RESEARCH ARTICLE

The paradox of critical security and the African solutions to African problems

Edward Silvestre Kaweesi [ID]

Department of Political Science and Public Administration, Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda
Email: Kaweesiesilve@gmail.com

Abstract

In this article, I attempt to theorise the nature of the African multilateral security system. In doing so, I interrogate the question: how does the emancipatory logic of critical security relate to the post-colonial ideal of self-determination within the context of the African multilateral security system? The question is worthy of an attempt, for it brings the post-colonial concerns of African security into the discussion of critical security. For the empirical exposition, I draw on the idea of African solutions to African problems (Afsol to Afprob) as the hallmark of Africa's collective security system to argue that at the ideational level, the emancipatory logic converges with self-determination. However, I observe that, at the level of operationalisation, the emancipatory logic of critical security diverges from the post-colonial ideal of self-determination. This is owing to the privileges of power reflected in the representational and financial capacity of the actors involved. This facilitates the reproduction of the Eurocentric dependency which Afsol to Afprob sought to supplant. The outcome is a paradox of critical security in post-colonial contexts exemplified in the disaggregation of emancipation into three emancipatory logics: the urgent, preferred, and desired.

Introduction

At the level of articulation, the agenda of the African multilateral security system relating to the institutions for collective security in Africa reflects the convergence of the emancipatory logic of critical security with the post-colonial ideal of self-determination. It is emancipatory given the array of security threats from which Africans need to be liberated. For Aning, the threats are broad and constitute the emerging 'new African security (dis)order'. The threats include ethnic antagonism, national rivalries, religious tensions, spreading weaponry, personal ambitions, and authoritarianism.[1] Some are 'complex common security problems', including the Great Lakes Region of Africa's enduring 'arch of insecurity'.[2] Refugee-generating situations endure and equally require concerted efforts.[3] As regards governance, democracy is incessantly threatened, as political transitions increasingly take the form of coups d'état. The cases of the coups in Mali and Guinea,

---

[1] Emmanuel K. Aning, 'African Crisis Response Initiative and the new African security (dis)order', *African Journal of Political Science/Revue Africaine de Science Politique*, 6:1 (2001), pp. 43–67 (p. 44).

[2] Solomon Hailu, 'A new start for African security', *International Journal on World Peace*, 26:4 (2009), pp. 63–73 (pp. 65–6). See also Wafula Okumu, 'The African Union: Pitfalls and prospects for uniting Africa', *Journal of International Affairs*, 62:2 (2009), pp. 93–111 (p. 93).

[3] Hailu, 'A new start for African security', pp. 65–6.

---

and the military takeovers in Chad and Sudan, attest to the extent to which democratic gains are being eroded by the increased militarisation of the political space in Africa.[4]

Furthermore, the agenda is post-colonial to the extent that it essentialises the quest for self-determination that relates to the liberation and empowerment of African identity. This is articulated in phrases such as the 'new start for African security'.[5] As such, the African Union (AU) promises a 'new doctrinal and structural framework' to address the security crisis in Africa.[6] The framework comprises both the structural and doctrinal/ideational layers. At the pinnacle of the structural layer is the African Union (AU), which is taken as the highest aggregation of African collective action. The commitment as transmitted in the preamble of the Constitutive Act of the African Union (hereinafter 'the Act'), is for member states:

> [to be] CONSCIOUS of the fact that the scourge of conflicts in Africa constitutes a major impediment to the socio-economic development of the continent and the need to promote peace, security, and stability as a prerequisite for the implementation of … development and integration.[7]

The AU was thus created to attune African multilateralism to those concerns of the times that would not be addressed under the framework of the Organisation of the African Unity (OAU). The OAU's mission was to facilitate decolonisation. The AU furthers the liberation of African identity, enabling it to mature as a player in the global economy and other areas of international relations.[8]

To operationalise the mandate of the AU, part of the 'new structural framework' is the 'new APSA' – the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). It includes an array of institutions including the Peace and Security Council (PSC), which acts as the governing layer of the structure for security. The Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) provides security analysis. Part of the military capacity of the AU is the African Standby Force (ASF). The ASF ensures the observance of human security, good governance, and the development-related aspects of post-conflict reconstruction. In addition to ASF are the Common African Defence and Security Policy (CAD&SP) and the Military Staff Committee (MSC). The Panel of the Wise (POW) serves as the external advisory body, and the African Peace Fund (APF) acts as the consolidated fund for the AU's collective security undertakings.[9] Therefore, through APSA, Africa's collective capacity is mobilised to address Africa's security-related challenges.

The AU is also mandated to empower Africans to '[decide] their destiny [even on issues of security] without Europeans'.[10] This is because, in the AU strategic alignment, security is construed as a *sine qua non* for the progress of African identity. In that regard, several ideas have been mobilised to tune the Africans into collective action. They include the idea of the 'African Renaissance'. This idea connotes all the efforts aimed at the positive transformation of African identity. The long-term objective is to reclaim the position of African identity in the world.[11] Additionally, there is the idea of 'Afrocentricity', which encourages the African people to start seeing themselves as agents rather than spectators to historical revolution and change.[12] Not least is the idea of Pax Africana, which is underscored for the purpose of mobilising a sense of collective essence. It speaks to the belief that the peace of Africa can only be assured by the exertions of Africans as agents of their own

---

[4]Wondemagegnehu D. Yohannes 'Peace and Security', in Ulf, Engel (ed.) *Yearbook on the African Union* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2022), 139–178.

[5]Hailu, 'A new start for African security', pp. 65–6.

[6]Ibid., p. 65.

[7]African Union, 'The Constitutive Act', Addis Ababa (2000), p. 3.

[8]Pierre Buyoya, 'Toward a stronger African Union', *The Brown Journal of World Affairs*, 12 (2005), pp. 165–175 (p. 165).

[9]Alex Vines, 'A decade of African peace and security architecture', *International Affairs*, 89:1 (2013), pp. 89–109 (p. 97).

[10]Bheki R. Mngomezulu, 'Revisiting the notion of "African solution to African problems"', *Journal of African Union Studies*, 8:2 (2019), pp. 9–23 (p. 9).

[11]Okumu, 'The African Union'.

[12]Roseline M. Achieng', 'Can we speak of African Agency? APRM and Africa's Agenda 2063', *African Sociological Review/Revue Africaine de Sociologie* 18:1 (2014), pp. 49–64 (p. 50).

liberation.[13] These ideas form the body of African political thought, which relates all ideas that enable political progress in Africa. As a body of ideas, they are broadly referred to as 'narratives of return' in the study of post-colonial Africa. This is because they obtain from the 'cultural precepts, norms and orientations of the pre-colonial [Africa] that provide a philosophical paradigm for the creation of a future society'.[14] The pinnacle of the 'narratives of return' is the essentialisation of Ubuntu as a collective term for unity, social cohesion, and African advancement. Ubuntu is the cornerstone of the reorganisation of Africa.[15]

Worth noting is that the hallmark of the advancement of Africa's multilateral security system is the attempt to reshape the idea of African solutions to African problems (Afsol to Afprob). The idea was introduced in 1992 by George Ayittey, an African political economist, following the Somali debacle, related to the deadly clash in Mogadishu, Somalia in 1992. The clash was between the US Rangers and the Somali radicals of the warlord Mohammed Aideed. As a result, 18 US Rangers were killed. The incident provoked uproar among the American public. In the end, the then-government of the United States yielded to domestic pressure and pulled American troops out of Somalia in 1993.[16] Thus, there was a marked shift in the United States' foreign policy in Africa. Africa, in the words of Nicolas van de Walle, became a 'national interest backwater'.[17] The shift is also discussed as the 'post-Somalia world of intervention hesitancy'.[18] It led to the adoption of 'disengagement' as the guiding rubric of the United States' foreign-policy actions in Africa.[19] The disengagement was epitomised by the extent to which the United States remained indifferent to the Rwandan and Liberian episodes of violence in the 1990s.[20]

As a result, Afsol to Afprob became the rallying cry for Africans to mobilise their capabilities to address Africa's security challenges. The extent to which there are security challenges that can strictly be referred to as 'African' is contested. It is asserted that some of the problems that are dubbed 'African' are a result of the activities of external actors operating in Africa. The crisis in Somalia is, for instance, partly blamed on the arms flows from Iran, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Poland, the United States, and other states that are interested in the geopolitical dynamics of the Horn.[21]

Also, the idea that Africa can adequately address the problems which bedevil its security is debated. The core argument in this debate is that Africa grapples with inadequate capacity to address its security-related challenges. It has been reasoned therefore that the invocation of strict adherence to 'African solutions' can be used as an excuse by the Western governments to avoid committing to multilateral security arrangements at the United Nations (UN) aimed at maintaining peace and security in Africa.[22] Further, the question of how Afsol to Afprob can be reconciled with the mandate of the institutions for global peace and security such as the UN is interrogated. This is transmitted as the 'agency' question. The focus is on who should be in charge of African

[13]Kristiana Powell and Thomas Kwasi Tieku, 'The African Union's new security agenda: Is Africa closer to a pax pan-Africana?', *International Journal*, 60:4 (2005), pp. 937–52.

[14]Biney Ama, 'The historical Discourse of African Humanism', in Praeg Leonhard and Magadla, Siphokazi (eds.) Ubuntu: Curating the Archive (University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2014), pp.27–53 (p.30).

[15]Arthur Gwagwa, Emre Kazim, and Airlie Hilliard, 'The role of the African value of Ubuntu in global AI inclusion discourse: A normative ethics perspective', *Patterns*, 3:4 (2022), available at {https://doi.org/10.1016/j.patter.2022.100462}.

[16]Aning, 'African Crisis Response Initiative', p. 47.

[17]Martin Kindl, 'African security futures: Threats, partnership, and international engagement for the new US administration', *PRISM*, 6:4 (2017), pp. 14–31.

[18]Herbert M. Howe and Aaryn Urell, 'African security in the post-Cold War era: an examination of multinational vs private security forces', *African Journal of Political Science/Revue Africaine de Science Politique*, 3:1 (1998), pp. 42–51 (p. 50).

[19]Aning, 'African Crisis Response Initiative', p. 45.

[20]Howe and Urell, 'African security in the post-Cold War era'.

[21]Belachew Gebrewold, 'The cynicism of "African solutions for African problems"', *African Security*, 3:2 (2010), pp. 80–103.

[22]Paul D. Williams, 'Keeping the peace in Africa: Why "African" solutions are not enough', *Ethics & International Affairs*, 22:3 (2008), pp. 309–29.

solutions. The contention is whether it should be the AU, the UN, or subregional bodies such as the Economic Community of West Africa (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC).[23]

Despite the debate over the viability of Afsol to Afprob, the idea is considered to be an important pillar of African multilateralism under the AU.[24] It is the practical pathway through which the promise, contained in Article 3(f) of the Act is sustained. The article provides that the AU is supposed to 'Promote peace, security, and stability on the continent'.[25] The objective is to attune the AU security agenda to the historical mission of liberation. The desired outcome is the promotion of the 'African personality'. This relates to the empowerment of Africans to take charge of African affairs. It is conceived as the true sense of the African liberation struggle.[26]

Afsol to Afprob, therefore, bears the post-colonial vision for self-determination. The purpose is to enable the empowerment of Africans to become a force to be reckoned with in the global arena.[27] The commitment to Afsol to Afprob is summarised under the preamble of the Act of the AU, that the member states are: 'DETERMINED to take up the multi-faceted challenges that confront [the] continent and peoples in light of the social, economic, and political changes taking place in the world'.[28] The aim is 'to bestow Africa as a matter of principle, the lead role or ownership in the endeavour to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts on the continent'.[29] Afsol to Afprob is for that matter articulated as an 'anti-imperialist' undertaking.[30] Yet the AU, as the institution which is supposed to be at the vanguard of operationalising African solutions, grapples with limited capacity to deliver solutions to all African problems. As a way forward, it is suggested that it would be pragmatic for the AU to continue mobilising external actors to fund African solutions. Glas in that regard concludes that 'AU officials [should] uphold both the anti-imperialist norm and their pragmatic dependence as mutually congruent'.[31] Adekeyo Adebayo describes this in terms of 'strategic partnerships', where the AU works with the European Union (EU) and the UN to address the challenges to Africa's security.[32]

There are then different perspectives and contentions on the viability of Afsol to Afprob; we should begin, however, with the realisation that the idea springs from a shared spirit of self-determination. A problem remains, however: how does the anti-imperial stance contained in Afsol to Afprob relate to a continuing dependency of former colonies, and how might the two be disentangled? This has implications for the meaning and operationalisation of Afsol to Afprob. Dependency syndrome, for instance, leads to the questionable ownership of Afsol to Afprob. Of concern, as outlined earlier, is the question of financial capacity to enable Africans to operationalise African solutions. It is reported that, because of the lack of adequate funding, the operations of the PSC, ASF, and CEWS remain sub-optimal.[33] For that matter, 'the AU [risks] becoming a weak, donor-dependent institution with limited capacity'.[34] The AU institutional reform study by a team

---

[23]Williams, 'Keeping the peace in Africa'.

[24]Mngomezulu, 'Revisiting the notion', p. 14.

[25]African Union, 'The constitutive act', p. 5.

[26]Okumu, 'The African Union'.

[27]Mngomezulu, 'Revisiting the notion', p. 14.

[28]African Union, 'The constitutive act', p. 3.

[29]Ndubuisi Christian Ani, 'Three schools of thought on "African solutions to African problems"', *Journal of Black Studies*, 50:2 (2019), pp. 135–55 (p. 138).

[30]Aarie Glas, 'African Union security culture in practice: African problems and African solutions', *International Affairs*, 94:5 (2018), pp. 1121–38.

[31]Ibid.

[32]Adekeye Adebajo, 'Strategic partnerships', in Ulf Engel (ed.), *Yearbook on the African Union*, volume 1 (2020) (Leiden: Brill, 2021), pp. 194–213.

[33]Vines, 'A decade of African peace', p. 107.

[34]Ibid., p. 109.

led by Paul Kagame regarded this as the problem of over-dependence on partner funding. It was reported that 97% of AU programmes are funded by donors.[35]

The AU, as a way forward, has since 2003 strived to overcome the 'heavy financial dependence'. The projection is that in the future member states should fund the operational budget at 100%, the programme budget at 75%, and the Peace Support Operations at 25%. To realise that target, in 2016, the Heads of State introduced a Union Levy of a 0.2% tax on eligible imports to member states.[36] Despite such initiatives, tangible outcomes are yet to be realised. The deadline for the actualisation of those budgetary targets was the year 2021, but it was postponed by four years to 2025.[37] Nevertheless, the process through which the paradox of dependence can be overcome is articulated by the Kagame institutional reforms; the gap is how they can be operationalised.[38] The theoretical implications of such an enduring paradox for the understanding of African security is the major undertaking of this discussion.

Against this background, I theorise in this article the nature of the African multilateral security system. In doing so, I interrogate the question: how does the emancipatory logic of critical security relate to the post-colonial ideal of self-determination in the context of the African multilateral security system? Accordingly, drawing on the idea of Afsol to Afprob as the hallmark of Africa's collective security system, I argue that at the ideational level, the emancipatory logic of critical security converges with the post-colonial ideal of self-determination.

However, I observe that at the level of operationalisation and implementation of Afsol to Afprob, the emancipatory logic diverges from the post-colonial ideal of self-determination. This is owing to the privileges of power reflected in the representational capacity of the African political elite vis-à-vis that of the African people (citizens), and the financial capacity of the donors (the EU) vis-à-vis that of the AU member states. This facilitates the reproduction of the Eurocentric dependency that Afsol to Afprob sought to supplant. In the final analysis, the reproduction of dependency undermines the realisation of the post-colonial ideal of self-determination in matters of security. This leads to a paradox in the operationalisation of Afsol to Afprob. This is exemplified in the disaggregation of the emancipatory logic into three logics: of the urgent (exceptional security needs of the African people), preferred (emergency security issues according to the political elites with representational capacity), and desired (issues to be operationalised as considered by the donors with the financial capacity).

The discussion is accordingly organised into three analytical turns. The first turn is a conceptual discussion of how the post-colonial quest for the self-determination of identities restricts the meaning of security to the emancipatory logic of critical security. I underscore at this point the convergence of the post-colonial quest for the self-determination of identities with the emancipatory logic of critical security as exemplified by African solutions. The second turn is a delineation of the divergence of the post-colonial ideal of self-determination from the emancipatory logic of critical security along the continuum of the operationalisation of African solutions. I delineate how the privileges of power related to the representational and financial capacity of the actors (the African people, the political elites, and the EU) mediates the operationalisation of the solutions, leading to the disaggregation of the emancipatory logic into three logics: the urgent, preferred, and desired. I present the conclusion in the third turn. The discussion is prescriptive. The focus is on the avenues through which Africans can attain the capacity to realise the true sense of Afsol to Afprob. Before developing this argument, I set out in the section below the methods that were used.

---

[35] Paul Kagame, 'The imperative to strengthen our Union', Report on the Proposed Recommendations for the Institutional Reform of the African Union 29 (2017).

[36] Ulf Engel, 'The state of the Union', in Ulf Engel (ed.), *Yearbook on the African Union*, volume 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2021), pp. 23–39.

[37] Alexandre T. Ratebaye, 'The annual interview: Implementation of the African Union's twin financial and institutional reforms', in Ulf Engel (ed.), *Yearbook on the African Union*, volume 2 (Leiden: Brill, 2022), pp. 13–18.

[38] For the discussion of the reforms, see Kagame, 'The imperative to strengthen our Union'.

Theorising the nature of the African security system: Method

I draw in the first section on the critical security literature which discusses the intersection of emancipation, identity, and security to help theorise the nature of the African multilateral security system. Specifically, I draw on the work[s] of, for example, Ken Booth,[39] Edward Newman,[40] Lara Montesinos Coleman,[41] Carolin Kaltofen,[42] Karin Fierke,[43] and Anne Hinz.[44] For the second turn, I draw on the literature discussing the operationalisation of African solutions. I juxtapose it with the critical security literature analysing the question of identity and security. I particularly draw at this point on João Nunes,[45] Myriam Dunn Cavelty,[46] Sarah Bertrand,[47] Felix Ciută,[48] Ryerson Christie,[49] Tarak Barkawi and Mark Laffey,[50] Thorsten Bonacker,[51] and Catherine Gegout.[52]

I rely on several sources to discuss the three disaggregated logics of emancipation: the urgent, preferred, and desired. To explain the urgent logic, I rely on Afrobarometer data from the surveys of 1999–2001, 2002–3, 2005–6, 2008–9, 2011–13, 2014–15, and 2016–18. The specific focus is on African citizens' responses to the questions: what are the most important problems facing this country that government should address? Which of these is most important? As regards the time period, I selected the series beginning from the period 1999–2001 because this period marked the transition from the OAU to the AU. It should be recalled that the decision for the establishment of the AU was reached at the Sirte (Libya) OAU Summit of 1999. The launch came in 2002. Further, the choice of data set is informed by the comprehensiveness with which Afrobarometer transmits the views of African citizens on political, social, and economic matters as they obtain to different African states.

I draw on the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) reports in order to triangulate the views cast in the Afrobarometer data. The objective is to indicate how the issues captured by Afrobarometer resonate with the security-related concerns of people as transmitted in the reports of the APRM as an institution of the AU. The APRM annual reports are published by the APRM secretariat. They offer country-specific assessments of the progress of member states of the AU in the thematic areas of democratic and political governance, economic governance and management, and corporate governance. The reports give a glimpse into what the AU takes as its official record on governance-related issues.

---

[39] Ken Booth, 'Security and emancipation', *Review of International Studies*, 17:4 (1991), pp. 313–26.

[40] Edward Newman, 'Critical human Security Studies', *Review of International Studies*, 36:1 (2010), pp. 77–94.

[41] Lara Montesinos Coleman, 'Racism! What do you mean? From Howell and Richter-Montpetit's underestimation of the problem, towards situating security through struggle', *Security Dialogue*, 52:1_suppl (2021), pp. 69–77.

[42] Carolin Kaltofen, 'Engaging Adorno: Critical Security Studies after emancipation', *Security Dialogue*, 44:1 (2013), pp. 37–51.

[43] Karin M. Fierke, *Critical Approaches to International Security* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2015).

[44] Anne Hinz, 'Security and the costs and benefits of manipulating analytical boundaries: Constructivist debates within European Critical Security Studies', *Sicherheit und Frieden/Security and Peace*, 25:4 (2007), pp. 202–7.

[45] João Nunes, 'Reclaiming the political: Emancipation and critique in Security Studies', *Security Dialogue*, 43:4 (2012), pp. 345–61.

[46] Myriam Dunn Cavelty, Mareile Kaufmann, and Kristian Søby Kristensen, 'Resilience and (in)security: Practices, subjects, temporalities', *Security Dialogue*, 46:1 (2015), pp. 3–14.

[47] Sarah Bertrand, 'Can the subaltern securitize? Postcolonial perspectives on securitization theory and its critics', *European Journal of International Security*, 3:3 (2018), pp. 281–99.

[48] Felix Ciută, 'Security and the problem of context: A hermeneutical critique of securitisation theory', *Review of International Studies*, 35:2 (2009), pp. 301–26.

[49] Ryerson Christie, 'Critical voices and human security: To endure, to engage or to critique?', *Security Dialogue*, 41:2 (2010), pp. 169–90.

[50] Tarak Barkawi Tarak and Mark Laffey, 'The postcolonial moment in Security Studies', *Review of International Studies*, 32:2 (2006), pp. 329–52.

[51] Thorsten Bonacker, 'Security practices and the production of center–periphery figurations in statebuilding', *Alternatives*, 43:4 (2018), pp. 190–206 (p. 193).

[52] Catherine Gegout, *Why Europe Intervenes in Africa: Security Prestige and the Legacy of Colonialism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).

The evidence that gives exposition to the preferred logic is gleaned from the records of the AU, particularly the decisions and declarations. These transmit the politically agreed positions of the AU member states. To further strengthen the discussion, I draw on the literature that discusses Africa's security in relation to Afsol to Afprob.

Finally, I use the annual and sectoral reports of the AU Commission (AUC) to discuss the desired logic of emancipation. The evidence generated from those reports is juxtaposed with arguments presented in post-colonial literature about security in Africa. But generally, I analyse how the emancipatory logic of critical security relates to the post-colonial ideal of self-determination within the context of the African multilateral security system. To begin with, the relationship is paradoxical.

The paradox of critical security in the post-colonial

The discussion about the critical security agenda is projected as a paradox of meanings. We are taught that 'a paradox is a set of mutually inconsistent propositions each of which enjoys some plausibility when viewed on its own'.[53] But beyond the homogeneous meanings, critical security embraces several approaches to explaining the nature of security in terms of threats and the means of addressing them.[54] It opens up David Baldwin's *security problematique* as expressed in the array of answers which can be given to his seven questions of security: for whom, how much security, from what, by what means, at what cost, and in what period.[55] Thus, within the frontiers of critical security, there is no circumscription of the meaning of security, the security concerns to be privileged, and how they can be addressed. In critical security, the conceptualisation of security is not delimited, but three questions are fundamental in unravelling the *critical security problematique*: whose security should be prioritised? What are the key threats? And whose interests do they serve?[56]

In line with those questions, emancipation becomes a medium that enables the discussion of the security of identities in post-colonial contexts. To give credence to that submission, Booth's emancipatory logic of security is material:

> [Security] in world politics is an instrumental value that enables people(s) some opportunity to choose how to live. It is a means by which individuals and collectivities can invent and re-invent different ideas about being human.[57]

Booth's emancipatory logic rhymes with the quest for Afsol to Afprob. This is to the extent that Afsol to Afprob espouses the quest for 'people(s)' to make their choices as regards security. This quest is historical and is reaffirmed in the preamble of the Act of the AU:

> that since its inception the Organisation of African Unity has played a determining and invaluable role in the liberation of the continent, the affirmation of a common identity, and the process of attainment of the unity of our continent and has provided a unique framework for our collective action in Africa.[58]

Furthermore, the myriad security challenges that are supposed to be contained under African solutions point to the extent of determination needed to emancipate African people from their predicament. The self-determination of Africans to address their security challenges relates to the

[53] Stephen Schiffer, 'A paradox of meaning', *Noûs*, 28:3 (1994), pp. 279–324.

[54] Newman, 'Critical Human Security Studies'.

[55] David A. Baldwin, 'The concept of security', *Review of International Studies*, 23:1 (1997), pp. 5–26 (pp. 13–17).

[56] Christopher S. Browning and Matt McDonald, 'The future of Critical Security Studies: Ethics and the politics of security', *European Journal of International Relations*, 19:2 (2013), pp. 235–55 (p. 238).

[57] Ken Booth (ed.), *Critical Security Studies and World Politics* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2005), p. 23.

[58] African Union, 'The constitutive act', p. 2.

quest to attain agency and their capacity to 'choose how to live'. In this regard, Article 4(k) of the Act provides for the 'Promotion of self-reliance within the framework of the Union'.[59]

Such a quest for self-determination may require governments to be at the vanguard of the liberation processes. Liberation connotes 'security [seen] through the lens of struggle'.[60] Newman was of the view that the idea of liberation relates to the 'central paradox of human security', where the very 'structures and norms' which have been said to cause human insecurity are paradoxically critical to its promotion.[61] The paradox is further deepened in instances where the issues at hand relate to the security of identities as collectivities. Thus, Hudson put it precisely that identity politics underlines, 'the ambivalence of human security as both a political project of emancipation and an analytical framework'.[62] This is because, in an attempt to address the ambivalence, the discussion of human security is opened to a multiplicity of contextual interpretations beyond the universalised United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Security category. The objective is to transcend human security orthodoxy, which lacks contextual grounding and does not give a voice to identities.[63]

This underlines the need for a transition from human security orthodoxy, which essentialises methodological individualism, to focus on the security of identities in different contexts. The idea is that security concerns are supposed to be discussed in relation to the emancipation of a particular identity category of race, gender, and/or nationality.[64] This shift is what is described as critical human security.[65] Context matters as far as security is concerned, and Kaltofen accordingly advises that we should treat security not as a concept with definite meaning but as a 'constellation' – always transitioning to accommodate different issues and logic as a result of 'contextual motion'.[66] This contextual understanding of security enables the understanding of the security of multiple identities and their vulnerabilities. Relatedly, Fierke is of the view that 'identity' is the analytical bridge between critical approaches.[67] By bringing the notion of the vulnerability of states and societies as the focus of security, Fierke indicates a move towards a productive discussion between the traditional and critical approaches to security.[68] This resonates with Hinz's discussion of Copenhagen's duality of state security and societal security.[69]

Within post-colonial Africa, Afsol to Afprob reconciles the vulnerability of African identity with responsibility. This is because the emancipation of identities from all vulnerabilities requires a 'multiplication of resilience'. This relates to 'granting the vulnerable the means and responsibility to help themselves'.[70] In that regard, Dunn Cavelty, Kaufmann, and Kristensen argued that '(In)security [is not] only dependent on character and severity of threats it is exposed to (its vulnerability), but also on the subject itself'.[71]

So, the imperative of Afsol to Afprob does not only lie in the magnitude of the security threats to be addressed, but also in the capacity of Africans to be at the vanguard of the operationalisation of African solutions. Africans to that extent are required to take the responsibility to extricate themselves from vulnerabilities. To overcome vulnerability is to be emancipated. And regardless of the identity category that needs emancipation, Booth contends that emancipation necessitates

[59]Ibid., p. 7.

[60]Coleman, 'Racism! What do you mean?', p. 69.

[61]Newman, 'Critical Human Security Studies'.

[62]Hudson Heidi, '"Doing" security as though humans matter As Though Humans Matter: A Feminist Perspective on Gender and the Politics of Human Security', *Security Dialogue*, 36:2 (2005), pp. 155–174 (p. 158).

[63]Christie, 'Critical voices and human security', p. 187.

[64]Hudson, 'Doing security as though humans matter'.

[65]Ibid.

[66]Kaltofen, 'Engaging Adorno', p. 38.

[67]Fierke, *Critical Approaches to International Security*.

[68]Ibid.

[69]Hinz, 'Security and the costs and benefits of manipulating analytical boundaries'.

[70]Dunn Cavelty, Kaufmann, and Kristensen, 'Resilience and (in)security', p. 3.

[71]Ibid., p. 4.

the 'theories of good life' – which argue for the promotion of biological drives of life in tandem with theories of 'survival' – making a case for liberation from all vulnerabilities.[72] Booth's allusion to the 'good life' and 'survival' broadens the meaning of security. The myriad vulnerabilities from which African people are supposed to be liberated in order to live a 'good life' and 'survive' better broaden Africa's multilateral security agenda. For instance, in advocating for an expansive agenda for security in Africa, Paul D. Williams's logic is emancipatory. He identifies three issue areas: violence, health challenges (HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases), and environmental degradation.[73]

As such, at the ideational level, the articulation of Afsol to Afprob reflects the post-colonial ideal of self-determination and the emancipatory logic of critical security. This points conceptually to the convergence of the emancipatory logic of critical security with the post-colonial ideal of self-determination. The convergence, however, ceases to hold when it comes to the operationalisation of Afsol to Afprob. Thus, the emancipatory logic diverges from the post-colonial ideal of self-determination. This is attributed to a plethora of security challenges from which Africans need to be emancipated, yet they also grapple with a dearth of capacity, as discussed in the following section.

Operationalisation of Afsol to Afprob

At the ideational level, Afsol to Afprob takes the form of 'a discourse of futurity'.[74] The articulation of Afsol to Afprob is thus inclined to reflect on the colonial past to chart a way forward for the future. The objective is to carry on with 'the heroic struggles waged by [the] peoples and [the] continent for political independence, human dignity and economic emancipation'.[75] This is in line with the idea of 'anti-imperialism/African solutions first', which Paul Williams puts as the third principle of African security culture.[76] As such, as outlined earlier, Afsol to Afprob invokes the post-colonial ideal of self-determination for the liberation of African people. With regard to operationalisation of Afsol to Afprob, one can hardly imagine the self-determination of Africans without the financial assistance of global players (in this case the EU). This questions the extent to which African solutions remain African. In a way, because Africans lack the capacity for self-determination, then Afsol to Afprob, to appropriate Booth's words, becomes a 'practical impracticality'.[77] This resonates with João Nunes's 'notions of reality and power'.[78] Nunes is of the view that 'political relations and structures [underpin] the reality of security and engagement'. He discusses this as the politics of materialisation.[79]

Materialisation relates to control over privileges of power and how they mediate political outcomes, including security. When African solutions are discussed in relation to the materiality of the privileges of power, the critical question of who is in a powerful position to speak about security comes to bear on the operationalisation of African solutions. The privileges of power include the (political) representational and financial capacity on which this discussion is anchored. At the theoretical level, answers to the question of who is powerful to speak about security are varied. The Copenhagen securitisation process point at statesmen. The Paris School refers to 'institutionalised patterns of practices that simultaneously empower and constrain agents in their capacity to speak

---

[72]Booth, 'Security and emancipation', p. 322.

[73]Williams, 'Thinking about security in Africa', p. 1028.

[74]For the discussion of the idea of the 'discourse of futurity', see, Baldwin Andrew, 'Whiteness and Futurity: Toward a research agenda', *Progress in Human Geography*, 36:2 (2012), pp.172–187.

[75]African Union, 'The Constitutive Act', Addis Ababa (2000), p.2.

[76]Williams D Paul, 'From Non-Intervention to Non-Indifference: The Origins and Development of the African Union's Security Culture', *African Affairs*, 106:423 (2007), pp.253–279.

[77]Booth, 'Security and emancipation', p. 321.

[78]Nunes, 'Reclaiming the political'.

[79]Ibid., pp. 353 and 357.

security'.[80] However, whether it is statesmen or institutions that are powerful to speak security, the privileges of power are critical in enabling security-related decision-making. With 'politics [and power] as a matter of command', the meaning of security in the context of Africa takes the form of what Ole Weaver identifies as the effects of the 'logic of necessity'.[81] The logic obtains from the question of who determines what is necessary. This is moderated by privileges of power as determinants of necessity. Thus, owing to power dynamics in the post-colonial context, the emancipatory logic of critical security gets disaggregated into exception, emergency, and decision.[82]

Related to the AU, I submit that owing to the privileges of power and representational and financial capacity, the post-colonial agenda for self-determination as expressed in Afsol to Afprob loses its homogeneous appeal. This elicits the question of who is empowered to deliver the African solutions and who is liberated (emancipated) by African solutions. As a result, the emancipatory logic of African solutions gets disaggregated into three logics, the urgent (exceptional security needs of African people), preferred (emergency security issues according to the political elites with political representational capacity), and desired (the issues to be operationalised/implemented as decided by donors with the financial capacity). I begin by elaborating on urgent emancipatory logic in relation to Afsol to Afprob.

The urgent: The know-thyself

The *urgent* is identified by the African as an individual, *Umuntu* – thyself. It is an outcome of introspection about one's internal state.[83] It is described as know-thyself. Within the context of African identity, the know-thyself is transmitted as part of the Ubuntu. In this case, the individual is subject to the collective conceptions of identity. This is expressed in the Nguni proverb, *Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* (translated as 'a person is a person through other persons'), as the highlight of Ubuntu.[84] Ubuntu does not supplant the sanctity of individuals, except that the cornerstone of their existence is the society to which they belong. The individual becomes a beneficiary of the survival of society. In that regard, the referent object is not the individual values as per the universalised elements of methodological Human Security which Hudson accused of 'false holism'.[85] Society (as an identity) becomes the referent object, and as earlier noted, this is discussed as the critical human security approach as opposed to the methodological individualism of human security.[86] The individual, in this case, is but 'an irreducible unit of the political life … [of] the state or an identity [and] conceived of in plurality'.[87] In the African context, the beginning is a person – individual – *Umuntu*, who is part of other persons – *ngabantu*. The individuals are not an end in themselves but rather part of society. This underscores the existence of the individual as part of the emancipated society as a whole.

Beyond the philosophical complexities of the Ubuntu–Umutu dichotomy, I take the know-thyself, in this case, to connote society's self-knowledge about what constitutes emancipation from the vantage point of African identity. The evidence to illustrate this is gleaned from Afrobarometer surveys and the general literature about security in Africa. It is indicated that the meaning of security to African people is inclined to the logic of human development. To African people, progress as emancipation from societal problems can only be realised by overcoming problems of livelihood. The urgent needs of Africans resonate with Booth's emancipatory of 'the survival-plus':

[80]Hinz, 'Security and the costs and benefits of manipulating analytical boundaries', p. 206.

[81]Nunes, 'Reclaiming the political', p. 349.

[82]Ibid., p. 349.

[83]Timothy D. Wilson, 'Know thyself', *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 4:4 (2009), pp. 384–9.

[84]Adeoye O. Akinola and Ufo Okeke Uzodike, 'Ubuntu and the quest for conflict resolution in Africa', *Journal of Black Studies*, 49:2 (2018), pp. 91–113.

[85]Heidi Hudson, 'Gender and the politics of human security', *Security Dialogue*, 36:2 (2005), pp. 155–74 (p. 162).

[86]Hudson, 'Doing security as though humans matter', p. 163.

[87]Monika Barthwal-Datta and Soumita Basu, 'Reconceptualizing regional security in South Asia: A critical security approach', *Security Dialogue*, 48:5 (2017), pp. 393–409 (p. 396).

Emancipation is freeing people (as individuals and groups) from the physical and human constraints, together with poverty, poor education, political oppression, and so on. Security and emancipation are two sides of the same coin. Emancipation, not power or order, produces true security. Emancipation, theoretically, is security.[88]

The responses of African citizens as aggregated by the Afrobarometer survey data rounds of 1999–2000 to 2016–2018, reflect Booth's emancipatory logic. The responses were provoked by the question: in your opinion, what are the most important problems facing this country that government should address? For 14 years, four issues have been dominant. These include, listing from the highest rating, unemployment, poverty/destitution, food shortage, management of the economy, health, education, infrastructure, and water. The issues outlined indicate that human development needs were inclined towards elements of human security. This reflects the nexus between human security and human development. The nexus is no longer debatable.[89]

Therefore, with regard to security needs, the issues of state security were low-ranked. Issues of political violence, political instability, ethnic tensions, democracy, political rights, war (international), and civil war were considered after mentioning the core UNDP-ranked human security elements of health, food, environment, and economic security,[90] as shown in Table 1.

One could argue that the inclination of responses to human security concerns could be attributed to the fact that state security is taken as a given in instances where it is guaranteed. And as the case of Mali attests, state security is important to the extent that its absence impacts human security. For instance, political instability/ethnic tensions were highly scored during the period 2016–18, at 7.8%, higher than the score of unemployment at 7.0%. However, the percentage was lower than that of the responses mentioning poverty and destitution (8.9%), food shortage/famine (16.0%), and water supply (8.7%). This indicates the primacy of human security concerns even when state-related threats are abundant. It also underlines that beyond the methodological individualism of human security that privileges the individual as the referent object of security, inadequacies in aspects of state security can have reversals in human security gains as depicted in Table 2.

The data emphasises that where the state is riddled with political instability, the net loss is reflected in a reduction in the provision of human security needs. Thus, Barthwal-Datta and Basu called for the need for scholars of critical security to engage with the consequences of weak states.[91] Thenceforth, with African identity at the centre of African solutions, human security gains become part of the many emancipatory gains which are supposed to be made. More gains would be realised if practical answers are given to questions of weak democratic institutions, pervasive human rights, continental vulnerability to external forces, and weak institutional capacity to tackle the challenges of Africans.[92]

By the self-determination logic of Afsol to Afprob, all security challenges are supposed to be addressed through the mobilisation of concerted efforts of Africans not as individuals but as a community. This reflects the Ubuntu ideal that 'the resolution of a problem in any African society is the responsibility of the entire community'.[93] The notion of Ubuntu essentialises the African people as the cornerstone of African identity. To that extent, state security concerns can be privileged if

---

[88]Booth, 'Security and emancipation', p. 319.

[89]Richard Jolly and Basu Richard, 'Human security: National perspectives and global agendas: Insights from national human development reports', *The Journal of the Development Studies Association*, 19:4 (2007), pp. 457–72; and Fen Osler Hampson, 'Human security', in Williams D. Paul (ed.), *Security Studies* (Routledge, 2012), pp. 301–16.

[90]See Des Gasper, 'Securing humanity: Situating "human security" as concept and discourse, *Journal of Human Development*, 6:2 (2005), pp. 221–45, for an analysis of UNDP's exposition to Human Security.

[91]Barthwal-Datta and Basu, 'Reconceptualizing regional security in South Asia', p. 405.

[92]Okumu, 'The African Union', p. 107.

[93]Thomas Kwasi Tieku, 'A Pan-African view of a new agenda for peace', *International Journal*, 67:2 (2012), pp. 373–89 (p. 376).

Table 1. Depicting aggregated urgent human security needs in comparison to state security-related problems according to the citizens' responses collected in the Afrobarometer surveys.

Period	Urgent issues (human security)	Total (%)	Urgent issues (state security)	Total (%)
2016−18 *Surveys in 34 countries*	1. Unemployment	13.7	Political instability	0.9
	2. Health	9.8	Political violence	0.4
	3. Education	8.3	Civil war	0.2
	4. Infrastructure/roads	6.9	War (international)	0.1
2014−15 *Surveys in 36 countries*	1. Unemployment	13.7	Political instability	1.0
	2. Health	9.7	Political violence	0.4
	3. Education	8.2	Civil war	0.2
	4. Water	7.5	War (international)	0.1
2011−13 *Surveys in 34 countries*	1. Unemployment	22.2	Political instability	1.1
	2. Poverty/destitution	10.0	Civil war	0.3
	3. Food shortage	7.7	Political violence	0.2
	4. Management of economy/stabilisation	7.0	War (international)	0.1
2008−9 *Surveys in 19 countries*	1. Unemployment	22.2	Political instability	1.1
	2. Poverty/destitution	9.9	Civil war	0.4
	3. Food shortage	8.1	Political violence	0.2
	4. Management of economy/stabilisation	6.8	War (international)	0.1
2005−6 *Surveys in 18 countries*	1. Unemployment	22.6	Political instability	1.1
	2. Poverty/destitution	10.1	Civil war	0.4
	3. Food shortage	8.1	Political violence	0.2
	4. Management of economy	6.6	War (international)	0.1
2002−3 *Surveys in 16 countries*	1. Unemployment	23.3	Political instability	1.1
	2. Poverty/destitution	10.0	Civil war	0.4
	3. Food shortage	8.2	Political violence	0.2
	4. Management of economy/stabilisation	6.6	War (international)	0.1
1999−2001 *Surveys in 12 countries*	1. Unemployment	22.3	Political instability	1.2
	2. Poverty/destitution	10.3	Civil war	0.5
	3. Food shortage	8.4	Political violence	0.3
	4. Management of economy/stabilisation	6.3	War (international)	0.1

Source: The data organised in this table is obtained from the Afrobarometer Online data analysis tool for survey rounds of 2016−18, 2014−15, 2011−13, 2008−9, 2005−6, 2002−3, 1999−2001.

they enhance the security of African people. This underlines the imperative of Richard Ashley's 'emancipatory realism,'[94] related to the strengthening of the institutions of the state including the capacity to maintain law and order.

[94]Booth Ken, 'Security in Anarchy: Utopia realism in theory and practice', *International Affairs*, 67:3 (1991), pp.527–545 (p.534).

Table 2. Depicting urgent security needs in comparison to state security-related problems according to citizens in Mali.

Round	Urgent issues (human security)	Total (%)	Urgent issues (state security)	Total (%)
2016–18	1. Food	13.7	Political instability	7.8
	2. Poverty	9.8	Civil war	0.9
	3. Water	8.3	Political violence	0.2
	4. Unemployment	6.9	War (international)	0.2

Source: The data organised in this table is obtained from the Afrobarometer Online data analysis tool for the Mali Survey Round of 2016–18.

To this extent, much as emancipatory realism is statist, it is equally critical.[95] The absence of a strong government to guarantee political order can be detrimental to human security. In any case, the APRM asserts that human rights abuses are an indication of weak state institutions in Africa.[96] This makes a case for critical human security which calls for the strengthening of the capacity of governments to provide human security needs.[97] This means that, for the emancipation of the African people to be realised, the post-colonial ideal of self-determination has to entail measures to empower governments to be in a position to maintain law and order. This, however, does not negate that some governments in Africa more often than not use instruments of state power, particularly the military, to abuse human rights in order to guarantee regime security. The quest for regime security complicates Africa's post-colonial security agenda at the level of agenda-setting, as indicated in the discussion of the preferred emancipatory logic in relation to Afsol to Afprob.

The preferred: Know why

The articulation of the idea of Afsol to Afprob at the level of agenda setting is decided by the political elites who have representational capacity. The political elites of the member states of the AU leverage their representational power to decide on the African problems to which the African solutions should apply. The nature of security, to that effect, takes the form of 'what actors make of it'.[98]

The decisions and declarations reached during the Heads of State Summits and Ordinary Meetings of the AU General Assembly, therefore, indicate that the AU's preferred security agenda is broad. It includes issues of conflicts,[99] state fragility, terrorism,[100] drug trafficking,[101] environment,[102] water,[103] poverty alleviation,[104] employment, education, children's rights,[105] human

[95] Booth, 'Security in anarchy', p. 534.

[96] African Union, *African Peer Review Mechanism: Annual Report 2017*, p. 77, available at: {https://www.aprm-au.org/publications/aprm-2017-annual-report/} accessed 6 March 2022.

[97] Amitav Acharya, 'Human security: East versus West', *International Journal*, 56:3 (2001), pp. 442–60.

[98] Ibid.

[99] Decision on the African Union Master Roadmap of Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns in Africa by the Year 2020 – Doc. Assembly/AU/6(XXVIII); Decision on the Establishment of an African Union Centre for Post Conflict Reconstruction and Development (AUCPCRD) – Doc. Assembly/AU/15(XVI) Add.2; and Decision on the Report of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) on the Implementation of the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by year 2020 – Doc. Assembly/AU/8(XXXI).

[100] Decision on the African Union Special Fund on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism and Violent Extremism in Africa – Doc. Assembly/AU/Dec.614(XXVII) and Declaration of Support to the Countries of Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) and Benin in the Fight Against Boko Haram – Doc. Assembly/AU/19(XXIV) Add.7.

[101] Decision on the Threat of Drug Trafficking in Africa Assembly/AU/Dec.239(XII).

[102] Decision on the Sixteenth Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Sixth Conference of Parties to the Kyoto Protocol – Doc. Assembly/AU/11(XVI) and Declaration on Climate Change and Development in Africa- Assembly/AU/Decl.4(VIII).

[103] Decision on Fast Tracking the Implementation of Commitments for Accelerating the Achievement of Water and Sanitation Goals in Africa – Doc. Assembly/AU/16(XXIV) and Decision on the Report on the Implementation of Sharm El Sheikh Commitments on Accelerating Water and Sanitation Goals in Africa – Doc. Assembly/AU/12(XXII).

[104] Declaration on Employment, Poverty Eradication, Inclusive Development in Africa – Doc. Assembly/AU/20(XXIV).

[105] Decision on Appointment of a Member of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child – Doc. EX.CL/653(XVIII).

and people's rights,[106] corruption, HIV/AIDS,[107] the Ebola virus,[108] malaria, tuberculosis,[109] corruption, maternal and child health,[110] and women's rights.[111] The solutions to the security challenges are also reflected in declarations. They include respecting sovereignty, industrial development, economic integration, youth empowerment,[112] debt cancellation, good governance, poverty alleviation, food security,[113] conservation of nature, and economic and social empowerment.[114] The agenda is broad and focuses on the traditional threats of war and human-centric threats of poverty, poor education, and political oppression.

The operationalisation of the 'preferred' agenda, however, brings a shift in the emancipatory logic within the context of the post-colonial. This is to the extent that the AU has failed to reign over the political elites who, in the quest for political survival, abuse the human rights of African people. The operationalisation of Afsol to Afprob as such takes the form of regime security.

The preferred [as] regime security

The AU, in its quest for the preservation of solidarity among African states, has often been deterred from condemning abuses of the rights of Umuntu as an individual African.[115] This belies the commitment to Article 4 of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights:

> Human beings are inviolable. Every human being shall be entitled to respect for his life and the integrity of his person. No one may be arbitrarily deprived of this right.[116]

The failure to address abuse of rights contravenes Article 4(h) of the Act of the AU. The article provides for intervention in the affairs of any member state to thwart war crimes and crimes against humanity.[117] Furthermore, some leaders have remained cynical about embracing intervention. Hence, seven months after the launch of the AU, the intervention clause was amended in 2002.

---

[106]Decision on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples – Doc. Assembly/AU/9 (VIII) Add.6; Decision on the Promotion of Cooperation, Dialogue and Respect for Diversity in the Field of Human Rights – Doc. Assembly/AU/17(XV) Add.9.

[107]Decision on Abuja Call for Accelerated Action towards Universal Access to HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (ATM) Services in Africa – Doc.Assembly/AU/5 (VII) and Lome Declaration on HIV/AIDS in Africa – AHG/Decl.3 (XXXVI).

[108]Assembly Decision on Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) Outbreak – Doc. Assembly/AU/6(XXV) 2015.

[109]Decision on the Hosting of a Special Follow-up Summit on the Abuja 2001 African Union Summit on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Other Related Infectious Diseases in the Third Quarter (July/August) of 2013 – Doc. Assembly/AU/12(XX) Add.7.

[110]Decision on the Reduction of Maternal, Newborn and Child Mortality and Morbidity in Africa – Doc. Assembly/AU/12(XX) Add.4.

[111]Decision on the Report of the Commission on the Implementation of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA) – Doc. EX.CL/1053(XXXII).

[112]Decision on Proposal to Declare the Period of 2018–2027 as the 'African Decade for Technical, Professional, Entrepreneurial Training and Youth Employment' (Item Proposed by Burkina Faso) – Doc. EX.CL/1035(XXXI) and Declaration on the 2017 AU Theme 'Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investments in Youth' – Doc. Assembly/AU/3(XXIX).

[113]Declaration on Responding to the Challenges of High Food Prices and Agriculture Development – Doc. Assembly/AU/Decl.2 (XI); Decision on the Summit on Food Security in Africa, Abuja, Nigeria – Doc. Assembly/AU/6 (VIII); Decision on the Proclamation of 2014 the Year of Agriculture and Food Security – Doc. Assembly/AU/Dec.449(XIX); and Decision on Fast Tracking CAADP-Malabo Commitments for Accelerating Agriculture Transformation in Africa through Biennial Review Mechanism and Africa Agricultural Transformation Scorecard – Doc. Assembly/AU/15(XXX).

[114]Decision on Fast Tracking CAADP-Malabo commitment for Accelerating Agriculture Transformation in Africa Through Biennial Review Mechanism and Africa Agricultural Transformation Scorecard -Doc.Assembly/AU/15(XXX).

[115]Ndumiso Dladla, 'Towards an African critical philosophy of race: Ubuntu as a philo-praxis of liberation', *Filosofia Theoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religions*, 6:1 (2017), pp. 39–68.

[116]African Union, African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1981, date of last signature 2016), p. 3.

[117]African Union, 'The constitutive act', p. 7.

This was done in favour of sovereignty.[118] Furthermore, the lukewarm support that the African Citizens Directorate (CIDO) receives from the AU Commission further explains the hesitancy of the AU to rein in the actors of the member states who abuse the rights of African people.[119] The agency is tasked with promoting the citizens' voices within the agenda of the AU. The little support which CIDO receives implies that the voices of the African people are not privileged by the AU during the agenda setting and operationalisation of Afsol and Afprob. This gives credence to the conclusion that the reliance on the speech acts of the elites excludes those who are affected from voicing their security concerns.[120] It reflects 'false emancipation', where the 'processes that were emancipatory at first always turn out to produce even greater domination and enslavement'.[121]

To that extent, in the quest for regime security, the (ordinary) people are excluded from political decisions, and they suffer the totalitarian tendencies of autocratic governments, which include abuse of human rights and normalisation of state-inspired violence against political opponents. In the end, security is seen as 'connected to exclusion, totalization, and even violence'.[122] This points to internal colonialism, where the political elites as the dominant power in the formerly colonised states subjugate and oppress the very people whose interests they are supposed to promote and defend. The subordination of the population by a dominant internal group, the regime in power, leads to:

> systematic group inequality expressed in policies and practices of a variety of societal institutions, including systems of education, public safety (police, courts, and prisons), health, employment, cultural production, and finance.[123]

The privileging of regime security speaks to Fanon's sense of post-revolutionary betrayal, where elites put their political survival to the fore by leveraging 'psychic and socio-economic violence of colonialism after the end of formal colonial rule'.[124] The AU thus becomes an accomplice in the scheme of oppressive governance. A case in point is when the AU's African Prevention and Protection Mission in Burundi (MAPROBU) failed to take off in 2016. As an experiment of Afsol to Afprob, the AU was supposed to deploy a 5,000-strong peacekeeping mission to stabilise Burundi following the outbreak of violence between the Burundian Army and the rebel group. The violence was a reaction to Pierre Nkurunziza's lifting of the constitutional two-term limits to seek a third term in office. The violence threatened to translate into a major civil war. The failure of the AU mission to take off was attributed to the lack of political will on the side of the ruling political elites in Burundi who refused to approve the mission.[125] The last option was for the AU to authorise a forceful intervention under Article 4(h) of the Act.[126] However, the heads of state were reluctant to acquiesce to intervention in matters considered to be internal to a particular state.[127]

As a result, the norm of sovereignty, which is critical to the protection of states from external aggression, is corrupted to take the form of 'regime security'. This deflates the logic of emancipation as the hallmark of decolonisation. Emancipation is skewed to reflect the interests of the powerful actors. The outcome is that the post-colonial ideal of self-determination, as reflected in the concerted efforts of Africans to promote their emancipation through the agenda of Afsol to

[118]Evarist Baimu, and Kathryn Sturman, 'Amendment to the African Union's right to intervene: A shift from human security to regime security?', *African Security Studies*, 12:2 (2003), pp. 37–45.

[119]Thomas Kwasi Tieku, 'African Union promotion of human security in Africa', *African Security Review*, 16:2 (2007), pp. 26–37.

[120]Bertrand, 'Can the subaltern securitize?', p. 285.

[121]Kaltofen, 'Engaging Adorno', p. 43.

[122]Nunes, 'Reclaiming the political', p. 349.

[123]Charles Pinderhughes, 'Toward a new theory of internal colonialism', *Socialism and Democracy*, 25:1 (2011), pp. 235–56 (p. 236).

[124]Sharad Chari and Katherine Verdery, 'Thinking between the posts: Postcolonialism, post socialism, and ethnography after the Cold War', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 51:1 (2009), pp. 6–34 (p. 8).

[125]Yolande Bouka, *Missing the Target: The African Union's Mediating Efforts in Burundi* (Brussels: Egmont Institute, 2016).

[126]African Union, 'The constitutive act', p. 7.

[127]Ibid.

Afprob, is twisted to focus on the survival of political elites. The interests of African citizens are subsequently subordinated to the political survival of the political elites. The citizens become vulnerable to the decisions and outcomes with a high impact on their life, which they cannot control or predict.[128] The agenda of Afsol to Afprob thus take the form of a measure designed to protect continental regimes against external pressures by assuring the outside world that African states are doing something about themselves.[129] The implications are that whereas at the ideational level, related to the articulation of the idea of Afsol to Afprob, there is harmony between the interests of political elites and those of African citizens, the interests diverge at the level of operationalisation. This is because of the obsession of political elites with their political survival. The political elites, as earlier explained, abuse the emancipation of citizens particularly through the violation of human rights. The post-colonial ideal of self-determination and the emancipation which Afsol to Afprob espouses are thus reduced to regime security. This perpetuates inequality and oppression and marks a perversion of the commitment to the liberation of the African people.

In the end, two categories of African people are created: African citizens as the ordinary, and political elites as the extraordinary. In this case, what Felix Ciută dubbed as a hopeless debate over 'ordinary or extraordinary' becomes manifest.[130] African solutions take the form of a debate on whether they are meant to benefit the ordinary African people (citizens) or the extraordinary African political elites. This is anathema to the collective spirit of self-determination as expressed in the ideal of Afsol to Afprob. The disaggregation of the emancipatory logic is further deepened by the AU's lack of financial capacity to operationalise African solutions. It should be recalled that, at the ideational level of Afsol to Afprob, the promise of self-reliance is resounding. This is transmitted in Declaration on Self-Reliance:

> [That] Africa must also be self-reliant in finding African solutions to African problems in the peace and security domain both in terms of funding and enhancing our collective capability to respond to conflict situations. The African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises (ACIRC) is the interim mechanism that we have created for this purpose while we are operationalizing our African Standby Force.[131]

The operationalisation of Afsol to Afprob, however, casts the AU Declaration on Self-Reliance in paradoxical terms. The paradox is deep. On the one hand, self-reliance is professed, yet to attain self-reliance the AU relies on the goodwill of others. On the other, the goodwill is guided by the foreign-policy objectives of the donor as the 'other'. So, the interests of African people and the AU as the aggregation of the African self are subordinated to the national interest(s) of the donors. The African political elites and the African citizens as a result start symbolising Spivak's peasant proprietors: '[who are] incapable of making their proper name … whether through parliament or a convention'.[132] This is because the AU as a convention of Africans through which they seek to promote Afsol to Afprob is lacking in capacity. Its geopolitical security determinations need economic-financial guarantees from the EU at a 68%, as shown in Table 3.

From the data, it is made clear that power determines desire. What the EU desires to fund is what takes centre stage as far as the operationalisation of the Afsol to Afprob agenda is concerned.

---

[128]Nunes, 'Reclaiming the political', p. 356.

[129]Christopher Clapham, 'Africa and trusteeship in the modern global order', *The New Protectorates: International,* in Mayall James and Oliveira Richardo (eds.), *The new protectorates: International tutelage and the making of Liberal States* (London: Hurst & Company, 2011), pp. 67–82 (p. 75).

[130]Ciută, 'Security and the problem of context', p. 313.

[131]African Union, Declaration on Self-Reliance – Doc. Assembly/AU/Decl.5(XXV), pp. 1–2.

[132]Sentence sustained using Spivak's Marxist logic of the subaltern, in Spivak Gayatri Chakravorty, 'Can the subaltern speak?', in Rosalind C. Morris (ed.), *Can the Subaltern Speak? Reflections on the History of an Idea* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), pp. 21–82 (p.32).

Table 3. Depicting development partners' contribution to the AU budget (including Peace Support Operations (PSO) by the Financial Year 2021.

Partner	Contributed Amount (USD)	Percentage (%) of Total Budget
European Union	**125,676,836.54**	**67.87079**
Covid Response Fund	43,144,623.44	23.29992
Strategic Partnerships with Africa (SPA)/Joint Financing Arrangement (JFA)	7,083,809.33	3.825556
South Korea	3,735,274.39	2.017206
Member states	1,319,271.75	0.712462
Spain	1,112,585.00	0.600843
United States of America	994,847.00	0.537259
World Bank	696,673.00	0.376233
Germany	585,671.22	0.316287
Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation	570,961.22	0.308343
United Kingdom	184,330.73	0.099546
Other	65,845.42	0.035559
Grand Total	**185,170,729.29**	**100**

Source: Information extracted from African Union Commission End of Term Report 2017–2021: Taking Stock, Charting the Future, 2021, p. 39. Modified in terms of calculating the percentages of the total budget.

So, as Spivak recasts Marxism, '[power] produces positive effects at the level of desire – and … knowledge'.[133] At the level of agenda selection, it is the interests and understanding of the EU that predominate when it comes to choosing the desired focus of Afsol to Afprob.

The desired: Know what and know why

The desired connotes the issues which are selected to be operationalised under the idea of Afsol to Afprob. These are inclined to the desires of the donors. The evidence for this is adduced from the annual sectoral and general reports of the African Commission Union Chairperson. The reports indicate that operationalisation of Afsol to Afprob is dependent on the availability of funding from the donors. EU support is enormous. The EU supports the activities of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Regional Mechanisms (RMs). These include the North Africa Regional Capability (NARC), Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), Eastern Africa Regional Standby Brigade (EASBRICOM), East African Community (EAC), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Economic Community for the West African States (ECOWAS), South African Development Community (SADC), and Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS).[134] These institutions execute the mandate of APSA in different regions of the continent. Furthermore, funding and technical support had to be sought from the EU to enable the operationalisation of the AU Convention on Cybersecurity and Personal Data Protection (Malabo Convention). Similarly, the EU provided the funds which enabled the continuity of the APSA Phase111.[135]

[133] Spivak, 'Can the subaltern speak?', p. 26.

[134] Nicoletta Pirozzi, *EU Support to African Security Architecture: Funding and Training Components, Vol. 76* (Conde-sur-Noireau: EU Institute for Security Studies, 2009).

[135] African Union, *Annual Report on the Activities of the African Union and Its Organs* (African Union, African Union Commission, 2018), p. 56.

The operationalisation of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) as the flagship operational programme of the AU could as such be weakened if the EU withdrew funding.[136] Thus, when the EU Support Programme for APSA was about to end in 2018, the AU Commission, RECs and RMs, and the EU held a meeting in Cotonou Benin in November 2017. The purpose was to address the issues that were undermining the program. The AU was concerned that a financial vacuum would ensue if the EU support ended.[137] The EU was disenchanted by the lapses in the implementation of the peace and security programmes under APSA. These included the failure of the AU to deliver effective and timely peace and security programmes.[138] The AU, from that meeting, managed to assuage the EU to continue funding APSA-related activities. The EU as a result renewed its commitment to APSA. The commitment of the AU member states to APSA conversely remained abysmal. For instance, by 2013, the AU Mission in Somalia received financial support from the EU as part of the 140 million euros under the EU Africa Peace Facility (APF). But by 2018, African financial support for the Somalia mission had not been realised, although the initiative was touted as the epitome of Afsolto Afprob.[139]

The EU in addition has played a pivotal role in the provision of the biological drivers of emancipation such as water, food, and health care. The interventions are of salutary effect, and they are manifested in the array of human development programmes that the EU has funded. The programme for water-provision promotion as per the 2008 Sharma El-Sheik Declaration for Accelerating the Achievement of Water and Sanitation Goals in Africa (Assembly/AU/Decl.1[XI]) was premised on the availability of donor support. The Federal Republic of Germany had to commit 2.7 million euros to enable the second phase of actualisation of the African Water Vision 2025. An additional 2 million euros was mobilised from the EU to facilitate technical capacity building in monitoring and evaluation of water availability and accessibility. The move was meant to enable the member states to be in a better position to attain the recommended water and sanitation goals.[140]

With respect to environmental security, the Monitoring of Environment and Security in Africa (MESA) program was initiated in 2012. It took off in 2013 after funding was guaranteed by the EU under the African-Caribbean and Pacific Programme (ACP). EU funding was mobilised to mainstream disaster-risk reduction and management into climate-change adaptation.[141] The AU Commission also had to secure funding from the EU to operationalise the 2015 Paris Agreement in Africa.[142] By the AU Commission report of 2019, the EU had provided 52 million euros to enhance the generation and provision of climate-related information to the member states. The focus was on issues of agriculture and food security, disaster and risk reduction, energy, health, and water resources.[143] Moreover, support was channelled to the educational sector under the AU Strategy for Harmonisation of Higher Education. Specific attention was on supporting the capacity of universities to innovate competence-oriented curricula.[144]

Worth noting is that EU funding has been critiqued. It is asserted that the support is not necessarily philanthropic. It is regarded as part of the post-Cold War quest of the West to 'secure an easy

---

[136] APSA, *Moving Africa Forward, Africa Peace and Security Architecture.* African Peace and Security Architecture (African Union, 2010).

[137] African Union, *Annual Report on the Activities of the African Union*, p. 12.

[138] Vines, 'A decade of African peace and security architecture'.

[139] African Union, *Report of the African Union Commission on the Strategic Review of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM.* African Union, African Union Commission, 2013), p. 4.

[140] African Union Commission, *African Union Commission Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture Annual Report 2012* (African Union, African Union Commission, 2012).

[141] African Union Commission, *African Union Commission Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture Annual Report 2012.*

[142] African Union, *Annual Report on the Activities of the African Union*, 2018, p. 42.

[143] African Union Commission, *Annual Report on the Activity of the Union and its Organs* (African Union, African Union Commission, 2019).

[144] Ibid., pp. 44, 49, 54, and 80.

peace dividend for their war-weary populations' without engaging in 'costly entanglements'.[145] It is observed that Western strategists are aware that the 'small wars' in Africa and the rest of the global south have consequences that are far in reach. The concern is that as the already-weaker states are ruptured, terrorists find it easy to fill the vacuum. In the context of Sierra Leone, this is discussed as subaltern terror where 'lumpen violence' took over the state from elites.[146] This phenomenon became internationalised as a result of the emergence of terror outfits in West Africa. What was at the periphery – a small concern, hitherto dismissed as thuggery – had to be brought to the centre of security discussions.[147] For this reason, since the beginning of the war on terror, Africa's security concerns have been part of the security strategies of the powerful actors of the world, including the EU. This is discussed as subaltern geopolitics within the study of Libya.[148]

Furthermore, the AU Commission perceives the dependency on external funding as risky. The concern is that the funding comes with restrictions that constrain the operations of institutions under APSA.[149] One of the restrictions is the demand that 70% of the funds allocated to APSA by the EU be absorbed before more funding is granted.[150] Put differently, the restrictions and conditionalities may not necessarily reflect imperialism, but a form of constructive engagement wherein the EU demands proper accountability for funds provided. Also, the EU's demand for democratisation and observance of human rights, which is perceived as imperialism by the political elites, is of emancipatory utility to the African people. It serves to criticise and sometimes supplant the excessive expressions of regime security such as abuse of human rights. The paradox at this point is that the emancipatory concerns of African people are guaranteed by the former coloniser, whose actions are considered imperialistic by the African political elites. In addition, as some member states of the AU oppress and fail to provide for their people, the EU provides for African people through support of provision of health care, education, and water supply. This marks a reversal of roles in the post-colonial, for where the AU fails, the EU guarantees the emancipation of African people. This deepens the divergence between the post-colonial ideal of self-determination and the emancipatory logic of critical security in Africa. This is because at the same time as the African political elites chastise dependency, it benefits the African people (the ordinary citizens).

Consequently, the inability of the AU to fund African solutions enables the continuity of dependence of the formerly colonised on former coloniser. This casts doubt over the independence not only of states but of Africa as a collectivity. It reincarnates 'the story of the white man's burden'.[151] In the end, the post-colonial vision of African solutions gets lost at the level of operationalisation. The lack of financial capacity to support African solutions means that Africans cannot claim to be in total control of the solutions. So, whereas the AU can state its preferred security concerns, when it comes to the choice of what to be operationalised, the external actors present the final policy plans. African actors can only negotiate within those plans as part of a 'consulformation' process. Africans become part of the discussion of an 'already finalized plan'.[152] The AU's role to that extent is reduced to legitimising what is externally decreed as an indigenous project. This passes for the paradox of ownership as far as African solutions are concerned.

[145]Franke and Gänzle, 'How "African" is the African peace and security architecture? Conceptual and Practical Constraints of Regional Security Cooperation in Africa', *African Security*, 5:2 (2012), pp. 88–104.

[146]Jimmy D. Kandeh, 'Ransoming the state: Elite origins of subaltern terror in Sierra Leone', *Review of African Political Economy*, 26:81 (1999), pp. 349–66.

[147]Barkawi and Laffey, 'The postcolonial moment in Security Studies', p. 330.

[148]James D. Sidaway, 'Subaltern geopolitics: Libya in the mirror of Europe', *The Geographical Journal*, 178:4 (2012), pp. 296–301 (p. 296).

[149]APSA, *Moving Africa Forward*.

[150]Ibid.

[151]See Bonacker, 'Security practices and the production of center–periphery figurations', p. 193, for a discussion of how dependency on donors for security renders the independence of the states of the global south rather empty.

[152]Thomas Kwasi Tieku, 'A pan-African view of a new agenda for peace', *International Journal*, 67:2 (2012), pp. 373–389 (p. 382).

Conclusion

In the final analysis the EU's intervention in the security system of Africa lends prestige to the EU and recasts the colonial legacy.[153] It sustains Eurocentric dependency – the assumption of European centrality in the human past and present.[154] Eurocentrism thus becomes a constant in the security agenda of Africa. This provides a critique of the post-colonial ideal of self-determination on which Afsol to Afprob is anchored. The quest for Afsol to Afprob becomes a perfect addition to Nyerere's enduring sentimental sense of African-ness – a feeling of mutual involvement.[155] Yet the feeling of mutual involvement suffers the absurdity of alacrity without capacity. Accordingly, one practical question endures: 'Can African feet divorce Western shoes?'.[156]

Furthermore, the extent to which Afsol to Afprob asserts the complete liberation of Africa from external influence is reminiscent of Fanon's sense of decolonisation with the 'colonized [thumbing] their noses at the very values, shower[ing] them with insults and vomit[ing] them up'.[157] Yet paradoxically, for the Africans to decolonise, they need to depend on the resources of the coloniser. This reflects the reincarnation of the binary axis of power of the coloniser/colonised. It justifies the 'ritualistic ambiguity' of the 'post-words'. They obtain from 'the imperial idea of linear time', in which the history of progress is determined 'around a single, binary opposition'.[158] Therefore, '[the] utopia [of the idea of Afsol to Afprob] and reality [of the operationalisation of the idea] – [seem to belong] to two different planes [and] can never meet'.[159]

Going forward, to overcome the puzzle of Eurocentric dependency, many ideas should be left to contend. Most importantly, the capacity of the AU as the aggregation of Africa's interest and capacity can be as good as the capacity of its member states. Thus, in the short term, the member states should come good on their promises to financially support the operations of the AU. The AU Commission should also be empowered to act as a continental-wide actor that can intervene in internal matters of states deemed prejudicial to the security of the African people.

Within the broader scheme of governance, African states should commit to democratisation. Governments should be more responsive and accountable to the African people.[160] This is because some of the insecurity which necessitates 'African solutions' can be thwarted by building democratic institutions. Thus, beyond rhetoric, the AU should emphasise and enforce adherence to democratic principles and observance of human rights. The member states of the AU should also address the problem of endemic corruption which undermines the provision of and access to services such as health, education, and employment. The provision of services by the state, together with the observance of political freedom that democracy, guarantees constitutes the highest expression of human dignity. By emphasising these, the AU will be able to thwart 'the waning commitment to the democratic project on the part of political elites'.[161]

Finally, the self-determination of Africans will require that long-term strategies are devised to uplift the financial capacity of the African people to enable them to take charge of their emancipation. To sustainably finance the operations of the AU, African solutions should be anchored in the long-term strategy of harnessing industrialisation. This will empower the economies of the African states to support the self-determination agenda of the AU. Of course, at the moment, it is impractical to imagine African states, the majority of which even lack the capacity to feed their citizens, making a significant contribution to the continental-wide communitarian agenda of the AU.

[153] Gegout, *Why Europe Intervenes in Africa*.

[154] Barkawi and Laffey, 'The postcolonial moment in Security Studies', p. 330.

[155] Julius K. Nyerere, 'A United States of Africa', *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 1:1 (1963), pp. 1–6.

[156] Richard Tambulasi and Happy Kayuni, 'Can African feet divorce Western shoes? The case of "ubuntu" and democratic good governance in Malawi', *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, 14:2 (2005), pp. 147–161. (p.147).

[157] Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961). Trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2004) pp. 6, 8.

[158] McClintock, 'The angel of progress: Pitfalls of the Term "Post-Colonialism"', in Brydon Diana (ed.), *Post-Colonialism: Critical Concepts* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 84.

[159] Booth, 'Security in anarchy', p. 530.

[160] Emmanuel Gyimah-Boadi, 'Africa's waning democratic commitment', *Journal of Democracy*, 26:1 (2015), pp. 101–13.

[161] Ibid., p. 110.

So, the economic advancement of African countries through industrialisation will have a multiplier effect on the financial capacity of the AU. But, unquestionably, the multiplier effect will be dependent on the willingness of political actors of the member states to substantially contribute to the AU. But at the moment, the articulation of Afsol to Afprob without the means gives credence to the assertion that liberty without economic status is propaganda.[162]

Edward Silvestre Kaweesi teaches Security Studies and African Political Theory in the Department of Political Science and Public Administration at Makerere University, Uganda. He is also a mentor on the Leadership for Africa Programme (LEAD) at the University of Cologne, Germany.

---

[162]Booth, 'Security and emancipation', p. 322.