and circumstantial in style.[39] For the period 1961 to 1963, the Ontario / Canada-based researchers around Newcombe, and much in line with Spencer, argue that

> *there was a partial merger of the Afro-Asian and the Soviet blocs, with the latter loading about equally on its own bloc and on the Afro-Asian bloc. Also* [in the same period] *some of the imperial nations had negative loadings on the Afro-Asian bloc, showing that they opposed it in voting.*[40]

Confirming earlier research, Newcombe et al. state that

35 Spencer, Africa at the UN, p. 377.

36 Ibid., p. 379, emphasis UE.

37 J.N. Rosenau, Comparative Foreign Policy: Fad, Fantasy, or Field, in: International Studies Quarterly 12 (1968) 3, pp. 296–329. With an interest in predicting voting patterns, based on national attributes, see J.E. Vincent, Predicting Voting Patterns in the General Assembly, in: American Political Science Review 65 (1971) 2, pp. 471–498. For a later testing of Rosenau's "pretheory on foreign policy" with regard to the foreign policy behaviour of African states at the UN, see R. Vengroff, Instability and Foreign Policy Behavior: Black Africa in the UN, in: American Journal of Political Science 20 (1976) 3, pp. 425–438.

38 H. Newcombe / M. Ross / A.G. Newcombe, United Nations Voting Patterns, in: International Organization 24 (1970) 1, pp. 100–112; Meyers, African Voting; B.M. Russett, Discovering Voting Groups in the United Nations, in: American Political Science Review 60 (1966) 2, pp. 327–339.

39 In fact, after years of negligence of roll-call analysis, the rise of the BRICS in international politics has led to a revival of this method. See P. Ferdinand, Rising powers at the UN: an analysis of the voting behaviour of BRICS in the General Assembly, in: Third World Quarterly 35 (2014) 3, pp. 376–391; and B. Hooisjmaaijers / S. Keukeleire, Voting Cohesion of the BRICS Countries in the UN General Assembly, 2006–2014: A BRICS Too Far?, in: Global Governance 22 (2016) 3, pp. 389–407.

40 Newcombe et al., United Nations Voting Patterns, p. 102. See Spencer, Africa at the UN.

> [the] *main pattern discovered in the changes in nation blocs over time is a trend toward bipolarization: The Latin American nations joined the West while the Afro-Asian states joined the Soviet bloc*.[41]

Likewise, Bruce M. Russet, in those days on a junior fellowship at Yale University, with an analysis of the 18th UNGA session (1963–1964) discusses the Afro-Asian Group vote as a case that can be compared to "the Commonwealth" or "the communists".[42] He, too, confirms, that in their actual voting behaviour most African states took positions more aligned with the Soviet bloc.[43] But Russet also drew attention to the fact that the Cold War "issue" and the questions of Southern Africa – apartheid, Southern Rhodesia, South-West Africa, and the territories under Portuguese domination – account for most of the variation in the voting pattern of all UN member states.[44]

Social science has produced only very little knowledge on the role of African states on the UN Security Council in the 1960s, this remains an academic void. An academic state of the art on the role of African countries in the UN Security Council only started developing in the 1970s. Egypt was the first African country to sit on the council (1946, 1949–1950). Between 1951 and 1958, no African country was on the UNSC.[45] And between 1959 and 1962, only one African country at a time was allowed to be a council member.[46] In 1963, for the first time two African UN member states were elected to the UNSC.[47] And it was only in 1966 that the current practice was introduced to have three non-permanent member on the UN Security Council coming from Africa (the so-called A3).[48]

Apart from the United Nations, important arenas for galvanizing support for African positions in international affairs have been the and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).[49] In academia, thinking about the relationship between African countries and the Commonwealth mainly is a debate of the late 1970s, early 1980s when anti-apartheid policies gained more traction.[50]

41 Newcombe et al., United Nations Voting Patterns, p. 121.

42 Russet, Discovering Voting Groups, p. 327. Surely, this kind of social science is a child of its time and has always been far from being "objective", "neutral", or anything similar – as indicated by Russet's categorization of introduction of "Haiti [as] (Negro, very under-developed)". This critique also goes for the way that he is constructing voting blocs. See Russet, Discovering Voting Groups, p. 334.

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid., p. 336.

45 Here and in the following UNSC, Search Membership by Region, <http://www.un.org/en/sc/inc/list_eng_region.asp?region=af> (accessed 30 December 2019).

46 Tunisia (1959–1960), Liberia (1961), and Ghana (1962).

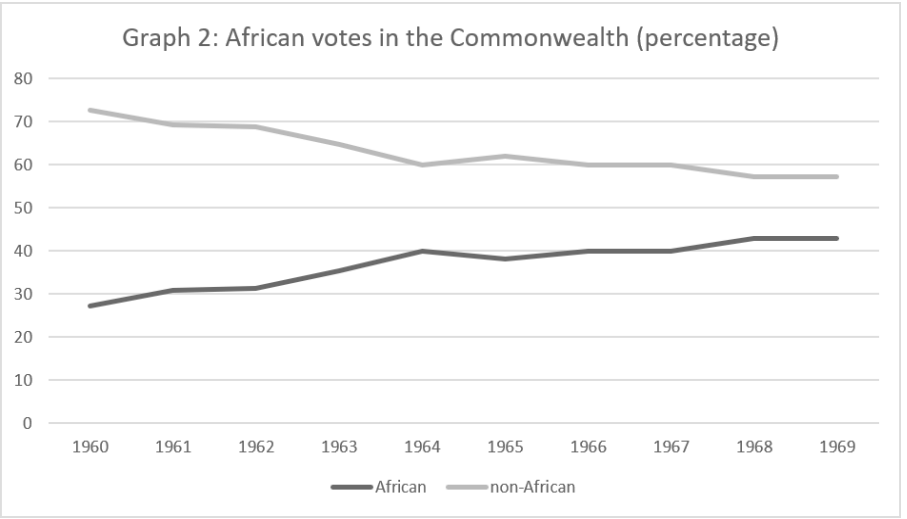
47 Ghana and Morocco. In 1964, it was Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire (in 1965 the latter, again, was the only African country on the council).

48 In 1966 it was Mali, Nigeria, and Uganda; in 1967 Ethiopia, Mali, and Nigeria; in 1968 Algeria, Ethiopia, and Senegal; and in 1969 Algeria, Senegal, and Zambia.

49 The international organisation La Francophonie or *Communauté française*, which mainly – but these days not exclusively – is made up of France's former African colonies, was only created in 1970.

50 For an early exception see J. Holmes, The Impact on the Commonwealth of the Emergence of Africa, in: International Organization 16 (1962) 2, pp. 291–302.

The British Commonwealth was constituted on 31 December 1931 by the United Kingdom, the Union of South Africa, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.[51] Until 1960 membership remained fairly limited, with India and Pakistan joining in 1947, Sri Lanka in 1948, and Malaysia (then Malaya) in 1957.[52] In the same year Ghana became the first African country to join the Commonwealth. As more and more of the former colonies gained independence in the 1960s, the organisation grew – and, again, African states changed membership composition considerably (see graph 2). Until the end of the 1960s, African membership in the Commonwealth grew to 12 out of 28 (or a combined share of the votes of almost 43%).[53] By 1969, African, Asian, Caribbean, and Pacific countries commanded 78.57 per cent of the club's votes. These new majorities soon had a clear impact. Following a constitutional referendum in South Africa on whether the Union should become a republic, at the initiative of its two African members (Ghana and Nigeria) as well as India, Malaysia, and Canada the Commonwealth rejected the country's request to remain a member because of its apartheid policy. The government of the Republic of South African then decided to withdraw its membership application.[54] Ever since, the Commonwealth has become an important place for the Organization of African Unity to lobby for the imposition of sanctions against South Africa.




Notes: On 31 May 1961 South Africa withdrew its membership from the Commonwealth. After the end of apartheid, the country rejoined the club on 1 June 1994. See E. Anyaoku, The Commonwealth and South

51 Plus, at that time, the Irish Free State and Newfoundland.

52 The impact on the Commonwealth of the emergence of Africa is the topic of an article by Holmes who holds that Africa has "given the Commonwealth a new sense of mission, and injected into it a needed dose of ebullient African vitality". See Holmes, The Impact on the Commonwealth, p. 291.

53 These included Ghana (1957), Nigeria (1960), Sierra Leone, Tanzania (both 1961), Uganda (1962), Kenya (1963), Malawi, Zambia (both 1964), Botswana, Lesotho (both 1966), Mauritius, and Swaziland (both 1968)

54 Again, a topic that was hardly discussed in academia in those days. See E. Anyaoku, The Commonwealth and South Africa: Restoring a relationship, in: South African Journal of International Affairs 1 (1993) 1, pp. 1–8.

Africa: Restoring a relationship, in: South African Journal of International Affairs 1 (1993) 1, pp. 1–8. And excluding the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland (1953–1963) as well as Southern Rhodesia (1964–1969). Source: Commonwealth, Commonwealth Network, <http://www.commonwealthofnations.org> (accessed 30 December 2019).

The OAU explicitly stated non-alignment as one of its guiding principles.[55] It was therefore not too surprising that many independent African states joined the Non-Aligned Movement.[56] Following the Bandung conference held on 18–24 April 1955 in Indonesia, initially it was mainly African and Asian countries trying to formulate politics that stayed away from the Cold War bloc competition.[57] The NAM was formally established in June 1956 in Belgrade.[58] The first NAM summit was held in the same town in 1961, the second one in 1964 in Cairo, and the third 1970 in Lusaka. Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser served as first secretary-general of the organization (1964–1970).[59] As regards membership, African countries were admitted through the summits, meaning that membership did not correlate with the year of independence. African membership increased from 11 in 1961 (out of a total of 22), 30 in 1964 (out of 42) to 36 in 1970 (out of 54).[60]

In the United Nations, the Non-Aligned Movement, and the Commonwealth, the 1960s have been a period in which African countries started harmonizing their foreign policies to push some themes that they could easily agree upon: the complete decolonization of the African continent and the struggle against apartheid being the most important ones.[61] As a collective of states, African countries learned quickly how to make use of these arenas. The global politics of African states became an important sovereignty strat-

55 OAU, The Charter, §3 (6–7).

56 See A. Ajala, The Organization of African Unity and Non-Alignment, in: Nigerian Journal of International Affairs 7 (1981) 1–2, pp. 103–117.

57 African participants (out of 30 nations) included Egypt, Ethiopia, the Gold Coast (i.e. Ghana), Liberia, Libya, and Sudan.

58 See P. Willetts, The Non-Aligned Movement. The Origins of a Third World Alliance, New York / London 1978; J. Dinkel, The Non-Aligned Movement. Genesis, Organization and Politics (1927–1992), Leiden / Boston 2019.

59 Whether African governments in practice have taken non-aligned positions has been empirically tested for the period January 1963 to January 1966 through regression correlations on the intensity of interactions with the Soviet bloc by P.J. McGowan, Africa and Non-Alignment: A Comparative Study of Foreign Policy, in: International Studies Quarterly 12 (1968) 3, pp. 262–295, based on criteria developed by R.C. Good, Changing Patterns of African International Relations, in: American Political Science Review 58 (1964) 3, pp. 632–641. Accordingly, Algeria, Egypt, Somalia, Ghana, and Congo (Brazzaville) had the highest levels of interaction while "but most African states evidenced little or no contact". McGowan, Africa and Non-Alignment, pp. 282 and 289. For the period 1958 to 1962, Hovet counted that African states voted identically with the Soviet Union 66.4 % of the time and with the United States only 36.8 %. See T. Hovet, Africa in the United Nations, Evanston 1963.

60 Out of the 41 independent African countries in 1969, by 1970 the following five were not a member of the NAM: Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Madagascar, Mauritius, and Niger – but they all joined in 1973.

61 See D. Thiam, La politique étrangère des etats africaines, Paris 1963 [English The Foreign Policy of African States: Ideological Bases, Present Realities, Future Prospects, London 1965]; F. Ansprenger, Die Befreiungspolitik der Organisation für Afrikanische Einheit (OAU) 1963–1975, München / Mainz 1975; R.A. Akindele, Reflections on the Preoccupation and Conduct of African Diplomacy, in: Journal of Modern African Studies 14 (1976) 4, pp. 557–576; O. Aluko (ed.), The Foreign Policies of African States, London 1977.

egy.[62] Often it was built-up from the OAU Liberation Committee to the level of Council and Assembly, and then introduced into the global arenas where African states controlled a substantial number of votes.[63]

## 4. Intra-African Relations

The development of relations between the independent African states was characterized by few activities to build-up on Pan-African principles,[64] and soon were overshadowed by violent conflicts which ranged from inter-state clashes over territory to civil wars, and violent attempts of secession to armed liberation struggles.[65] As time went by, increasingly the OAU Assembly of Heads of State and Government ceased to be a site of decision-making (less important and also often intra-organizational matters were left to the Council of Ministers – see graph. 3).[66] After 1965 the OAU moved into inertia. Furthermore, when looking at the politics of the OAU as an international organization, soon gaps between rhetoric and practice showed up. First, very few initiatives were launched to developed intra-African relations in practice. And, second, those initiatives taken were only lukewarmly supported. In the period 1963 to 1969 only four instruments were adopted by the OAU which in itself is an indicator for little concrete work and a tendency to avoid entering into binding decisions at continental level. The first of these texts, the *Phyto-Sanitary Convention for Africa* which was adopted in Congo (Léopoldville) on 13 September 1967, did not require signatures (and had no day for entering into force).[67] Hence it was ratified by only twelve OAU member states – some did so as late as 2016 (these twelve member states also deposited the legal instruments).

62 On the notion, see J. Agnew, Sovereignty Regimes: Territoriality and State Authority in Contemporary World Politics, in: Annals of American Geographers 95 (2005) 2, pp. 437–461.

63 G.A. Nweke, Harmonization of African Foreign Policies, 1955–1975: The Political Economy of African Diplomacy, Boston 1980. For general reflections of the early foreign policies of African states see N.J. Padelford / R. Emerson (eds.), Africa and World Order. New York 1963; Hovet, Africa in the United Nations; V. McKay, Africa in World Politics. New York 1963; V. McKay (ed.), African Diplomacy: Studies in the Determinants of Foreign Policy, New York 1996; I.W. Zartman, Decision-Making Among African Governments on Inter-African Affairs, in: Journal of Development Studies 2 (1966) 1, pp. 98–119; I.W. Zartman, International Relations in the New Africa. Englewood Cliffs 1966; K. Ingham (ed.), Foreign Relations of African States, London 1974.

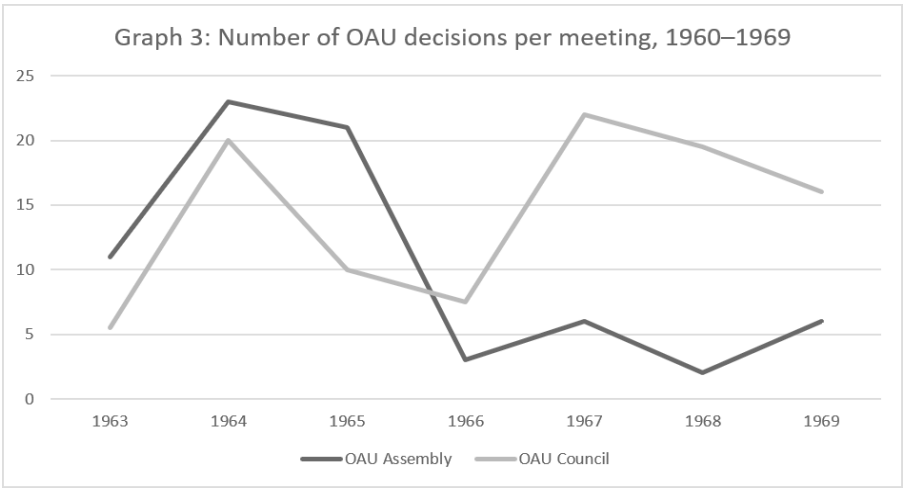
64 For a fairly optimistic account of the institution's capacity and policies, see John Markakis who at that point in time was assistant professor in the Department of Political Science at Haile Selassie I University, Addis Ababa. J. Markakis, The Organisation of African Unity: A Progress Report, in: Journal of Modern African Studies 4 (1966) 2, pp. 135–153.

65 For general introductions into the history of violent conflict in Africa, see W. Reno, Warfare in Independent Africa, New York 2011; P.D. Williams, War & Conflict in Africa, Cambridge 2011; S. Straus, Making and Unmaking Nations. War, Leadership, and Genocide in Modern Africa, Ithaca 2015; T.J. Stapleton, Africa. War and Conflict in the Twentieth Century, London 2018.

66 Furthermore, in the 1960s the OAU did not meet for any extra-ordinary summit, yet the Council held three extra-ordinary meetings in this period. Attendance of the OAU Assembly left much to be desired. So, for instance, in 1966 only 13 presidents and 3 prime ministers out of 38 member states attended the summit. See van Walraven, Dreams of Power, p. 189.

67 Usually legal documents enter into force upon signature by fifteen member states.

The *African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources* was adopted in Algiers, Algeria, on 15 September 1968 and entered into force on 16 June 1969.




Note: The Council of Ministers was meeting twice a year (i.e. the graph shows an average). And in both cases, often including at least one motion of thanks to the hosts of the meeting. Sources: See tab. 1 and 2.

And when it comes to the ratification of OAU legal instruments, member states usually have been reluctant to ratify decisions that they have had approved in the Assembly before. Out of the 40 OAU member states at that moment in time, only 27 have ratified and deposited the legal instruments – mainly in the mid- to late 1970s. The *Constitution for the African Civil Aviation Commission*, which was adopted on 17 January 1969, entered into force on 15 March 1972. But the legal instruments were only ratified and deposited by 6 out of then 41 OAU member states, and as late as in the 2010s. And, finally, the *OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa* was adopted in Addis Ababa on 10 September 1969 and entered into force on 20 January 1974. 35 out of 41 member states at the time ratified and deposited, often years later. There is no consistent pattern, apart from the fact that Niger is the only member state that deposited the instruments for the legal documents of the OAU in the 1960s, and Libya, Mauritius, and Somalia did not deposit any.

The second main characteristic of intra-African developments in the 1960s was violent conflict in and among member states. Thus, violent conflict broke out between neighbours over attempts to annex territory, including the Sand War in October 1963 between Morocco and Algeria over the latter's Tindouf and Béchar provinces. Repression and contestation of the powers of the centre developed into fully-fledged civil wars in Sudan (1955–1972), Congo / Léopoldville (1960–1965), Mali (1962–1964), and Chad (1965–1979). The conflict in Congo, which included the ousting and killing of Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba (1960 and 1961, respectively), added a new dimension to

violent conflict in Africa as it became one of the first proxy wars in Africa during the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union.

In some newly independent countries, parts of the territory wanted to secede. The Katanga insurgency in Congo / Léopoldville started in 1960. In Nigeria, following a coup, a counter-coup and pogroms against Igbo people working in the Northern parts of the country, on 30 May 1967 the eastern state of Biafra declared its independence. The federal Nigerian troops recaptured Biafra in a war that lasted until January 1970. And on a smaller scale from 1963 to 1967 Kenya was fighting ethnic Somali secessionists who thrived for a Greater Somali in the Northern Frontier District.

The independence of quite a number of OAU member states was the result of liberation struggles, for instance in Tunisia (1952–1954), Algeria (1954–1962), or the Mau Mau uprising in Kenya (1952–1964). And as the *wind of change* did not led to majority rule all over the continent and the *UN Declaration on the granting of independence to colonial countries and people*[68] was ignored in some parts of Africa, wars of independence were started in Eritrea against the Ethiopian empire (1960–1991), in the Portuguese colonies of Guinea-Bissau (1956–1974), Cape Verde (1956–1974), Angola (1961–1974), São Tomé and Príncipe (1961–1974), Guinea (1962–1974), and Mozambique (1964–1974) as well as in South Africa (1961–1993), Southern Rhodesia (1964–1979), and Namibia (1966–1990).

In 1960–1961, African countries at the United Nations were seriously divided over policies towards Algeria and Congo (Brazzaville). The newly independent Francophone countries clearly opposed other African states' positions.[69] It was only after 1962 that African states managed to reconcile their positions – but mainly at the cost of rarely speaking up on issues of violent conflict among member states.[70] Save for a few decisions taken by the Assembly or the Council, the OAU could rarely agree to intervene in conflicts.[71] Regarding the clash between Morocco and Algeria the OAU appointed an ad hoc commission of seven states to arbitrate the conflict. In 1964 the Council of Ministers dealt with both this case and the Kenya / Somalia conflict.[72] And on the Congo crisis in 1964, OAU interventions were futile.[73] But otherwise, the OAU simply called upon member states to end conflict and seek some form of reconciliation (for instance in

68 UNGA, UNGA Resolution 1514 on the granting of independence to colonial countries and people". 947th Plenary meeting, 9 December 1960, New York.

69 Hove, Africa in the United Nations; and van Walraven, Dreams of Power, p. 118.

70 Zartman, Decision-Making Among African Governments; M. Povolny, Africa in Search for Unity: Model and Reality, in: Background 9 (1966) 4, pp. 297–318; B. Andemicael, Peaceful Settlement Among African States: Roles of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity, New York 1972; D.H. Johns, The "Normalization" of Intra-African Diplomatic Activity, in: Journal of Modern African Studies 10 (1972) 4, pp. 597–610; Z. Červenka, The settlement of disputes among members of the Organisation of African Unity, in: Verfassung und Recht in Übersee 7 (1974) 2, pp. 117–138.

71 See Červenka, The settlement of disputes.

72 Markakis, The Organisation of African Unity, p. 141

73 Ibid., p. 146. See Akinyemi, The Organization of African Unity.

the case of Nigeria's Biafra conflict).[74] The Commission of Mediation, Conciliation, and Arbitration "was never presented with a single case for resolution" and therefore "largely moribund".[75] However, forms of informal diplomacy and "good offices" emerged. And with regard to conflict *within* member states, insistence on the principle of non-interference in internal affairs became a pretext not to engage with violent conflict (see Akinyemi 1972–1973).[76] Rather, the OAU engaged in shadow-fighting, by ritually addressing conflict beyond its borders: after the Six-Day War between Egypt and Israel (5–10 June 1967), every year the OAU Assembly pronounced itself against what was termed the "Israeli aggression".

## 5. Explaining Disenchantment

The *wind of change* had created a spirit of optimism across the African continent. However, the euphoria did not last long. The main reason for this was a dramatical deterioration in regime quality. The OAU soon earned its title as a "club of dictators". Authoritarian rule became the standard, rather than the exception (see graph 4). In the 1960s most independent African countries saw a shift from formal multi-partyism to one-party rule, or military dictatorship – actually, some tried both, and others entered this road in the 1970s. And in another four states there had been non-democratic monarchies anyway (including Ethiopia). By the end of 1969, out of 41 independent African states only Botswana, Equatorial-Guinea, Gambia, Madagascar, Mauritius and Zambia had managed to maintain the principle of competitive multi-party elections – and most of them should drop it soon thereafter.[77] In 1969 the number of one-party states had increased from 6 in 1960 to 14, and the number of military regimes from 1 to 17. Within a decade the share of formally democratic OAU member states had decreased from slightly over 60 percent to well below 20 percent.

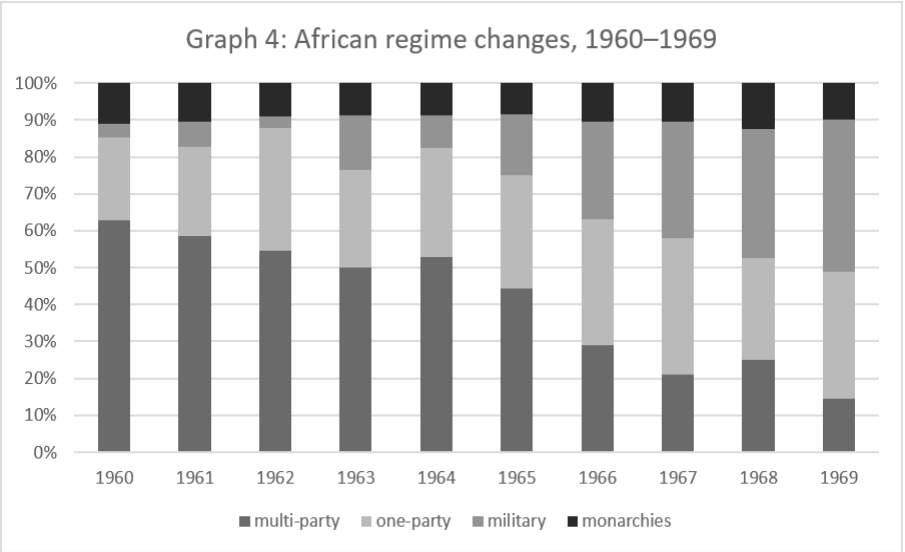
The majority of non-democratic governments had little interest in intervening in fellow African countries' affairs or investing into the OAU's capacity to resolve violent conflict, because in the long run this could have only worked against them. In this respect, the OAU had clearly reached its limits.

74 G.E. Akuchu, The Organization of African Unity Peacemaking Machinery and the Nigerian-Biafran conflict, PhD thesis, University of Denver 1974.

75 M. Muyangwa/M.A Vogt, An Assessment of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, 1993–2000, New York 2000, p. 7.

76 Van Walraven (Dreams of Power, p. 286) counts ten African conflicts for the 1960s. In seven cases OAU mediation interventions were successful, but they failed in the cases of the conflicts between Kenya, Ethiopia, and Somalia in 1963, the Congo crisis in 1964, and the Nigerian civil war (1967–1970). For a more positive assessment of the OAU's mediation record in the 1960s, see Muyangwa/Vogt, An Assessment of the OAU Mechanism, p. 5.

77 Equatorial-Guinea in 1970, Gambia in 1994, Madagascar and Zambia both in 1972.




Notes: By and large, following the typology of M. Bratton and N. van de Walle, Democratic Experiments in Africa, Regime Transitions in Comparative Perspective, Cambridge 1997. Excluding South Africa and Southern Rhodesia. Source: D. Nohlen, M. Krennerich and B. Thibaut (eds.), Elections in Africa. A Data Handbook, Oxford 1999.

## 6. Conclusions

By the end of the 1960s, the Organization of African Unity had become a bifurcated regional body. On the one hand, in global politics is had successfully asserted itself as a voice of African liberation movements that were fighting apartheid, settler colonialism and other forms of European colonialism within the international arenas in which African states commanded a considerable number of votes – the United Nations, the Commonwealth, and Non-Aligned Movement (though until 1969 little progress was made in substance). On the other, the OAU did not live up to the aspirations of its founding members. It may have selectively promoted "the unity and solidarity of the African States" and also contributed substantially towards eradicating "all forms of colonialism from Africa" as promised in the OAU Charter,[78] but it had failed to intensify African "cooperation and efforts to achieve a better life for the peoples of Africa", and "having due regard to the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights".[79] Regime change across the continent – from forms of multi-partyism towards one-party and military rule – led to a situation in which neither the OAU nor its

78 OAU, The Charter, §2 (1) a, d.
79 OAU, The Charter, §2 (1) b, e.

Commission Mediation, Conciliation, and Arbitration[80] were capacitated to effectively address violent conflict on the continent. The human rights record of many African governments decreased considerably, and many more regimes went along the same trajectory in the 1970s and 1980s.

In 1963 the OAU had materialised as a compromise over diverging models of regionalism. By the end of the decade, insistence on the principles of non-interference and respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each member state[81] had won the day over any forms of sovereignty sharing, let alone transfer, and responsibility for African people living under conditions of (non-colonial) authoritarian rule. The majority of illiberal OAU member states had reached a consensus to keep the OAU Secretariat and its other institutions weak.[82] The momentous 1960s have been an African decade, but then again, they haven't. Against this background it is not without irony that periodic attempts to discuss other forms of regionalism which would centre around Pan-Africanist visions were introduced by authoritarian regimes such as Libya.[83] It was only after the end of the Cold War and the second wind of democratic change in Africa, but also the genocide in Rwanda in 1994, that the practices and institutions of the OAU were thoroughly revisited – ultimately leading to the transformation of the continental body into the African Union in 2001. Importantly, while keeping many of the OAU principles, the newly shaped Union introduced its right

> … *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.*[84]

In this respect, the momentous 1960s casted a long shadow into the 21st century.

80 OAU, The Charter, §19.

81 OAU, The Charter, §3 (1–3).

82 See, for instance, K.M. Khamis, Promoting the African Union, Washington 2008, pp. 9–20; and K.D. Magliveras / G.J. Naldi, The African Union, 2nd edn, Alphen aan den Rijn 2018, pp. 23–24.

83 On the failed project for the advancement of the "United States of Africa", see U. Engel, The Changing Role of the AU Commission in Inter-African Relations. The Case of APSA and AGA, in: J.W. Harbeson / D. Rothchild (eds.), Africa in World Politics. Engaging a Changing Global Order, 5th edn, Boulder 2013, pp. 186–206, at pp. 188–194.

84 OAU, Constitutive Act, §4(h).