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ABSTRACT

The inauguration of the African Union (AU) in July 2002 represents an ambitious project to establish frameworks and institutions that promote regional integration and co-operation to address the continent’s perils. This is particularly true in the security and defence sectors. Because conflicts in Africa have been characterised by humanitarian catastrophes, regional co-operation now reflects the priorities of human security and development. In particular, the Constitutive Act of the AU enforces the principles of the responsibility to protect (R2P) the right to intervene in a member state in respect of grave circumstances and intolerance of unconstitutional changes of government. At first glance these principles seem contrary to international law, the notion of sovereignty and the primacy of the UN Security Council in matters of international peace and security. Using new-institutionalism approaches the research will examine the process whereby the AU originated and how the organisation affects member state behaviour. In particular, the research will examine whether one can identify a critical juncture to account for the origins of the AU and whether the norms enshrined in its Constitutive Act are being internalised by member states. It is the contention of the research that calculations of material interest and power balancing often compete with norm localisation thus affecting institutional predictability and the ability of the African Union to fulfil its mandate.
LIST OF ACRONYMS

AU  African Union
R2P Responsibility to Protect
PSC Peace and Security Council
ECOWAS Economic Community of West African States
ICISS International Commission on State Sovereignty and Intervention
UN United Nations
WSOD World Summit Outcome Document
CEWS Continental Early Warning System
IGAD Intergovernmental Authority on Development
SADC Southern African Development Community
ASF African Standby Force
OAU Organisation of African Unity
ECOMOG ECOWAS Military Monitoring Group
NPFL National Patriotic Front of Liberia
INPFL Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia
SMC Standing Mediation Committee
UNOMIL UN Observer Mission in Liberia
UNMIL UN Mission in Liberia
AMIS African Union Mission in Sudan
TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Acronyms

Abstract

Introduction

Chapter One
1.1 The Responsibility to protect and the interpretive dilemma.
1.2 The African Union’s Peace and Security architecture.

Chapter Two
2.1 The three approaches in new-institutionalism. Construing the relationship between institutions and behaviour and understanding the process whereby institutions originate or change.
2.2 Operationalising the three approaches in new-institutionalism to account for the origins of the African Union.

Chapter Three
3.1 The ECOWAS intervention in Liberia. Building-blocks for the origins of the African Union.
3.2 How and Why ECOWAS intervened.
3.3 Lessons learnt from the ECOWAS intervention.
3.4 Does the ECOWAS intervention serve to account for the subsequent security architecture of the African Union?

Chapter Four
4.1 Explaining the Logic of Appropriateness.
4.2 The African Union and its Critics. Why calculations of interest persist in Africa.
4.3 The future of the African Union and the responsibility to protect.

Conclusion

References