Structure and African Foreign Policy Agency

When Will "African Solutions to African Problems" Be Fully Realized?

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African states, regional organizations, and nongovernmental organizations have exhibited impressive foreign policy agency in the areas of parliamentary diplomacy, agenda setting, and program formulation, affecting the continent and the global system. African states and organizations have accumulated decades of experience in building cooperative linkages and acting within the international order, thereby innovating new ideas and initiatives. For example, 55 African states constitute a sizable voting bloc in the UN General Assembly and in other fora and have often worked together to promote an agenda that benefits Africa.

While acknowledging impressive African agency, this article takes account of countervailing structural factors within the framework of the agent-structure debate.[1] First, African regional and subregional structures consist of developing countries that will continue to be unable to fully implement foreign policy agency initiatives, particularly in the areas of collective security and economic cooperation. Second, structure helps determine whether program formulation within an African subregion is present or not. In the North African subregion, two relatively strong, rival states have created a bipolar structure, resulting in an absence of subregional agency in collective security, economic cooperation, and other areas. In contrast, most African subregional structures are not bipolar, and leaders and states have exhibited agency in forging organizations to promote economic cooperation and collective security, and some have made modest gains in implementation. The overarching question is when will African foreign policy agency overcome structural constraints and make the goal of "African solutions to African problems" a complete reality?

Introduction

Observers have noted the growing volume of agency in African foreign policies for decades.[2] More recently, Chris Alden and Amnon Aran point out that agency—as opposed to structure—is gaining increasing importance in the study of international relations, including Africa.[3] Among others, Sophie Harman and

William Brown argue that the mounting evidence of African foreign policy agency and innovation in a variety of areas (e.g., South–South relations, nonalignment, peace and security,[4] trade and investment,[5] climate change, and health) weigh against the exclusive use of mainstream international relations theory, including variants of realism, in analyzing foreign policy on the continent.[6] Jonathan Fisher argues that African foreign policy agency has led to the reshaping of international institutions, including the UN and World Bank. He also points out that agency extends beyond the state to civil society organizations that are active in international affairs.[7] Ronald Chapaike and Marutse H. Knowledge argue against Eurocentrism in international relations theory and point to African agency during the Cold War, which has only increased in the new millennium.[8]

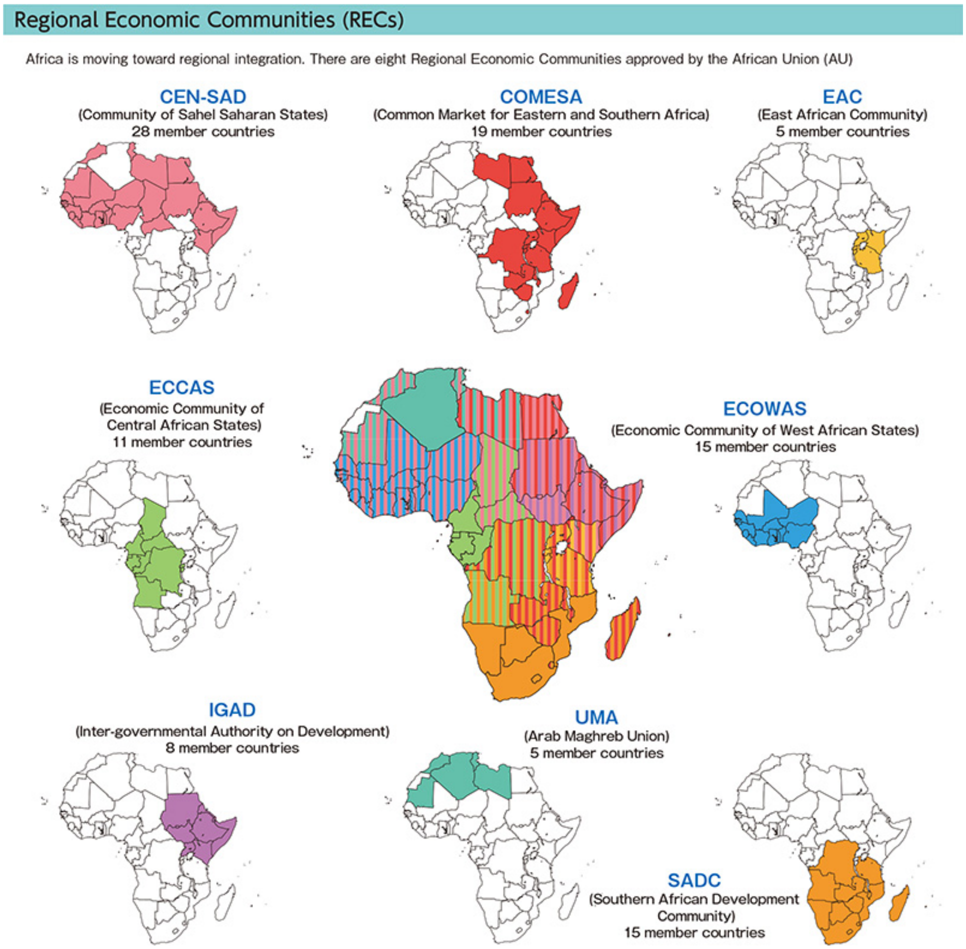
In an edited volume, Harman, Brown, and others explore the implications of the engagement of old and new players and how these players are redefining Africa's political and socioeconomic transitions and changing patterns of region building. This includes African agency in the UN and World Trade Organization (WTO), negotiations over climate change and trade agreements with the European Union (EU), and regional diplomatic strategies.[9] There has also been African agency in the push by organizations and some states for corporate social responsibility. In a journal article, Harman and Brown demonstrate how scholars have altered their work over time, thereby acknowledging the growing importance of African agency; they point to Beth Whitaker's iterative work on "soft balancing" by African states.[10] They also highlight Danielle Beswick's chapter in their edited volume on "omni-balancing" and Rwanda as a leader in the African Union (AU), Davos (World Economic Forum), and other fora.[11]

Fridon Lala connects global "multipolarization" and the rise of the global South with the rise of African agency in the domains of peace, security, and climate change and in shaping the global normative framework. He analyzes the cases of the AU and South Africa as actors exercising agency regionally and globally. The AU has adopted "Agenda 2063" in promoting African interests globally, demanding greater representation in the WTO, International Monetary Fund, and World Bank, and using the New Partnership for African Development as a means to make African states more attractive to investors and lessen dependence on external donors and international financial institutions. Lala focuses on South African foreign policy agency during the presidency of Thabo Mbeki, who proclaimed the "African renaissance" and "African solutions to African problems." Mbeki's leadership helped lead to the AU and its constituent organizations and to robust AU peace operations and sanctions against countries with unconstitutional changes of government. Mbeki also led in securing South African membership of the Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) group that challenged US dominance of the global economic system. Lala concludes that the structural organization of relevant institutions is crucial to the process of exercising agency.[12]

I agree that one must use various theoretical prisms and frameworks (e.g., not just variants of realism) in approaching the foreign policy agency strides that African states and organizations have made in a relatively short period as well as guard against the overuse of variants of realism and other conventional international relations theories in analyzing African foreign policy agency. In contrast to Europe, Africa has experienced few interstate wars due to the weakness of states created by European imperial colonizers.[13] Instead, African foreign policies have often focused on collective action to prevent regime collapse, state failure, and conflict spillover.[14] In recent decades, observers cannot explain solely the low level of interstate war in Africa by pointing to the inability of states to project power beyond their borders but rather must also blame regional organizations and other institutions created through African foreign policy agency to manage disputes and prevent conflict. Finally, most African states are not as weak as sometimes portrayed in the literature, and observers can no longer cast these states as primarily "victims" of outside powers.

While dynamic, visionary leadership is essential for agency, leaders and states act within specific structural parameters.[15] Writing from a constructivist perspective, Walter Carlnaes points out that situational-structural conditions often constrain agents.[16] These conditions include the amount of power that states have, which helps define the structure of a particular region. Therefore, one must take into account structural factors in analyzing and assessing agency in African foreign policies and implementation. One cannot downplay the power of states and the level of cooperative action within organizations as essential elements determining the degree to which foreign policy initiatives are implemented nor the differences in implementation.[17] Leaders, states, and organizations may show agency in agendas and creating structures but not be able to follow through with substantive implementation.[18]

I analyze African foreign policy agency and structural constraints in the areas of economic cooperation—particularly regional economic communities (REC) and collective security, two of the most important areas of agency—and assess the importance of structure (especially the amount of resources and power) in weak implementation. First, I focus on RECs, such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC), Common Market of East and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the East African Community (EAC). When these RECs were founded through African foreign policy agency, most policy makers had aspirations of generating European-style internal trade volumes and promoting rapid economic development. However, due to the lack of intraregional trade, poor agrarian economies and infrastructure, and the weak capacity of states, the RECs have not significantly boosted intraregional trade or economic development. These economic communities contrast with successful ones, such as the EU, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) of South America.



(Image courtesy of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan)

Figure 1. African regional economic communities. Pictured are the eight African Union–approved RECs.

Second, I examine collective security agency initiatives under the umbrella of the AU, including the African Peace and Security Architecture, the African Standby Force (ASF), and operations such as the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and analyze how structural factors constrain implementation. In addition, I examine the record of subregional organizations that have been able to generate collective security initiatives but have fallen short in implementation. These include AMISOM, which African states have failed to fund, as well as the ECOWAS and its failures to stabilize Côte d'Ivoire, 2002–2004, and Mali, 2012–2013. The shortfalls in African agency contrast with the well-endowed North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which led successful peacekeeping operations in Bosnia and Kosovo and engaged in stabilization in Afghanistan, as well as UN peacekeeping operations that are paid for mainly by annual contributions by the United States, China, United Kingdom, France, Russia, Germany, and Japan.

In the second part of the article, I analyze the absence of foreign policy agency (security and economic) on the part of the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) in the most economically advanced African subregion, which is partly explained by an intense rivalry of two moderately strong, middle income states, creating a bipolar structure. I contrast the structure of North Africa and AMU with that of other African subregions and their organizations, which mostly consist of states that do not have the capacity to threaten each other and, therefore, have demonstrated foreign policy agency in program formulation with weak implementation.

In conducting comparative analysis, I use examples of successful foreign policy agency implementation by collective security organizations—NATO and the UN—which benefited from member states with relatively high GDP per capita and defense budgets, as well as economic communities: the EU, ASEAN, and MERCOSUR. In determining the strength of subregional structure and projecting into the future, I use *African Futures 2050* by Jacobus Kamfer Cilliers, Barry Hughes, and Jonathan Moyer of the Institute of Security Studies, which provides four different scenarios for Africa in the next 30 years.[19] I use the best-case scenario in the development of GDP per capita in gauging prospects for collective security and economic cooperation implementation.[20] In assessing prospects for the RECs, I use the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and UN Conference on Trade and Development indices of intraregional trade.[21] Finally, I assess the prospects for the development of rivalries within the subregions, using structural realist and constructivist approaches, gauging how changing power dynamics and rivalries in a region shape behavior.[22]

Regions with high GDP per capita have governments with relatively more revenues to spend on foreign policy agency implementation (free trade areas [FTA], customs unions and monetary unions, and collective security structures and operations). Furthermore, regions with high GDP per capita usually have diversified economies (manufacturing, services, and agriculture) that provide the bases for successful economic communities with FTAs and common markets. Intraregional trade increasing over time provides evidence that an economic community is successful. African GDP per capita is currently below USD 2,000 and is projected to increase to USD 3,400 by 2030 and could increase to USD 12,000 by 2050 if all goes well in the global economy and African governance reform, which holds promise for Africa and especially some RECs.[23] There is variation according to subregion, with some developing middle classes and both formal and informal trade, while others lag behind.

The more the GDPs per capita of African regions grow, the more African actors will be able to pay for organizational institutions and collective security operations. Regions with low GDPs per capita mean that small government revenues must be spent on domestic services, such as education, health care, and civil service. In contrast, GDP merely means the size of population that can be mobilized for war. For example, Nigeria has the largest GDP in Africa but one of the lowest GDPs per capita, with the result that the government funds the military only enough so that units must remain focused on maintaining internal security and are excessively operational. Over time and in general, the longer that African states exist, the more nation-states, nationalism, and legitimacy grow—GDP per capita will become more important as a measure of state power replacing legitimacy.[24] One caveat is that regions with middle income GDPs per capita and intense rivalries (e.g., Morocco and Algeria) can cause the development of modern militaries that can fight interstate wars.

Regional Economic Communities

Since the 1960s, African leaders and states have demonstrated collective agency in founding RECs to promote trade and development through FTAs, customs unions, and common markets. Successful economic communities have had a relatively high GDP per capita, industrialization and trade in finished goods and services. For example, Western Europe was already industrialized with a relatively high GDP per capita after the World War II; the ending of the Franco-German rivalry opened the door to a common market and an eventual monetary union.[25] The defeat of Germany in 1945 enabled France to tie Germany's dominant economy to European cooperation, which placed constraints on the German economy. Today, trade among EU countries accounts for more than 40 percent of total EU trade.[26] Another success story that is more relevant to African RECs has been the ASEAN FTA, which has helped to boost intra-ASEAN trade since 2008 from 14 percent to 24 percent of total trade. ASEAN has a USD 14,000 GDP per capita, and members include several newly industrializing countries that have driven the jump in trade. MERCOSUR has been a moderately successful REC; from 1990 to 2000, intra-MERCOSUR trade jumped from USD 4 billion per year to more than USD 40 billion. However, due to protectionist barriers by Argentina, Uruguay, and Chile against Brazil's large economy and exports, intra-MERCOSUR trade was only 16 percent of total trade in 2010, where it has largely stayed until today.[27] MERCOSUR has a GDP per capita of more than USD 10,000—an indicator of an industrialized region, but one in which Brazil dwarfs other member states.

In addition, the EU advanced beyond a successful common market (with the elimination of tariffs and nontariff barriers and the free movement of labor) toward a monetary union with the introduction of the Euro in 1999. However, the EU's experience after the 2008 Great Recession demonstrates the perils of managing a monetary union as long as member states pursue different macroeconomic and budgetary policies. Given the European experience, African RECs should be cautious in attempting to develop monetary unions.

If Africa industrializes, the middle class grows, and GDP per capita rises according to the previously stated projections, economic cooperation will develop and help boost economic growth. Intraregional trade has grown in absolute terms since 2000, though the percentage of total trade has remained at 11 percent.[28] African RECs and FTAs have not significantly boosted intra-African trade.[29] Dependency on exports to Europe, Asia, and the Americas remains a structural barrier to intraregional trade, as does underdeveloped intraregional infrastructure, weak governance, and poor incentives for domestic industrial investment, and tariff and nontariff barriers. Far more manufactured goods and services continue to be traded in Europe and ASEAN in comparison to Africa. The continent produces many raw materials and food that do not bring much added value. These structural barriers must be overcome in order for the RECs to be successful.

The UNECA has ranked the RECs in order of integration with an index consisting of regional trade integration, "productive integration," financial and monetary integration, infrastructure, and free movement of people. UNECA ranks the EAC and SADC the highest, followed by ECOWAS and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), with COMESA and Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD) at the bottom.[30] North Africa is the subregion that has the best chance of industrializing and reaching more than USD 12,000 GDP per capita by 2050, with Egypt having the best prospects for industrialization. However, the rivalry between Morocco and Algeria will continue to hamper regional economic integration. Another problem is that Algeria and Libya remain oil and gas exporters to Europe and other locations and are not oriented toward intraregional trade.

EAC member states—Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda—have developed and are implementing an FTA and customs union, which have significantly boosted intraregional trade over the past decade, even though regional GDP per capita is only USD 1,000. The EAC was resurrected only in 1999 but has benefited from its previous existence from 1963–1977 and infrastructure that tied Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda together. As landlocked states, Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi have the incentive to lower trade barriers with Kenya and Tanzania to export their goods to Europe and Asia, and Chinese investment is spurring on much of the integration-fostering infrastructure improvements that are taking place within the EAC, which is a prime example of external power involvement in REC development. . Furthermore, Kenya and Rwanda are two dynamic industrializing economies that help drive the region. However, the EAC has a long way to go toward high levels of intraregional trade and middle income economies.[31]

(US Army photo by 1LT Ian B. Shay)

Figure 2. Exercise Shared Accord 19. A "Women, Peace and Security Conflict" panel was conducted during the Shared Accord 2019, Gabiro, Rwanda, 16 August 2019. The panel was composed of female African partner servicemembers from Rwanda, Uganda, and Zambia. They discussed the importance of women in peacekeeping operations in Africa and the role they play in child protection. Shared Accord 2019 focuses on bringing together US and Rwandan forces, African partner militaries, allies, and international organizations to increase readiness, interoperability, and partnership building among participating nations for peacekeeping operations in the Central African Republic.

The SADC—comprised of Angola, Botswana, Comoros, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe—has prospects for becoming a successful REC, with intraregional trade already standing at 15 percent of total trade and constituting more than half Africa's total intraregional trade.[32] South Africa is already an industrial economy with a GDP per capita above USD 6,000 and a substantial middle class; however, economic growth has been sluggish in the past decade. The most-developed infrastructure (roads, railways, airways, and seaways) in Africa ties much of the region together. Total GDP per capita is above USD 4,000 per capita and is expected to grow to more than USD 6,000 by 2030. However, this does not guarantee successful regional integration in Southern Africa, especially since South Africa's economy dwarfs those of other member states and the SADC's unipolar structure has resulted in protectionist tendencies, as in the case of Brazil and MERCOSUR. South Africa has dominated the South African Customs Union since its inception in 1910 and the economies of Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, and Eswatini,[33] which provides a negative example to other SADC member states and made the development of a wider SADC customs union difficult. In 2008, SADC member states agreed on an FTA but delayed implementation.

Instead of implementing the SADC FTA, the member states sought to become part of a larger FTA—COMESA and, in 2019, the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA). However, COMESA has fallen short of creating a customs union or common market and has failed to significantly boost intraregional trade in comparison with a smaller FTA, such as the EAC with its customs union.[34] Also, bilateral agreements with the EU provide a disincentive to the SADC FTA.[35] As a result, intra-SADC trade has remained at 15 percent of total trade, which is largely what it was in 2008.[36]

African leaders and technocrats created ECOWAS in 1975 with the goal of emulating the European Economic Community in promoting free trade and economic growth. However, ECOWAS struggled to promote such growth in subregional trade due to dependency on Europe, poor intraregional infrastructure, and a lack of trade in manufactured goods and services.[37] In 2019, intra-ECOWAS trade still consists mostly of staple foods.[38] While ECOWAS has created an FTA and customs union and has been successful in lowering tariff barriers, quotas, bans, and tariffs remain in place that stymie intraregional trade, especially affecting food products.[39] Part of the problem is that ECOWAS member states lack the capacity to implement regional commitments for trade liberalization. There is also a lack of knowledge on the part of officials and traders about ECOWAS rules, and there is a weak monitoring mechanism. On a more positive note, there has been increased trade in services, and a 2017 Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development and West Africa Club study of cross-border cooperation and policy networks notes the growing potential for intraregional trade, especially with the mushrooming of informal cross-border marketing networks. [40]

ECOWAS has planned to introduce a common currency to facilitate intraregional trade and investment. However, some member states' leaders cannot afford to let go of the control of their currencies and allow the free flow of goods. Another disincentive has been the Communaute francaise d'Afrique (CFA) common currency used by eight West African countries, guaranteed by the French treasury and pegged to the Euro as well as the Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest Africaine (UEMOA). Francophone states remain reluctant to abandon the financial stability provided by the CFA and UEMOA, even though they could gain greater monetary control with an ECOWAS currency. Similarly, the ECCAS suffers from a weak economic power structure (low GDP/capita and little interstate trade) and poor governance. ECCAS is centered on the Communauté *économique* et monétaire de l'Afrique centrale (CEMAC), which like UEMOA in West Africa is a customs and monetary union imposed by the former colonial power (France) and continues to be influenced by France. Both CEMAC and UEMOA lack the autonomy of a successful FTA customs union that generates a much greater volume of trade and has complete autonomy. Finally, there are still barriers to cross-border trade within UEMOA and CEMAC.

In sum, African foreign policy agency in promoting regional economic cooperation has been impressive, but implementation has been weak. Most recently, African leaders and states have founded the AfCFTA, which came into effect in May 2019. Landry Signe and Colette van der Ven predict that AfCFTA could boost intra-African trade from less than 12 percent of total African trade to 25 percent.[41] However, regional political and economic structural weakness with poor infrastructure, agriculture-centered economies, and low intraregional trade will hamper the progress of AfCFTA and most of the RECs.[42] Also, bipolar rivalry in North Africa and unipolar dominance in Southern Africa are impediments to progress. However, the ASEAN FTA shows the way forward, with member states sublimating their differences through dialogue and compromise and taking advantage of industrialization to greatly expand intraregional trade and development.

Limited Implementation of African Foreign Policy Agency in Collective Security

In the area of collective security, African leaders and states have shown considerable agency at creating organizations, such as the AU-based African Peace Facility (APF), African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), and ASF. These actors have made gains in moving toward "African solutions to African problems."

AMISOM has been Africa's greatest collective security accomplishment, rolling back al-Shabaab and enabling the establishment of a Somali government.[43] In addition, African collective security initiatives have led to brief peace support operations by the AU and subregional organizations that have given way to better-resourced UN missions.[44]

NATO—a collective security organization—does not depend on outside states or organizations for sustainment, peacekeeping, stabilization operations, or solving alliance problems. All member states have a high enough GDP per capita that enables them to fund the organization according to an agreed cost-sharing formula, even though many struggle to attain the required two percent of GDP per capita in defense spending. All member states that volunteer for peacekeeping or stabilization operations are able to pay their own way and provide their own equipment and training. In regard to the UN peacekeeping budget and peacekeeping operations, richer UN member states provide funding, and some developed countries provide their own troops for operations without reliance on the peacekeeping fund.[45]

In contrast to NATO, AU member states with low GDPs per capita and lack of resources have been unable to fully fund the AU Commission and APF. External donors pay more than 60 percent of the AU budget and fund more than 90 percent of AU peace operations. For example, the EU has provided more than USD 3 billion to the APF since 2004.[46] Recognizing that the EU and external actors expect African solutions, Pres. Paul Kagame of Rwanda proposed a .02-percent tax on African member states' eligible exports in order for Africa to pay for 25 percent of peace support operations; however, his proposal has lost momentum since he stepped down as AU chair in January 2019.[47]

The foreign policy agency of South Africa and other AU member states led to agreement in 2003 on the concept of an ASF as part of APSA, with full operational status planned for December 2015. The ambitious concept called for 15,000 troops in five subregional brigades with the ability to deploy to peace support operations and even intervene to stop genocide. However, there has been limited implementation, with the SADC brigade engaging in regular joint exercises and with part of the ASF undertaking two joint exercises. The problem has been a lack of resources (reflected in low GDP per capita) in maintaining forces from roughly 50 African militaries on standby. The EU has provided much of the funding for the ASF through the APF.[48] Given the slow development of the ASF and new and more challenging conflicts, such as efforts by violent extremist organizations (VEO) to seize control of Mali, South Africa and a dozen other African states created the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crisis (ACIRC) in 2013, which was funded by the EU APF.[49] However, ACIRC has been as resource-challenged as the ASF. In comparison, even NATO countries have had a difficult time with developing and maintaining rapid reaction and standby forces. In addition, sovereignty stymied AU intervention in conflicts to prevent genocide, specifically in Burundi in 2015 to stop Pres. Pierre Nkurunziza from carrying out ethnic cleansing against opponents of his efforts to defy constitutional term limits. AMISOM exemplifies a more realistic approach than the ASF and ACIRC, as the EU, US, and UN have provided the resources to fund, train, and equip African forces to be deployed to a specific mission and to sustain them.

While Uganda, Burundi, Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti, and other African countries have provided the troops and have fought al-Shabaab, AMISOM would have been impossible without external support. The EU has been paying AMISOM troops more than USD 1,000 per month since 2007.[50] The UN provides logistical support for AMISOM, 70 civilian personnel, the more than 10,000 strong Somalia National Army, and the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM).[51] The United States has provided more than USD 1 billion to support AMISOM and troop contributors with equipment, logistics, advisory support, and training since 2007, and US Africa Command has provided multinational training for AMISOM troop contributors and other forces.[52] While the AU has been unable to pay for AMISOM, it proved superior to the Horn of Africa's Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), which was unable to provide even basic financial and administrative support and faced opposition from the Somalia Transitional Federal Government.[53]

The EU also uses the APF to fund subregional collective security structures and operations, specifically those of ECOWAS and ECCAS.[54] In the 1990s, the Abacha military dictatorship in Nigeria was willing to spend billions of dollars and deploy large forces to lead ECOWAS in stopping civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone to demonstrate Nigerian power and seek international legitimacy. However, after Nigeria returned to civilian rule in 1999, strong public opposition to high levels of spending on external operations and a large external debt compelled Abuja to cease undertaking large-scale peace operations. Also, While ECOWAS has scored successes in Gambia in 2016–2017 in installing a duly elected president and in Liberia in 2003 to remove Charles Taylor, the organization has lacked the resources and forces to tackle larger security challenges. For example, ECOWAS troops deployed to Côte d'Ivoire in 2003 but were dependent upon 4,000 French troops, were unable to sustain themselves, and became part of a UN force (UNOCI) in 2004. In 2013, ECOWAS deployed 1,400 African-led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA) troops to Mali in 2013 to help stop the advance of a major VEO insurgency and again was dependent on French troops that defeated the VEOs. In 2013, the UN took control of the peace support operation with MINUSMA subsuming AFISMA. In Central African Republic, ECCAS intervened in 2013 to stop a civil war but was dependent on French troops and gave way to the AU and finally to a UN operations (MINUSCA).

External funding and support has also been essential for the Multinational Joint Task Force–Lake Chad Region in which two Central African states—Chad and Cameroon—came to the aid of Nigeria, which had been unable to counter Boko Haram and Islamic State–West Africa in the northeast of the country. Also, the G5 Sahel force that is being developed to replace French counterterrorist troops and that includes ECOWAS (Niger, Burkina Faso, and Mali), ECCAS (Chad), and AMU (Mauritania) countries is dependent on France and the United States.

African states and organizations have demonstrated foreign policy agency in creating structures and acting to resolve many of their security problems. However, they must seek substantial external assistance to deal with major internal conflicts and natural disasters. Similarly, African RECs have yet to fulfill their promise. It will be a decade or two before African states develop and industrialize to the point that they will have the resources to pay their own way for collective security and generate intraregional trade and development. The hard reality of poor and weak states limits African solutions to African problems.

Subregional Structure and Variation in Agency

The ending of regional power rivalry is a necessary condition for the emergence of cooperation. European cooperation only blossomed when the rivalry between Germany and France ended after World War II, leading to the EU. The end of military dictatorship in Argentina and Brazil ended their rivalry and opened the door to MERCOSUR. The establishment of ASEAN came after Indonesia and Malaysia overcame their rivalry and adhered to the principle of dialogue and the "ASEAN way," replacing confrontation. Similar transformation is necessary in each of the following African contexts.

North Africa

Morocco and Algeria are two of the strongest states in Africa. The former has a GDP per capita of more than USD 9,000 and the latter more than USD 16,000, and both have developed two of the strongest militaries in Africa, with relatively high defense spending due to strong military influence.[55] They also have legitimacy—Morocco as a longstanding kingdom and Algeria with the National Liberation Front, which liberated the country from French rule and became the basis for a strong military.[56] While there is the basis for considerable economic and security cooperation, the two countries have confronted each other since the "Sand War" in 1963 and especially since 1975 over the status of Western Sahara, which has led to an intense bipolar rivalry that has prevented subregional cooperation and led to moribund subregional organization and an absence of foreign policy agency. International mediation brought a peace agreement on Western Sahara in 1989, and a UN peacekeeping mission (MINURSO) in 1992 brought a thaw in Morocco–Algeria relations and led the two countries plus Libya, Tunisia, and Mauritania to form the AMU in 1989 to promote free trade. With the founding of the AU and the ASF, the AMU was designated as the lead organization in developing the North African brigade of the ASF in 2004. However, by 1994, Morocco and Algeria were again at loggerheads, and Libyan leader Mu'ammar Gadhafi opined that the AMU deserved to "be in the freezer."[57] As a result of the Morocco–Algeria standoff, the AMU failed in the economic and security sectors.[58]

The explanation for the failure of the AMU is partly a constructivist one and originated in the countries' differing conceptions of the Maghreb.[59] The Moroccan empire once encompassed Western Sahara and much of present-day Algeria and Mauritania, whereas Algeria rejected imperialism and promoted revolutionary nation-states. These clashing conceptions culminated in the 1975 Western Sahara dispute. Rabat saw Algeria's efforts to support the Sahrawi Frente Popular de Liberación de Saguía el Hamra y Río de Oro (POLISARIO) liberation movement in creating an independent Western Sahara as an assault on Moroccan sovereignty, while Algerian leaders viewed Morocco's seizure of Western Sahara in 1975 as thwarting a fraternal liberation movement and Saharawi national self-determination. In addition, the 1963 war and conflict of the late 1970s led both sides into a security dilemma in which they armed themselves with advanced weaponry to prepare for war. In addition, Colonel Gadhafi wanted to lead AMU and, when thwarted, abandoned the organization. During the 2011 Arab Spring, Algeria and Morocco cooperated to mitigate the spread of radicalism, but their rivalry soon resumed and endures today.[60]

Two competing conceptions of the nation-state and an intense bipolar rivalry of two industrializing countries with relatively strong militaries explain the failure of North African subregional cooperation. Whatever foreign policy agency the two states have exercised has been focused on trying to win over other African states to their respective positions. The North African subregional structure resembles the South Asian one, with the intense rivalry between India and Pakistan that has prevented the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation and other forms of regional cooperation from developing. In contrast, MERCOCUR, EU, and ASEAN have been able to overcome such rivalries and establish functioning regional cooperation structures.

Southern Africa

With a unipolar system and no serious rivals, South Africa provides foreign policy agency and resources (with bandwagoning by most states and occasional soft balancing by Zimbabwe and Angola) in SADC. South Africa's African National Congress (ANC) exercised foreign policy agency in leading resistance to apartheid South Africa from the 1950s to 1994, which established legitimacy once it assumed power in 1994. Also, liberation movements and "front line states" exhibited foreign policy agency in engaging with the Non-aligned Movement and the Organization of African Unity, producing Pan-Africanist solidarity. After the democratic transition in 1994, South Africa did not face a major adversary in the subregion and was by far the largest economy in the region. Under the leadership of Pres. Thabo Mbeki, 1999–2008, South Africa led the way in promulgating the "African renaissance" and the AU.

South African leadership and soft power and the prospect of increased aid and investment were attractive to many African leaders and states. However, a number of leaders and states resisted South African leadership. Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe pushed back against Nelson Mandela's and Mbeki's attempts to assume a dominant role in SADC, against Mandela's disapproval of Zimbabwe's 1998 intervention in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) "in the name of SADC," and against Mbeki's "quiet diplomacy" to end the crisis that gripped Zimbabwe from 2000 onward. Angola's Eduardo dos Santos also resisted South African efforts to bring a negotiated end to his country's civil war in the 1990s and the 1998 intervention in the DRC. Resistance also came from autocratic leaders who were fearful of South Africa's promotion of free market democracy and the right to intervene to stop massive human rights abuses, as occurred in the 1994 Rwandan genocide. In 2008, President Mbeki mediated in the conflict between the rising Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) and declining President Mugabe and ZANU-PF. His reluctance to strongly negotiate with Mugabe led to massive human rights abuses by Mugabe's security forces and the blunting of MDC electoral victories. In the 2010s, South Africa, under Jacob Zuma and Cyril Ramaphosa, became more internally focused and less assertive in SADC and the AU.

West Africa

West Africa features moderately weak states that have overcome rivalries to exercise foreign policy agency in ECOWAS. This subregion was important because of its closeness to the diaspora in the Americas and Europe. Foreign policy agency by Ghanaian leader Kwame Nkrumah and others propelled the Pan-Africanist movement in the 1950s and early 1960s and sought to bring down French neocolonialism and create African unity. Nkrumah was the major agent of change and was able to use his base in Ghana to fight neocolonialism and attempt to create a United States of Africa. The rivalry between Ghana and Nigeria and former French colonies shaped foreign policies in the 1960s.

In the 1970s, the disintegration of the Pan-Africanist movement and Nigerian foreign policy agency and use of its oil wealth led to rapprochement with France and UEMOA states and the establishment of ECOWAS. While rivalries remained, francophone states did not feel threatened by a weak and fractured Nigeria and agency could flow. Gadhafi's threat to Chad in 1980 helped generate agency in the formation of an ECOWAS mutual defense pact in 1981. After the reestablishment of civilian rule in Nigeria in 1999, the country's role in leading ECOWAS increased. Nigeria's controversial leadership in peace operations in Liberia and Sierra Leone in the 1990s gave way to foreign policy agency in helping to institutionalize ECOWAS and its Peace and Security Council in the 2000s and participating in a successful peace support operation in Sierra Leone, from 2000–2003 and leading one in Liberia in 2003.

Eastern Africa

East Africa features a longstanding engagement with Egypt and the Arab world and a moderately weak, multipolar structure. Kenya and Ethiopia are somewhat contentious anchor states, and Rwanda has rivalries with Uganda and Burundi. The rivalry between Kenya and Ethiopia for regional leadership as well as negative foreign policy agency by Sudan and Eritrea have helped to limit IGAD and divide responsibility for leadership of the East African Brigade of the ASF between the two countries; however, the rivalry has remained confined to the diplomatic realm. In the Horn of Africa, Ethiopia has dominated as one of the most legitimate nation-states in Africa, though its nine major nationalities also cause instability. Ethiopia and Kenya led in the development of IGAD, which is not a neocolonial organization but remains weak.[61] Kenyan foreign policy agency in IGAD led to peace settlements in Sudan in 2005 and Somalia in 2004.

An ideological and personal rivalry between the leaders of Kenya and Tanzania led to the collapse of the EAC in 1977; however, the organization reemerged in

1999. EAC member states have not invited Ethiopia to join, though they did invite South Sudan. However, the EAC was able to revive previous economic structures and overcome leadership differences in forging a fairly successful REC.

Central Africa

Central Africa features weak, personalist states with the lowest nation-state legitimacy and energy and mineral exporters suffering the "resource curse." French hegemony and weak states led by dictators helped produce more personalist, neocolonial foreign policies that have degenerated into "big man" solidarity and mechanisms for strong man survival under anarchy. As a result, there has been less foreign policy agency in Central Africa than in any other subregion and the development of weak subregional organizations (ECCAS and CEMAC). Feeble and degraded states in the DRC and Central African Republic have focused the attention of the other Central African states on stabilization, which prevents progress on economic cooperation and collective security initiatives, such as the ASF.

Conclusion

Africa will continue to exercise impressive foreign policy agency, but it will take decades before the vision of African solutions to African problems will be achieved. Structural realism and power provide part of the explanation for agency and its limitations in African foreign policies. Weak economic structures explain the inability of the RECs to produce ASEAN-level intraregional trade and economic development. A majority of states with low GDPs per capita are unable to fund collective security organizations, structures, and peace support operations. A bipolar rivalry between two relatively developed North African states has stymied regional foreign policy agency and the development of the AMU. Also, constructivism is significant in explaining the strong rivalry between a state based upon the remnants of empire and a new state based upon a revolution. A region with a unipolar economic structure has stymied the development of an FTA and customs union. In sum, Regional Security Complex Theory (which draws significantly from constructivism and neorealism) is a suitable lens through which to examine security dynamics in Africa. Strong African foreign policy agency with weak implementation leads to the question of whether African states and organizations overreach and waste resources in creating weak RECs and collective security structures and operations and standby forces. Some contend that Africa should not waste energy and resources on initiatives that require considerable external funding and that still perform in a suboptimal manner. Instead, African states should take an incremental approach in building their economies and cross-border cooperation and training and equipping of troops to essential peace support operations that are not too taxing. The growth in the African service sector with mobile phone banking and the growing Internet availability hold out hope for accelerated economic growth. At least most regions do not have the problem that North Africa and the AMU have with two relatively strong and legitimate rival states that do not cooperate, leading to a moribund regional organization.

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Dr. Burgess has been a professor of international security studies at US Air War College since June 1999. He has published books and numerous articles, book chapters, and monographs on Asian and African security issues, peace and stability operations, and weapons of mass destruction. His books include *The United Nations under Boutros Boutros-Ghali, 1992-97* and *South Africa's Weapons of Mass Destruction*. His recent journal articles include "Russia, South Asia, and the United States: A New Great Game?," *Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs* 2, no. 3 (Fall 2019); "A Pathway toward Enhancing the US Air Force–Indian Air Force Partnership and Deterrence in the Indo-Pacific Region," *Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs* 2, no. 1 (Spring 2019); "Multilateral Defense Cooperation in the Indo-Asia-Pacific Region: Tentative Steps toward a Regional NATO?" *Contemporary Security Policy* (December 2017); "Rising Bipolarity in the South China Sea: The Impact of the US Rebalance to Asia on China's Expansion," *Contemporary Security Policy* 37, no. 1 (April 2016); and "The US Pivot to Asia and Renewal of the US-India Strategic Partnership," *Comparative Strategy* 34, no. 44 (July 2015). He holds a doctorate from Michigan State University (1992) and has been on the faculty at the University of Zambia, University of Zimbabwe, Vanderbilt University, and Hofstra University.

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