

Multidimensionalism or Militarism? A Decade of Experimentation in African Peace Support Operations

By Francis Onditi¹

Abstract

The relationship between the military, police, and civilians within the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) has, at times, been characterised by considerable tension and mistrust. This bears direct implications on the effectiveness of the African Union in promoting peace and stability on the continent. This article explores the evolution of the African Standby Force (ASF) based on case studies of the Eastern Africa Standby Force (EASF) and ECOWAS Standby Force (ESF) to understand why and how the 2015 bench mark for achieving ASF's full operation capability did not happen. The article argues that, with regard to the uncertainty surrounding the evolution of the ASF; it is not enough to focus solely on the macro-level factors affecting the evolution of ASF. Instead, internal processes and structures such as the attitude of peacekeepers to each other is, without doubt, an inseparable part of the 'sluggishness' in the realization of a rapid deployment capability (RDC). It is, therefore, more appropriate to consider the role of internal processes and civil-military power relations in the evolution of the ASF post-2015.

Keywords: Peace support operations; African Standby Force, civil-military relations

Introduction

Even though the growing asymmetric warfare in Africa and the regionalization of conflicts calls for a multifaceted approach to peacemaking processes, there still is a heavy militarization of forces. In an increasingly multipolar world, characterized by growing threats from extremist groups (Solomon, 2012), such as Boko Haram and Al Shabaab, the militarization of peacekeeping practices has made some countries become fixated with the exercise of military power (Welz, 2016). Such inconsistencies in how forces are constituted and mobilized for Peace Support Operations (PSOs) are what this article describes as the fundamental enigma. Against the backdrop of this enigma, is the debate on the need to invigorate the structural and institutional capabilities of the African Standby Force (ASF) in the quest to promote the ideology of 'African solutions to African

¹ Francis Onditi is a Senior Lecturer & Head of Department, School of International Relations and Diplomacy, Riara University, Nairobi, Kenya. Email: fonditi@riarauniversity.ac.ke. He specializes in civil-military relations, peace and security institutional evolution, African studies in the international relations, civilian protection in armed conflict, international peacekeeping and political economy of African institutions.

problems' (Tieku, Obi and Scorgie-Porter, 2014). The ASF is however, faced with several challenges, including lack of cultural interoperability (Bayeh, 2014), duplication of regional organization's role, overlapping memberships of Regional Economic Communities (RECs) (Brosig, 2011), and the vicious cycle of excessive dependence on external financing, among others (Solomon, 2013; Apuuli, 2016). Elsewhere, I and my colleagues have argued that the most salient of the problems facing the ASF seems to revolve around the covert tensions among those entrusted with the responsibility to plan, design, and keep peace (Onditi, Okoth, and Matanga, 2016).

The ASF is one of the five pillars of the emerging African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), established in 2003 and adopted during the African Chiefs of Defence and Security meeting in Durban, South Africa, in 2004 (African Union, 2013). The concept of the ASF was to be replicated across the continent as follows: the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Standby Force (ESF); Eastern African Standby Force (EASF); Southern African Development Community (SADC) Standby Force; the North Africa Regional Capability (NARC), and the Central Africa Multinational Force (FOMAC). Apart from these five structures, the African Union Peace and Security Council (PSC) protocol embraces an expanded and comprehensive agenda that cuts across the spectrum of PSOs. The intention is to enable AU peace and security structures to respond to continental crisis in a timely and efficient manner (Dersso, 2010). As such, these regional structures are expected to address multiple issues, such as early warning and preventive diplomacy, conflict prevention, peacemaking and peacebuilding. Others include the encouragement and promotion of democratic practices and humanitarian and disaster management interventions. It is therefore obvious that within this gamut of issues, deploying 'boots and berets' alone cannot offer an effective response to contemporary conflict-related threats facing the continent (Aall, 2000).

The development of these peace and security structures is part of the AU's efforts to take charge of African affairs, including matters of peace operations (Franke and Esmenjaud, 2008). Moreover, this development is part of the drive towards Africanization and ownership of the pan-African project to cultivate the culture of self-reliance and minimize external overdependence (Franke, 2006). Many efforts have been made by the AU to undertake peace interventions since the first peace operation in Burundi in 2003, the AU peacekeeping mission in Darfur in 2004, and the mission in Somalia in 2007 (Murithi, 2009). These efforts were partly driven by the understanding that ongoing conflicts in Africa require a new concept of intervention, one that is not only fast, reliable and effective, but also multidimensional (involving civilians, military and police) in its composition. The former UN Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, in his 1992 *An Agenda for Peace*, argued for proactive peacekeeping and humanitarian intervention (United Nations, 1996). Thus, the ASF and its regional structures present an opportunity

for African countries to tackle challenges to peace operations within this institutional arrangement. Ideally, the linkages between the various pillars of APSA should provide for the effective coordination of plans and actors to effectively intervene in conflict.

It was envisaged that, once established, the ASF will consist of standby multidisciplinary contingents, with civilian and military components based in their respective countries, but ready for fast deployment to conflict zones anywhere in Africa, and possibly even outside the continent (African Union, 2010). However, effective command and control of the ASF requires a multidimensional and integrated approach to manage a host of technicalities and actors. The technicalities range from the establishment of an appropriate Africa-wide diplomatic and political engagement in election-related crises to the installation of an integrated and inter-operable command, control, communication and information system (C3IS), as well as infrastructure to link deployed units with mission headquarters (Gowan, 2008; Burgess, 2011). The inadequacy of operational resources is not unique to African institutions; historically, even the United Nations peacekeeping missions operating globally have experienced inadequate expertise, logistics, and diplomatic resources (Osmancavusoglu, 1999). However, the unpredictability of funding and lack of political will from African leaders has particularly been singled out as major problems facing the ASF's operationalization and sustainability (Oluwadare, 2013).

Although the ASF has the potential to contribute substantially to addressing asymmetric warfare on the continent, it cannot entirely overcome such challenges given that the overall force strength of the ASF is itself limited. The outcome of the second continental-wide field training since the formation of ASF, AMANI AFRICA II Field Training Exercise, which took place at the Army Combat Training Centre in the Northern Cape, South Africa, in October/November 2015, neither guaranteed the emergence of a stronger ASF nor did it promise to ensure an integrated force. So far, the ASF and its regional structures have not been able to reach a consensus on the composition of the force, and there is no satisfactory conceptual analysis of the Force, especially regarding the impact of civil-military tensions and exclusive nature of peacekeeping platform that continue to undermine its evolution (Tshiband, 2010; Bah, 2013; Hultman et al., 2013). This article addresses the policy lacuna by assessing the evolution of ASF structures, analyzing the challenges facing it, including the source of tensions between military and civilian actors, by drawing on the case of the EASF and ESF.

The article is structured into three major parts. The first, borrowing from Samuel Huntington's civil-military relations conceptual framework (Huntington, 1995), provides the conceptual and methodological perspectives to the study. In the second section, the article discusses challenges and prospects encountered by the ASF in its evolution as a multidimensional force. Based on the discussion on conceptual issues and challenges

facing the evolution of the ASF, the article delves into the question of the fundamental enigma. Drawing together the challenges and prospects for a multidimensional ASF and the dynamics of PSOs, the third part examines the policy leverages of a possible return of the ASF to the original vision of a multidimensional PSO platform. The conclusion, anchored on principles of multidimensionalism, examines the prospects for policy reforms.

Conceptual Issues

Whereas traditional peacekeeping focuses on ceasefire agreements and political settlements using the military model, multidimensional peacekeeping operations comprise a mix of military, police and civilian components working together to lay the foundations for sustainable peace (Bellamy and Williams, 2010). The Handbook on United Nations Multidimensional peacekeeping operations, reinforces this view that a multidimensional peacekeeping operation would traditionally perform two functions: i) ease tensions between hostile parties, and ii) create space for political negotiations (UNDPKO, 2003). Similarly, the Brahimi report identified key elements of multidimensional peacekeeping, including that they:

... must be part of a more comprehensive strategy to help resolve a conflict by taking into account its regional dimension, and addressing the political, economic, developmental, institutional-building, humanitarian and human rights aspects (United Nations, 2000:22).

Likewise, the AU peace support operations' doctrinal aspiration defines multidimensional peace operations as initiatives that involve the military, police and civilians to address diplomatic, political, and military issues in the social and security sectors and consolidating economic development (African Union, 2006). Conceptually, peacekeeping refers to a range of interventions intended to address conflicts and security issues through activities performed by civilians, the military and police, whose working relationship (civil-military relations (CMRs) is critical. Civil-military relations are more than a century old; some of the leading scholars (Huntington, 1957; Schiff, 1995) identify the relationship between the state, society and military as key to understanding how peace and security institutions function (Janowitz, 1960). This article conceptualises civil military relations to mean a level of trust among the various peace operation actors that naturally allow free exchange of information, while at the same time building on their comparative advantage to achieve the peace mission (Laura, 2011). A trusting civil-military relationship should be sustained through a mechanism that allows participation of all the components in planning for a peace operations. The absence of structural linkages among the PSO actors is a recipe for undermining peace operation capacities.

In addition to lagging behind on conceptual clarity of the ASF, there was also evidence that the operational road map of the force did not blend with realities of the emerging APSA. As such, some policy analysts view this as a gap that allowed military chiefs in Addis Ababa to craft the African Capability for Immediate Response to Crisis (ACIRC) as a response to the 'sluggishness' in achieving rapid deployment capability (RDC) (Lotze, 2015). Because of inconsistencies and development of competing structures, Walter Lotze suggests that there is need for a new operational design for the ASF that recognizes that the model of the AU working with the regions and member-states in different ways at different times is key to success.

In the context of African peace operations, civil-military relations are directly related to the concept of multidimensionalism in two ways. In the first instance, the military, police, and civilians should be seen collectively planning and conducting joint operations by reinforcing each other's skills and expertise. In the second instance, the military, police, and civilians engage jointly in integrated PSO training and field-based exercises. Such training exercises are organized to put them in a state of alert and readiness. Moreover, a multidimensional approach within these institutions is expected to foster both peacekeeping and PSO capacities. Some scholars have highlighted the importance of evaluating peace operations in relation to policy formulation and development (Towle, 2015), while others have noted discrepancies between the different components of peacekeeping and the need for joint, international, multinational, and inter-agency approaches to peace operation (Anderson and Walton, 2008). Despite the fact that most parts of Africa have experienced military interventions, existing policy studies have concentrated more on peacekeeping capacity gaps (De Coning, 2010; Carvalho and Ettang, 2011; De Coning and Karlsrud, 2011), instead of spurring debate on the transformation of peace and security institutions from military operation to a multidimensional approach, especially within the African peace and security institutions. As a result, there exists a gap in knowledge on the institutional evolution of AU peace operations, particularly with regard to the attitude and behaviour of various peacekeeping components. While the ASF in Addis Ababa is expected to set policies and offer overall coordination through the AU Peace Support Operation Division (PSOD) with the aim of realizing a fully integrated force, the RECs/ RMs are the actual implementers. It is, therefore, critical that vertical coordination of both processes and personnel are effectively developed. However, as this article illustrates, although both EASF and ECOWAS have developed the three components, their respective liaison officers at the AU are either serving or retired military officers (Onditi, 2015).

The next section examines features of an African PSO model in the context of APSA, as one of the emerging African institutions, presenting opportunities for fulfilling 'the African Solution for African problems' vision, yet stuck in both systemic and structural challenges.

Historical Challenges and Prospects for an African-led PSO Model

The ASF project continues to experience challenges that undermine its growth and attainment of full capability. Some scholars have argued that the idea of a Pan-African military force goes as far back as 1922, during the initial stages of the Pan African movement when African anti-colonial fighters resisted the colonial intruders (Franke and Esmenjaud, 2008). The foundations for this structure had been laid during the All-African People's Conference in 1958 (Beza, 2015). This notion of an African High Command was mooted by the founding President of Ghana in 1961 during the Casablanca conference. Its three objectives were: 1) to defend the states against the disadvantageous military pacts with, 2) to offer African states a feasible alternative to these disadvantageous military pacts, and 3) to spearhead the liberation of areas under colonial and what was considered white supremacist control.

However, the idea of a High Command was not endorsed by the majority of Africa's leaders, leading to the establishment of an alternative structure, referred to as the Defence Commission (Franke, 2006). In the absence of a common defence structure to manage post-independent threats, the former Organization for African Unity (OAU) occasionally undertook less complex ceasefire monitoring missions, such as the Bamako Ceasefire Commission (1963) (Murithi, 2009). The Pan African peacekeeping force that operated in Shaba Province of Congo (Kinshasa) in 1978-79 was the first OAU peace support operation, followed by the Chadian operation (1979-82), which was also the only OAU peacekeeping venture of a complex nature during this period (Cilliers and Malan, 2005; AU, 2013).

Regarding concretization of the idea of a common African army/ASF, there were several philosophical and practical justifications put forward in African policy discourses. The emancipation of the African people from the neo-colonial dependency as well as the bitter lessons learned from the UN failure to intervene in the horrific 1994 Rwandan genocide provided sufficient reasons for African leaders to revitalize the AU institutions (Magosi, 2007). However, the transformation of ASF and the regional standby force structures from military operations to a continental force with multidimensional capacities remains elusive. Some policy analysts have attributed this situation to inadequate financial resources (Cilliers and Hedden, 2014), while others have expressed optimism that the AU PSO platform has performed well by intervening in conflict situations, such as that of Somalia, with a view to fostering stability on the continent (De Coning et al., 2015; Freear and De Coning, 2013; Segui, 2013).

The concept of a multidimensional force has not been understood, even though AU has developed various policy briefs on the concept (AU, 2006). Moreover, the concepts of

peacekeeping and PSO have not been properly operationalized despite their continued use and presence among the peacekeeping formations. Both terms are used interchangeably and sometimes even synonymously. Traditional peacekeeping operations are intended to support peacemaking between states by creating the political space necessary for belligerent states to negotiate political settlements, characterized by ceasefire agreements and military observation. Some scholars have pointed out the importance of shared values among Africans and African institutions as key to the success of the envisaged African-Centered Solutions (AfSol) (Rwengabo, 2016; Yohannes, 2016). To this end, Sebastiano Rwengabo identifies three success factors: 1) commitment, 2) ownership, and 3) shared values (Rwengabo, 2016). While these factors are relevant, the financial uncertainty surrounding some of the African-led peace missions, such as the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), blights the rapid deployment capability vision. These concerns are also shared by Dawit Yohannes, who notes that, “Lack of material, logistical and financial capacity to deploy these missions is a self-evident but crucial factor that infringes upon the autonomy, success, and vitality of the interventions” (Yohannes, 2016: 64).

Key drivers to the challenges of developing a multidimensional force remain: i) ideological and practical divergence between the military and civilians; ii) unwillingness of AU members to adhere to their financial and capacity contribution (Rein, 2015); ii) the need to establish a permanent institutional framework to train civilian and military collectively (Murithi, 2009); and iii) the AU partnership with bilateral actors, such as the UN and European Union (EU), that do not fit neatly with the existing AU institutional frameworks such as the ASF or the regional economic communities (Williams and Boutellis, 2014). In addition, the brigades lack synchronization across regions and proper planning. For example, the AU Mission in Sudan (AMIS) and the frequent rejection of the UN Security Council (UNSC) of AU’s plans to deploy a mission due to gaps in planning and inadequate information (Beza, 2015). Moreover, the hostility and mistrust between states, such as the situation between members of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD): Ethiopia and Eritrea over their unresolved border conflict and Ethiopia’s non-mandated intervention in Somalia in 2006, militated the potential of EASF in consolidating capacities for the crisis in Somalia and South Sudan (Zamalek, 2012).

Lessons from previous civil-military interaction in African PSOs paint a gloomy picture of the future of such a model. For example, the experiences of Sierra Leone and Liberia and the more recently the African-led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA) indicate that among other challenges that undermined the mission in Mali were civil-military relational issues as well as poor cooperation resulting from lack of financial and logistical muscles (Oluwadare, 2013). It is important to note that challenges facing

the ASF are not unique to the African institutions. More advanced militaries in the west have developed the so-called joint inter-agency, international, multi-national military operation (JIIM) that is applied in coordinating military and civilian resources in a focused and coherent fashion (Fitz-Gerald, 2003; Hun et al., 2015). Although some scholars have emphasized lack of political support for the development of the ASF (Burgess, 2011), lessons from the Darfur peacekeeping mission indicate that concerns persist about the financial implications of implementing such objectives (Neethling, 2006). As the AU and African continent look to operationalizing the ASF, the significant costs related to its establishment have led African leaders to seek support from the international community.

Although the ASF structures, particularly EASF and ESF, have put anecdotal structures in place to deepen civil-military relations, there exists no context-specific doctrine on CIMIC. Such a doctrine would enhance synchronization of the mandates, roles and activities of the various stakeholders and actors in the peacebuilding system through joint efforts aimed at prioritization, sequencing, and harmonisation of programmes to meet common objectives (De Coning, 2007). It is also important to caution that ‘shopping’ for ideas in developing CIMIC structures may land ASF structures in an incongruous situation with ideals of good governance. The CIMIC structures in advanced military establishments such as the NATO and EU doctrine are mainly motivated by the need to establish cooperation between the military force as a separate, legally mandated entity and the civilian actors in their area of operations. This does not fit well with preferred models, such as the one advanced by the UN, which is built on the understanding that improved coordination between the military component and the civilian component is a pre-requisite for an integrated mission.

The ‘Fundamental Enigma’

One of the key proposals of the ASF was that regional standby forces would develop an integrated training system with the ability to provide individual and collective training for regional forces by the end of 2015 (Murithi, 2009). However, it has proved difficult to reach this goal which includes an AU rapid deployment capability within the ASF arrangement. Analysts have cautioned that there seems to be no ASF structure on the continent that can assemble an integrated RDC for deployment within 14 days as envisaged (Neethling, 2015). What ails the African PSO structure, first, is that the quality and suitability of the peace operation training programmes have not only been found to be below international standards, but also appear to have entrenched the militarization of the ASF structures. For example, studies on the internal processes of ASF structures reveal that, although 35 (45%) of the peacekeepers considered the various training initiatives to have increased integration of PSO concept, 25 (32%) totally disagreed with the view that such training could create an integrated military-humanitarian data base to enhance

the sharing of information (Onditi, 2015). The most notable structural inadequacies cited among the peacekeeping training environment are: an undue emphasis on traditional peacekeeping training while ignoring the ethos and principles of a contemporary PSO; a lack of lucid and evidence based training methodologies resulting in a mismatch between the training outcome and the emerging peace and security threats across regions; and inadequate policies and enforcement mechanisms aimed at harmonization and coordination within the primary PSO actors.

Second, for the ASF to attain rapid response capability to crises on the continent, there must be strong political will and commitment, and adequate financial resources. These insufficient logistical capabilities feed into dependence on external partners. Some policy analysts have applauded the AU-international partnership with institutions such as the European Union, towards building coordination and collaboration (Rein, 2015). This very approach is problematic because it simply enhances financial dependence and technical overreliance on global institutions such as the UN and EU (Fiore, 2014). Like any other development initiative in Africa, funding problems have remained, what we refer to as the fundamental enigma of the ASF initiative.

A review of the institutional resource mobilization strategy in an international centre of excellence, such as the International Peace Support Training Centre (IPSTC), reveals that 67% of the budget is provided by foreign countries compared to only 22% given by the Kenyan Government in the form of military personnel, land, and other fixed assets. The same finding reveals that the remaining 10% of the budget is provided by international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) (Onditi, 2015). In the same vein, it is evident that both EASF and ECOWAS structures rely on technical advisors (TAs) drawn mainly from Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden, as well as the USA, Britain and Germany. Due to funding constraints and inadequate technical capacity within the ASF structures, the multilateral partnerships are mired in suspicion and are founded on a needs basis as opposed to building long-term capacities of African peacekeepers. Most of the partnership difficulties occur when the available frameworks of the regional economic communities do not address the policy challenges at hand. This was the case with Mali when ECOWAS mechanisms were not optimally configured for responding to the crisis alone (Williams and Boutellis, 2014). In this case other non-ECOWAS states, including Algeria, Chad, Morocco, and Mauritania, had to engage using different methods (Francis, 2009).

On this note, international peacekeeping analysts have observed that frustrations caused by the failure to achieve full capability in 2015 have compelled a number of countries led by South Africa to refocus on the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crisis (ACIRC) formed in 2013 (Lotze, 2015). Among the challenges preventing the

success of the African-led peace operation, is that the AU distanced itself from long-term autonomous regional peacekeeping, and currently favours interim missions that are a prelude rather than an alternative to UN peacekeeping (Coleman, 2011).

Third, in relation to the quest for ASF effectiveness, it is imperative that evidence-based indicators, that investments in training are making a difference in improving behaviour of peacekeeping personnel, are needed. It is also important to show that funding is supporting high-quality training, and that efforts are not being duplicated. There are concerns about the perceived lack of transparency and accountability of regional peacekeeping training centres. These centres seem to have evolved separately from each other, with little coordination, and have not received much guidance from the AU to date. The skewed training-deployment transition rate is also an issue that both EASF and ECOWAS Standby Forces are grappling with. These training-deployment related challenges that impeded the operationalization of the ASF are not unique to the continent. They also affect the peacekeeping efforts of the UN in other parts of the world. Due to the fluid nature of conflicts, a conflict can change quite rapidly from a low intensity conflict into unrestrained violence. In Somalia, for instance, the civil war started in 1991 and on 24 April 1992 the UNSC established UNOSOM I to implement the ceasefire plan (United Nations, 1996). However, troop deployment only started in August 1992; the delay gave room for the belligerents to arm themselves effectively and prepare for the conflict. This slow deployment is one challenge identified by the study as militating against successful missions across the globe (Osmancavusoglu, 1999).

The founding principles of the African Governance Architecture (AGA) provides opportunities for the ASF structures to deepen democratic governance. Over for the last two decades, the AU has taken steps to improve its democratic and governance structures; but critics have portrayed the AGA as the single biggest achievement (Tissi and Aggad-Clerx, 2015). Like any other doctrine within APSA, the concept of AGA suffers a combination of shortcomings, including weak linkages with APSA and a lack of clarity on the role of other independent but interrelated institutions, such as the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). Even without dwelling on the weaknesses of the AGA, it is important to note that Africa has developed several other governance models. For instance, the principle of ‘non-interference’ was instrumental in safe-guarding the newly independent states in the 1950s and 1960s. This has now been replaced by the principle of ‘non-indifference.’ Despite the establishment of AGA as a framework for coordinating governance institutions, such as the Pan African Parliament, the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) and its APRM, the framework is viewed as another ‘white elephant’ project, created with good intentions but without operational priorities and the role that existing governance instruments and actors can play to support the agenda. This is part of the larger ‘organizational hypocrisy’ that continues to give rise to

impunity owing to the domineering ‘chide’ and ‘bully’ approach of the military generals who lead the regional ASF structures. The forceful development of ACIRC as a parallel to ASF, rather than complementing the existing efforts by the military committee in Addis Ababa, demonstrates the overbearing influence of the military at all levels of the African PSO.

Governance issues emerge as a key factor against the realization of an integrated force on the continent. Notably, hostile policies against the so called ‘foreign interference’ initiated by most African leaders blight the potential of ASF as the ideal Pan African solution to the political, human rights, peace and security challenges facing the continent. The unilateral decision by the Kenyan regime under leadership of Uhuru Kenyatta to contribute funds to the ASF at the time when the Kenyatta regime was facing both moral and legal questions at the International Criminal Court (ICC) at The Hague is an abuse of the principles of AGA as well as those of APRM. This is what some scholars have described as development-politics clash (Kumah and Brazys, 2016).

An equally unethical action occurred when the President Uhuru Kenyatta’s regime in Kenya made the unilateral decision to support the controversial presidential election process in Burundi against the backdrop of human rights violations and the unconstitutional re-election of Pierre Nkurunziza in 2015. The narrow-minded approach to the notion of African Solution to African Problems (ASAP) by African political class and leaders portrays the AU institutions and actors as lords of double standards, guided by politics of hypocrisy and least concerned with the plight of ordinary people. Apparently, lack of measures to mitigate such tendencies raises risks of continued disrespect for the pillars of democracy, which also spread to the very institutions that are supposed to define the ‘rules of the game.’ Yet, in what seem to deepen authoritarian rule in the very ‘heart’ of the AU institution, Ethiopia continuous to experience symptoms of receding democracy (Walker and Way, 2016).

In an environment riddled with authoritarian rule, statism and injustices, scholars have argued that civil society organizations (CSOs) are best placed to offer checks and balances (Mangu, 2002; Adejumbi, 2004). However, their engagement with AU and associated structures has been mostly marked by deep-seated cynicism. Although CSOs cannot fulfil all roles that a state plays in fragile environments, civil society leaders and organizations provide an important perspective that sheds light on a particular community’s needs and cultural characteristics. Studies reveal that civil society involvement on matters of peace building is a key factor in determining whether peace initiatives will be successful and sustainable. However, the state-centric approach adopted by the ASF structures gradually excludes the involvement of CSOs on matters of human rights and peace and security (Mangu, 2002). Yet, building relationships among PSO actors is dependent on

the coherence of a joint strategy of multinational military forces and CSOs (Abiew, 2003).

Although CSOs are better placed to offer alternative models on matters of peace and security, their experience with AU is rather poor: i) Despite the rhetoric on creating a union of people rather than governments, CSOs on the continent continue to operate in an atmosphere of suspicion and mistrust linked to external funding; ii) the AU may have undergone transformation, but the culture of the institution remains rigid, excluding CSOs, and requiring engagement with institutions, with a few exceptions, that are based on individual networks other than official CSO-AU engagements; iii) there is also a lack of culture regarding access to information among AU institutions, making it challenging to engage without the free flow of information. Currently, much of the information released is obtained through interpersonal relationships and subsequently shared among CSOs; iv) for CSOs' engaging at the continental level requires large amounts of resources not only to attend meetings, obtain information and keep track of what is happening, but also in establishing and maintaining the necessary interpersonal relationships. This, combined with apathy towards the institution and the limited access, discourages many CSOs from engaging at the continental level; and v) lack of co-ordination among AU institutions and between the AU and RECs means that CSOs must engage multiple times with different institutions, as there is no guarantee of a trickle effect. This means a heavier investment on the part of CSOs working towards bringing their issues to the AU table. Although AU member states have agreed on the need for accelerated peace and security on the continent, the process of reaching this goal is still largely contested.

Apart from the mistrust between the primary PSO actors and CSOs, the personnel imbalance between the two has contributed to the ineffectiveness of the ASF. Although the occupational distribution among peacekeepers does not indicate a wide gap among them (military forces 62 (36.5 %), police 57 (33.5%), and civilians 51 (30%)), there were some levels of disparity between regions (Onditi, 2015). The same study shows that EASF recorded 47 (47%) civilians among those undertaking PSO training at the IPSTC in Karen, Kenya. Comparatively, the ESF had only four (4) civilians (5.7%) among those undertaking a regional leadership PSO training at the National Defence College (NDC) in Abuja, Nigeria. These operational challenges are not isolated cases, but are influenced by existing policy frameworks on training and force generation. For instance, whereas the policy framework for the establishment of the ASF lays down the requirement for the military and police personnel as elements of the order of battle, the structure is ambiguous over the number and categories of civilians required for the same purpose. The structure outlines that, for the ASF to be regarded as adequate to undertake an operation, there should be 200-500 military observers. At the same time, 240 civilian police officers, two companies of police units (FPUs), and civilians are

required to conduct such an operation. The fact that the policy does not quantify the number of civilian experts required points to the difficulties in matching the peace and security needs to the PSO training, their coordination, and management and coordination of civilian capacities whenever any of the AU member states experiences crisis.

Conclusion

While the African Standby Force presents an ideal framework for enhancing the multidimensionality of capacities for responding to peace and security challenges, the framework has been beset by several challenges that have prevented it from achieving full operational capacity in 2015. Of note is the tactical and ideological diffusion of military traditions from which structures and processes are developed and tend towards military domination on matters that would be best handled by civilian or police personnel. One such structure developed by the AU and seen to be in competition with ASF is the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises (ACIRC). Yet, what would be required to have a successful African-led PSO model is a redesigning of ASF to better conform to the principles of a multidimensional approach.

Both militarism and political clientelism are so rooted in the African PSO environment that areas requiring specialized skills from civilian experts, such as gender, child protection, and human rights are implemented by professional soldiers with limited or no subject expertise in those matters. In some cases, the retired military person in civilian mode assumes civilian roles, masquerading as either 'protection' or 'human rights' experts. These cases of manipulations of peace and security positions and structures do not necessarily reflect the doctrine of a multidimensional force as originally configured. The result, in part, is that ASF structures across the continent are incapable of deploying a multidimensional force.

It is worth noting that ASF is not only one fundamental element in finding a solution to African conflicts. Its success is challenged by, among others, the fact that the capability of the regional structures and RECs is very uneven and there is no clarity concerning mandating authority. Notwithstanding the memorandum of understanding signed between AU and RECs on their general relationship, there is nothing specific that regulates their respective roles and powers in the use and authorization of ASF capabilities. As a result, there is lack of clarity about whether the AU needs to negotiate with RECs/RMs on the use of the brigades that they have raised and maintained. If this is going to be the case, there is no doubt that it will complicate matters. Additionally, it is a fact that some regional Standby Forces have a rich experience and an advanced level of capability while others do not. In this regard, the default option is to resort to firefighting or ad-hoc responses that stop short of institutionalising multinational peace support capabilities.

Policy Recommendations

Addressing the challenge of civil-military tensions implies that harmonious inter-organizational and inter-personal civil-military relationships should be institutionalized and legitimized through legal and policy instruments. This arrangement should be negotiated and agreed upon by the peacekeeping training centres, regional standby forces, RECs and AU, particularly the PSOD of the AU. The following are recommendations to address existing policy gaps:

- i. Existing peacekeeping training centres in both regions (EAC and ECOWAS) offer opportunities for, and should introduce initiatives/courses for enhancing harmonization of norms, values, and adjustments of attitudes based on lesson learnt mechanisms. PSO institutions with leadership drawn from diverse backgrounds, including CSOs, should be created. The African Peace Support Trainers Association (APSTA) is an ideal platform for enhancing the participation of civilians in decision making processes.
- ii. All PSO actors should take steps to revisit and reconfigure the concept of multidimensionalism to make it more inclusive to other actors, such as civilian-based organizations, think-tanks, and indigenous community leaders. Also, the term 'Force' needs to be reviewed to allow for the development of capacities apart from militarization as implied by the term. This is a problem which could be addressed by reconceptualising doctrines that inform operations within African political and socio-cultural realities rather than the blind application of universal concepts.
- iii. PSO actors at all levels should make deliberate efforts to strengthen the linkages of ASF structures to existing continental governance mechanisms such as the AGA and APRM. For this approach to benefit the majority of African people, the processes should be led by Pan-African CSOs.
- iv. PSO training requires a number of well-equipped, well-resourced and well-staffed training centres that can provide regional and continental support. Additional resources should be provided to build their capacity to meet the ASF training needs. In addition, existing infrastructure and personnel capabilities need to be upgraded, and training curricula need to be revised in line with the emerging peace and security architecture and the ASF requirements.

References

- Aall, P. (2000). NGOs, conflict management and peacekeeping. *International Peacekeeping*, 7 (1), pp. 121–41.
- Abiew, F. K. (2003). From civil strife to civil society: NGO-military cooperation in peace operations. The Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, Carleton University. Occasional Paper, No. 39.
- Adejumobi, S. (2004). Conflict and peace building in West Africa: The role of civil society and the African Union. *Journal of Conflict, Security and Development*, 4 (1), pp. 59-77.
- African Union (AU). (2013). African peace and security architecture: African Union blue print for the promotion of peace, security and stability in Africa. Addis Ababa.
- African Union (AU). (2010). African peace and security architecture (APSA): 2010 Assessment study. Addis Ababa.
- African Union (AU). (2006). Peace support operations doctrine: The African Standby Force. AU HQ, Addis Ababa.
- Anderson, D. and Walton, L. (2008). Joint, interagency and international organization economic planning integration. *Small Wars Journal*. (2008). Available at: www.smallwarsjournal.com.
- Apuuli, P. K. (2016). Establishing the full operation capability of the East African Standby Force: Challenges and opportunities. *Insight on Africa*, 8 (1), pp.1-17. DOI: 10.1177/0975087815611526.
- Bayeh, E. (2014). The Eastern Africa Standby Force: Roles, challenges and prospects. *International Journal of Political Science and Development*, 2 (9), pp. 197-204. DOI: 10.1014662/IJPSD2014.0
- Bah, B. A. (2013). Civil non-state actors in peacekeeping and peacekeeping in West Africa. *Journal of International Peacekeeping*, 17, pp. 313-336.
- Bellamy, A. and Williams, P. (2010). *Understanding peacekeeping (Second Edition)*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

- Beza, Y.T. (2015). The “African solutions for African problems”: Challenges for the African Standby Force. *Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 1 (4), pp. 450-457.
- Brosig, M. (2011). Overlap and interplay between international organizations: Theories and approaches. *South African Journal of International Affairs*, 18 (2), pp.147-67.
- Burgess, S. (2011). The African Standby Force, genocide, and international relations theory. *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal*, 6: (2), pp. 122-133. Available at: <http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/gsp/vol6/iss2/4>.
- Carvalho, G. and Ettang, D. (2011). Contextualizing the peacekeeping and peace building Nexus. In: *ACCORD, Conflict Trends*, (3), pp. 3-12.
- Cilliers, J. and Hedden, S. (2014). Africa’s current and future stability. Institute for Security Studies, Paper No. 274, November 2014.
- Cilliers, J. and Malan, M. (2005). Progress with the African Standby Force. Institute for Security Studies, Paper No. 98, May 2005.
- Coleman, K.P. (2011). Innovations in African solutions to African problems: The evolving practice of regional peacekeeping in sub-Saharan Africa. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 49 (4), pp. 517-545.
- De Coning, C. (2015). Contributing to Africa’s peacekeeping capacities 20 years of training for peace in Africa. *Conflict Trend*, Issue 2. African Centre for Constructive Resolution of Dispute, Durban.
- De Coning, C. (2010). Civil-military coordination in United Nations and African peace operations. UN complex peace operations. *Conflict Trend, ACCORD*, pp.48-60.
- De Coning, C. (2007). Civil-military coordination practices and approaches within United Nations peace operations” *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies*, 10 (1), pp.1-35.
- De Coning, C., and Karlsrud, J. (2011). Preparing and mobilizing civilian capacity for the future recommendations for implementing the Guehenno Report. *Policy Brief 2*.

- Dersso, S.A. (2010). The role and place of the African Standby Force within the African Peace and security architecture. Institute for Security Studies, paper No. 209.
- Fiore, G. (2014). Why Boko Haram should be on the European Union list of designated terror groups. *African Security Review*, 23 (1), pp. 78-83.
- Fitz-Gerald, A.M. (2003). Security sector reform: Streamlining national military forces to respond to the wider security needs. *Journal of Security Sector Management*, Vol.1,No. 21.
- Francis J. D. (2009). Peacekeeping in a bad neighbourhood: The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in peace and security in West Africa. *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, 9 (3), pp. 87-116.
- Franke, B. (2006). A Pan-African army: The evolution of an idea and its eventual realization in the African Standby Force. *African Security Review*, 15 (4), pp. 2-16.
- Franke, B. and Esmenjaud, R. (2008). Who owns African ownership? The Africanization of security and its limits. *South African Journal of International Affairs*, 15 (2), pp.137-158.
- Franke, U and Weber, R. (2012). At the Papini Hotel: On pragmatism in the study of international relations. *European Journal of International Relations*, 18 (4), pp. 669-9.
- Freeaar, M. and de Coning, C. (2013). Lessons from the African Union Mission for Somalia (AMISOM) for peace operation in Mali stability. *International Journal of Security and Development*, 2(2), pp. 23.
- Gowan, R. (2008). The strategic context: Peacekeeping in crisis, 2006-2008. *International Peacekeeping*, 15 (4), p. 453.
- Hultman, L., Kathman, J., and Shannon, M. (2013). United Nations Peacekeeping and civilian protection and civil war. *American Journal of Political Science*, 57 (4), pp. 875-891.
- Hun, J. Lee, Peter S. Pedersen, and Chad M. Pillai. (2015). Countering 21st century threats: The need for an increased joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational (JIIM) approach to irregular warfare. *Small Wars Journal*. Available online at: <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/countering21st>. Accessed on

21/08/2015.

Huntington, S.P. (1957). *Soldier and the State*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Huntington, S.P. (1995). Reforming civil-military relations. *Journal of Democracy*, 6 (4), pp. 9-17.

Janowitz, M. (1960). *The professional soldier*. Glencoe, IL: Force Press.

Kumah, S. and Brazys, S. (2016). Democracy or accountability? Governance and social spending in Africa. *The Journal of Development Studies*, 52 (2), pp.286-299. DOI:10.1080/00220388.2015.1087513

Laura, C. (2011). A call to arms: why a new theory of civil-military relations is required. *A Journal of the African Centre for Strategic Research and Studies: African Strategic Review*, 2(2), pp. 2-17.

Lotze, W. (2015). *The future of African peace operations: Time to adjust the operation design*. Center for International Peace Operations, May 2015.

Magosi, P. (2007). *What are the challenges facing the future of African Standby Force*.

Master's Thesis presented to the US Army College, Carlisle Barrack, Pennsylvania.

Mangu, A.M. (2002). African civil society and the promotion of the African Charter on democracy, elections and government. *African Human Rights Law Journal*, 12 (2), pp. 348-372.

Murithi, T. (2009). The African Union's foray into peacekeeping: Lessons from the hybrid mission in Darfur. *Journal of Peace, Conflict and Development* (14). Available at: www.peacestudiesjournal.org.uk.

Neethling, T. (2015). South Africa and AFRICOM: Reflections on a lukewarm relationship. *South African Journal of International Affairs*, 22 (1), pp. 111-129, DOI: 10.1080/10220461.1019556.

Neethling, L. (2006). Working towards an African peacekeeping capability: Key issues, Challenges, and dilemmas in Darfur. *South African Journal of Military Studies*, 34(2), pp. 93-10. DOI:10.5787/34-2-25.

- Onditi F. (2015). Civil-military relations influencing viability for multi-dimensional peace support capacities within the Eastern and West African Standby Forces. (Unpublished Doctoral Thesis). Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, Kakamega, Kenya.
- Onditi, F., Okoth, P., and Matanga, F. (2016). The quest for a multidimensional African Standby Force. *African Conflict and Peacebuilding Review*, 6(1), pp.69-88. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2979/africonfpeacrevi.6.1.04>.
- Oluwadare, A.J. (2013). The African Union and the conflict in Mali: Extra-regional influence and the limitation of a regional actor. *Journal of International and Global Studies*, 6 (1), pp. 107-120.
- Osmancavusoglu, E. (1999). Challenges to UN peacekeeping operations in the post-cold war era. *Journal of International Affairs*, 4 (4).
- Parver, C. and Wolf, R. (2008). Civil society's involvement in post-conflict peacebuilding. *International Journal of Legal Information*, 36 (1), pp. 51-79.
- Rein, C. (2015). The EU and peacekeeping in Africa: The case of AMISOM. *Global Affairs*, 1 (2), pp. 193-204.
- Rwengabo, S. (2016). AMISOM and African-centred solutions to peace and security challenges. *AfSol Journal*, 1(1), pp. 91-138.
- Segui, N.R. (2013). PSC retrospective. Appraising the role of the AU in Somalia. ISS Peace and Security Council report, Issue No. 42, p.8.
- Schiff, R.L. (1995). Civil-military relations reconsidered: A Theory of concordance. *Armed Forces and Society*, 22 (1), pp. 7-24.
- Solomon, H. (2013). Critical reflections of the African Standby Force; The case of its SADC contingent. *South African Peace and Security Studies*, 1(2), pp. 20-28.
- Solomon, H. (2012). The changing nature of the terrorist threat in Africa and the AU's response. *Journal of African Union Studies*, 1(1), pp. 93-102.
- Tissi, N. and Aggad-Clerx, F. (2015). The road ahead for the African governance architecture: An overview of current challenges and possible solutions." South Africa Institute of International Affairs. Governance and APRM Program. Occasional Paper, No. 174.

- Tieku, K. T., Obi, C. and Scorgie-Porter, L. (2014). The African peace and security architecture: Introduction to the Special Issue. *African Conflict and Peacebuilding Review*, 4 (2), pp. 1-10. DOI: 10.2979/africonfpeacrevi.4.2.1.
- Tshiband, A.N. S. (2010). Peacekeeping: A civilian perspective. *Journal of Conflictology*, 1 (2), pp.1-10.
- Towle, N. (2015). Evaluating peace support operation to enhance international policy. *Peace and Conflict Studies*, 22 (1), pp. 60-80.
- United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UNDPKO). (2003). Handbook on United Nations multidimensional peacekeeping operations. New York; DPKO, P. 1.
- United Nations. (2000). Report of the Panel on United Nations peace operation. New York: United Nations.
- United Nations. (1996). The Blue Helmets: A review of United Nations peacekeeping. (Third Edition). New York: United Nations Department of Public Information.
- Walker, C and Way, L. (2016). Ethiopia: The 100% election. *Journal of Democracy*, 27 (1), pp. 76-88.
- Welz, M. (2016). Multi-actor peace operations and inter-organizational relations; Insight from the Central Africa Republic. *International Peacekeeping*. DOI: 10.1080/13533312.2016.1178070
- Williams, P.D. and Boutellis, A. (2014). Partnership peacekeeping: Challenges and opportunities in the United Nations-African Union relationship. *African Affairs*, 113, (451), pp. 254-278.
- Yohannes, D. (2016). Enriching the African-centred solutions concepts: Reflections on AU-led peace support operations in Sudan and Somalia: In: Sunday Okello and Mesfin Gebremichael, African centred solutions to peace and security challenges in Africa. Institute for Peace and Security Studies, Addis Ababa.
- Zamalek A. (2012). Sub-regional organizations and conflict management: The case of the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD). Addis Ababa: Forum of Federations.