From Plan to Action? The Joint Africa-EU Strategy

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Introduction

To succeed the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) must be supported by effective cooperation between the African Union (AU) and the European Union (EU). Developing an Africa-EU Partnership on Peace and Security was thus amongst the main objectives of the 2007 Joint Africa-EU Strategy and the subsequent Action Plans for 2008-2010 and 2011-2013. But has the EU managed to bring together its various initiatives in support of African security governance since then? Has the AU proved itself a strategic partner? Has an effective working relationship materialized in Brussels, in Addis Ababa and on the ground in conflict zones across the African continent? If so – does this improve partnership between and institutional capacity within the two organizations? And does it promote strategic interests and securitization processes that benefit them both?

These are some of the key questions that this contribution sets out to answer. In so doing it adopts a two-stage approach; firstly, to bring out the importance – empirically as well as theoretically – of structured and focused analysis of Strategic Partnerships; and secondly, to assess the EU's efforts to help strengthen security governance in Africa through a Strategic Partnership with the AU. To date the academic study of the EU's Strategic Partnerships has focused on what such partnerships are - or indeed should be. This article seeks to take that enquiry a step further. It develops an analytical framework for theoretically grounded assessments of strategic partnership. The hope is that this might facilitate more structured evaluation, more nuanced analysis, more systematic comparison and better policy recommendations for future Strategic Partnerships. If successful, this will be beneficial to the scholarship not only of EU partnerships and strategic relations, but also to the study - and perhaps practice - of EU and AU efforts to facilitate better security governance in Africa.

Taking its empirical starting point in the 2007 Lisbon Summit, the Africa-EU Strategy and the two Joint Action Plans, which followed, the second part of the article identifies mutually agreed or at least jointly declared AU-EU ambitions for security governance in Africa. It goes on to examine the specific peace and security initiatives that the EU and the AU have launched so far. From these preliminary findings it will be determined whether - and if so to what degree – EU-AU policy convergence is emerging within the Strategic Partnership between the two. The analysis is case-based

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and focuses specifically on APSA-related policies implemented under the Partnership on Peace and Security. Finally, the article will evaluate the overall impact of EU-AU policy and convergence - or lack thereof - with regard to four key categories within the APSA: namely, partnership, institutional capacity, strategic interests and securitization.

The Study of Strategic Partnership

The EU responded to the changing international order following the end of the Cold War *inter alia* through the establishment of a series of so-called Strategic Partnerships with third parties, which it deemed particularly important in one way or another. The first official mentioning of such a Partnership was in reference to the Union's relations with Russia in 1998 (European Council, 1998).[1] Five years on the European Security Strategy referred to strategic partnership as a foreign policy tool and for the first time listed all the Union's strategic partners at that point (General Secretariat of the Council, 2003). By 2012 the EU has established ten Strategic Partnerships with third countries: Brazil, Canada, China, India, Japan, Mexico, Russia, South Africa, South Korea and the United States. The EU also has Strategic Partnerships in place with two international organizations: namely, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the African Union (Whitman and Rodt, 2012). The latter is the focus of the empirical analysis below, but first the next section will discuss how best to analyze Strategic Partnerships.

In its early days the scholarship of EU Strategic Partnerships was overwhelmingly Eurocentric. The tendency has been (and to some extent still is) to focus mainly on what the Union would – or indeed could – get out of these Partnerships, and whether it was strategic enough in its pursuit of such potential positive outcomes (Renard, 2011). In recent years more attention has been paid to the EU's partners and what they might achieve from such arrangements with the Union. The impact of Strategic Partnerships on specific policy areas, however, remains underexplored. This is a crucial piece of the puzzle when evaluating individual Partnerships, comparing

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[1] For a historical overview of the development of the EU's Strategic Partnerships see Renard (2011).

several Partnerships and seeking to understand strategic partnership as a policy tool. This contribution therefore argues that any evaluation of strategic partnership should include (a) the actor-perspective, (b) the partner-perspective and (c) the impact-perspective. In the case of the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership on Peace and Security that would mean that one should consider how (a) the EU, (b) the AU and (c) peace and security in Africa (might) benefit from the this specific arrangement. Moreover, it is important that one considers the strategic, institutional and operational outcomes within each of these three categories to examine the effectiveness of a Strategic Partnership in full.

The scholarly debate concerning how to measure 'effectiveness' is by no means one that is isolated to the study of Strategic Partnerships. Haastrup (2012) has synthesized the literature on the external impact of the EU and sought to explain how this academic tradition has developed various approaches including contrasting expectations and capabilities (e.g., Chris Hill, 1993 and 1998); seeking to characterize EU actorness, power or role-playing (e.g., Ian Manners, 2002); using specific criteria such as opportunity, presence and capability to evaluate the Union's external achievements with the constraints it faced in mind (e.g, Bretherton and Volger, 2006).

This contribution suggests that it is important to extend the debate beyond the agency and structures of EU external action to the specific impact of its Strategic Partnerships within particular policy areas. The following will examine the Africa-EU Partnership focusing primarily on its impact in real terms on African peace and security, rather than its outcome for the AU or the EU *per sé* or indeed for the Partnership itself. For this purpose it important to look beyond decision-making processes in Brussels, Addis Ababa and member state capitals. The following will examine more closely the specific purpose of policy actions, in this case within the Strategic Partnership on Peace and Security, and the conditions under which the Partnership itself (not necessarily 'just' the EU and/or the AU) has had a positive impact on the ground. In this way it will examine whether a Strategic Partnership, if effective, can be more than the sum of its partners.

Towards an EU Strategy for Africa

Following post-colonial independence and the subsequent Cold War divisions, the relationship between Europe and Africa fragmented. As a result, three different but co-existing frameworks for cooperation developed between the EU and countries in Africa. Firstly, from 1964 onwards the Yaoundé and later Lomé Conventions served as the framework for trade, political and economic cooperation between the European Communities and the former colonies in Africa. In 2000 the Cotonou Partnership Agreement (CPA) between the EU and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries replaced the Conventions and became the overarching framework for trade and aid relations between the EU and all 41 sub-Saharan African states (European Centre for Development Policy Management, 2006). After the Cold War a second set of arrangements developed through the Barcelona Process, which in 1995 created the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership between the EU and the North African countries. In 2008 the Union for the Mediterranean merged the Barcelona Process and the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. This placed the EU's relationship with North Africa within the European Neighbourhood Policy framework alongside the Union's neighbours to the East rather than their sub-Saharan peers (European Centre for Development Policy Management, 2006). Thridly, the EU signed a bilateral Trade, Development and Cooperation Agreement with South Africa in 2000, which in 2007 was incorporated into the Strategic Partnership launched between the EU and South Africa – the only such Partnership that the Union has established with a single African country (European Centre for Development Policy Management, 2006; Whitman and Rodt, 2011). The EU's own publically articulated purpose for all three strands of semi-formalized arrangements with African countries was to encourage partnership, promote trade, coordinate aid and facilitate the spread of so-called 'European values' through closer cooperation with the states concerned (Bach, 2008).

In a first attempt to structure the Union's relationship with the continent as a whole, an EU-Africa summit was organized in Cairo in 2000. During the summit a comprehensive framework for political dialogue between the two continents was drawn up. The Cairo agenda, as it would become known, identified a number of priority areas for cooperation. Amongst these were regional integration in Africa; integration of the continent into the world economy; human rights, democracy, good governance and rule of law; peace-building, conflict prevention, management and resolution; as well as development. Although the Cairo agenda pin-pointed priority

areas for cooperation and sought to converge European and African interests in these areas, the extent to which the two continents prioritized the issues at stake differed. The EU emphasized the importance of peace and security-related cooperation, whilst her African counterparts focused on trade arrangements and other economic issues such as debt relief (European Centre for Development Policy Management, 2006).

After the Cairo summit a period of deepening integration followed in both Africa and Europe. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)[2] was launched in 2001 and one year on the African Union replaced the Organization of African Unity (OAU). These would become key African components of the inter-continental relationship with Europe. Hoping to contribute more than her predecessor, which had left behind a legacy of non-interference in matters considered within the domestic jurisdiction of her member states,[3] the AU from the very beginning sought to develop a new African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). This was to include norms, structures, capacities and procedures to promote peace, security and stability on the continent (Salim in Assanvo and Pout, 2007: 4). In 2004 the AU Assembly of Heads of States and Governments decided to launch a Common African Defence and Security Policy to bring the member states' norms, principles, values and goals closer together, but the political positioning of the member states still vary on many of these issues (Assanvo and Pout, 2007).

With regard to the pursuit of a new value-set for African peace and security policies the AU publically stated her ambition to move away from the previous tradition of non-interference towards a 'policy of non-indifference'. To this end, article 4h of the Constitutive Act of the African Union introduced 'the right of the Union to intervene in a member state (…) in respect of grave circumstances, namely: war crimes,

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[2] NEPAD is now an African Union programme for political and socio-economic transformation on the continent. Its main objective is to enhance Africa's growth, development and participation in the global economy (NEPAD, 2011).

[3] The OAU did, however, engage in some ceasefire monitoring missions like the Bamako Ceasefire Commission (1963), the OAU peacekeeping forces in the Shaba Province of Congo (1978-79) and Chad (1979-82) (Assanvo and Pout, 2007).

genocide and crimes against humanity.' The Union's self-declared responsibility to protect civilians, commonly referred to as the 'R2P' principle, however, has so far never been invoked – not even in the cases of Darfur and Libya, where it might have been expected (Brosig, 2012).

With regard to Africa's proposed new structures, capacities and procedures to promote stability more concrete results have materialized through AU initiatives such as the development of the Peace and Security Council (PSC), the Panel of the Wise (PoW), the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) and the African Standby Force (ASF) - all to be supported by the AU Commission for Peace and Security and the corresponding Special Fund. The numerous Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in Africa are intended to play a key part in these new structures and procedures, each providing their share of the new capacities, but they too are currently under development – a process that is diverse and progressing at various speeds. The ASF, for example, is envisioned as five regional brigades, but the Economic Community for West African States (ECOWAS) and the South Africa Development Community (SADC) are much further in this process than their peers in the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU). Likewise, ECOWAS, ECCAS and IGAD have more experience in carrying out peace operations that the other RECs (Assanvo and Pout, 2007). Nonetheless, the AU has undertaken five peace operations in Burundi, Somalia, Sudan and the Comoros (twice) since 2003. This exemplifies how a lot has been achieved in a relatively short time in terms of developing new norms, structures, capacities and practices for the provision of peace and security in Africa. There is still a long way to go – and amongst the AU's biggest challenges is a significant capabilities-expectations gap resulting from lack of funding, experience and political leverage. As a result, the African missions in Sudan and Somalia, for example, remained under-equipped, under-manned and under-funded, leaving the Union not only with a problem of planning but also undertaking these endeavours (Assanvo and Pout, 2007). The complex inter-regional governance structures, multi-layered dependencies and institutional shortcomings all add to the APSA's current limitations in capacity (Brosig, 2012). Much therefore remains to be done before the AU can truly provide African solutions to African problems in the security realm – and it is in this regard that the Strategic Partnership with the EU could be useful.

While the AU was developing the Common African Defence and Security Policy, the EU was seeking to strengthened internal cooperation within its Common Foreign and Security Policy. To this end the EU launched the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) and in 2003 it initiated its first civilian and military missions within it. Several of these first ESDP missions and many to come would be conducted in Africa. Following a request from the AU the European Commission also set-up the African Peace Facility (APF) in 2003, which quickly became the most important source of funding for AU peace operations. The APF was to be built on the principles of African ownership, solidarity and partnership between Europe and Africa. This was but one of the EU's early initiatives to fund African peace and security initiatives. The 2003 European Security Strategy stressed the need for further engagement abroad to ensure 'a secure Europe in a better world', as did the Action Plan for ESDP in Africa, which was submitted to the EU Political and Security Committee in November 2004. (Assanvo and Pout, 2007 ; Dodo, 2011). In 2005 the EU went on to publish a Strategy for Africa, which sought to increase coordination and coherence within and between EU activities related to Africa. In particular, the Strategy focused on how to facilitate economically, socially and environmentally sustainable development and support African efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals for peace, security and good governance by 2015. Moreover, the Strategy provided initial guidelines for coordination through international fora and cooperation between important players within and beyond Africa. In the Strategy the EU vowed to engage with African partners at the national, regional and continental level, guided by a principle of subsidiarity, where only matters that would be dealt with less effectively at a lower level should be reserved for a higher level of governance (Commission of the European Communities, 2005; Council of the European Union, 2006). In 2006 the EU Concept for Strengthening African Capabilities for the Prevention, Management and Resolution of Conflicts replaced the Common Position on the Prevention, Management and Resolution of Violent Conflicts in Africa from 2004 (Assanvo and Pout, 2007).

The Africa-EU Strategic Partnership

With the increase in European initiatives seeking to support the emerging African Peace and Security Architecture, concerns were raised about the lack of African

ownership of the agenda. In response the 2007 summit in Lisbon marked the official launch of a Joint Africa-EU Strategic Partnership. It declared a 'shared vision' to take the continent-to-continent relationship to a new, more strategic level with strengthened political partnership and enhanced cooperation at all levels, although the AU and EU would remain at the core. The partnership was to be based on a 'consensus of values, common interests and common strategic objectives' (Council of the European Union, 2007 : 2). This was the first occasion upon which the EU and the AU sought to develop a shared strategy and plan for their mutual cooperation. The Joint Strategy was to provide a long-term framework for Africa-EU relations, whilst its implementation was envisioned through shorter term Action Plans, which would be reviewed regularly. The Strategic Partnership identified as its main objective to establish a comprehensive framework for specific strategies to then be put in place for peace and security, governance and human rights, trade and regional integration as well as develoment. The first Action Plan for 2008 to 2010 went on to outline eight strategic areas for cooperation, the first of which was peace and security. Otherwise the Plan reiterated the importance of the Cairo agenda items, adding fighting terrorism and managing migration to the list of joint priorities for cooperation (Council of the European Union, 2007). A second Action Plan for the period from 2011 to 2013 was adopted at the third Africa-EU Summit in Tripoli in 2010 (European External Action Service, 2011). Both Action Plans focused on three key priorities: firstly, enhancing dialogue between the EU and the AU on security matters; secondly, operationalizing the APSA ; and thirdly, providing predictable funding for AU peace operations (Brosig, 2012).

The specific goal of the first priority (to enhance EU-AU dialogue on security) was to develop 'common positions and implement common approaches' to shared challenges in this realm. To this end, the EU and the AU have developed a 'whole network of inter-institutional meetings and working groups at all levels' (Brosig, 2012: 297). This includes the EU-Africa Summit every three years, which reviews the overall direction of the Strategic Partnership and launches a new Action Plan for the period between each summit. In addition to this, the EU Political and Security Committee and the AU Political and Security Council as well as representatives from the two Commissions meet on a regular basis, as do the EU-AU ministerial troikas. Joint Africa-EU Expert Groups and the Joint Africa-EU Task Force have likewise been established to ensure

regular communication and information exchange on priority areas between the two Partners. Both the AU and the EU have established permanent representations to each other's headquarters (Brosig, 2012). All of this has significantly enhanced dialogue between the two partners, as envisioned in the first priority area of the Action Plans.

Although progress is taking place also in the second priority area, operationalizing the APSA is a much bigger mouthful. As a result, the achievements in this area are more modest. The ASF and CEWS are still not fully functional, in large part due to the regional differences between the RECs. As outlined above, the Central and Northern RECs in particular have struggeled to contribute their share of the ASF. Brosig (2012) argued that these differences should be reflected in EU support for the APSA, if this is to be operationalized effectively. The EU has taken a number of concrete measures to this end for example by appointing an EU Special Representative for African Peacekeeping : General Pierre-Michel Joana. The EU, through the African Peace Facility, has provided more than EUR 700 million in support of the APSA. For example, the EU has funded civilian and training measures seeking to assist the development of the AU and RECs in this regard. EUR 92 million have been spent on capacity-building programmes such as the Amani-Africa-Euro RECAMP initiative (Brosig, 2012).

With regard to the third priority area concerning funding for African peace operations the EU has provided funding for all the AU peace operations to date. EUR 600 million were allocated in support of the African missions (particularly in Sudan and Somalia), but the provision of predictable funding for AU peace operations remains a challenge (Brosig, 2012).

Conclusions

The purpose of this undertaking was to evaluate the overall impact of EU-AU policies and convergence - or lack thereof - with regard to partnership, institutional capacity, strategic interests and securitization within the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership for Peace and Security. To this end the above adopted a two-stage approach; firstly, to bring out the importance – empirically and theoretically – of structured and focused analysis of Strategic Partnerships; and secondly, to assess the EU's efforts to help strengthen security governance in Africa through a Strategic Partnership with the AU. To date the academic study of the EU's Strategic Partnerships has focused on what such partnerships are - or indeed should be. This article sought to take that enquiry further and develop an analytical framework for theoretically-grounded assessment of Strategic Partnerships. The hope is still that this might facilitate more structured evaluation, more nuanced analysis, more systematic comparison and better policy recommendations for future Strategic Partnerships. If successful, this would be beneficial to the scholarship not only of EU partnerships and strategic relations, but also to the study and practice of EU and AU efforts to facilitate better security governance in Africa.

Assessing the developments up to, during and after the 2007 Lisbon Summit, which launched the EU's Strategic Partnership with the AU, the second part of the article concluded that AU and EU ambitions and efforts to foster better security governance in Africa are converging. So far specific initiatives have been initiated within the realm of peace and security by both organizations, although they have yet to launch for example joint peace operations. These preliminary findings suggest that a degree of EU-AU policy convergence related to peace and security is taking place and that this is emerging within the Strategic Partnership.

Acknowledging the nexus between security and development the European and African unions and their member states together, and alongside the UN, the RECs and others involved in this process, are seeking to develop their relationship, which was traditionally focused on economic and social development, beyond the 'donor' and 'recipient' roles towards a more equal and strategic partnership with the provision of 'African solutions to African problems' in the peace and security realm at the core. There is still some way to go before this ambition is realized, however, there is a growing consensus that the EU has 'the potential to make a major contribution on

promoting structural stability in Africa' (Assanvo and Pout, 2007: 2) and that 'the AU is becoming a true partner in African security matters for the EU and the UN' (Brosig, 2012: 301).

Amongst the questions sought answered in this contribution was whether the EU has managed to bring together its various initiatives in support of African security governance since then? Whether the AU has proved itself a strategic partner? Whether an effective working relationship has materialized in Brussels, in Addis Ababa and on the ground across the continent? And if so – whether this has improved partnership between and institutional capacity within the two organizations? And does it promote strategic interests and securitization processes that benefit them both? In short the answer is 'yes – but'. It is really a question of whether one sees a glass half-full or half-empty. The Strategic Partnership for Peace and Security has already come a long way, but it still has a long way to go to succeed.

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