4

Agentic Governance in Africa: Managing the Tension between Dependence and Self-Reliance

Michelle Ndiaye and Anthony Chinaemerem Ajah

Acknowledgement

This contribution is the result of a stretched discussion between the two authors, following Michelle Ndiaye's panel presentation during a High-Level Conference organized by the Africa Programme, Chatham House, 11-12 July 2019, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on the theme "Africa's Future in a Changing Global Order: Agency in International Relations". We are grateful to Chatham House's Africa Programme for the opportunity to present the seed ideas that resulted in this paper. We also thank the reviewers of our manuscript for their comments and suggestions.

About the authors

Michelle Ndiaye is the Director of the Africa Peace and Security Programme at the Institute for Peace and Security Studies, Addis Ababa University. She is also the Head of the Secretariat for the Tana High-Level Forum on Security in Africa.

Anthony Chinaemerem Ajah (Ph.D) is a Lecturer at the Humanities Unit in the School of General Studies & Department of Philosophy at the University of Nigeria in Nsukka.

Keywords

Agency in Governance; Africa; Dependency; Self-Reliance; Interdependence.

Abstract

Several governance discourses on Africa are fraught with lamentations about how Africa is being manipulated to remain dependent on the Global North (and more recently, parts of the Global East). This viewpoint is complemented by assertions on why Africa should instead isolate itself in order to be self-reliant, giving no room for external influence. This stands in counterpose to the globalist prescription which argues that Africa's development lies only in its greater integration into the global political economy, resulting in various forms of dependence on and interdependence with other systems outside Africa. Seen from some perspectives, each of these positions is an extreme option and the pull towards either of them results in tension. But how practical and sustainable is isolationism in the massively globalized and almost technologically borderless 21st century in which several existential challenges are shared across continents? Additionally, how best can Africa manage the fears of vulnerability and the need for interdependence in the same century of increased options for the continent's self-reliance? This paper demonstrates how more agency in governance is necessary for a careful management of the tension between dependence and self-reliance in 21st century Africa. It argues that the degree of dependence, vulnerability and self-reliance of Africa varies from one sector to another, with the implication that to manage the perceived tension, Africa needs to (i) maximize obvious opportunities of self-reliance without waiting on external assistance; (ii) accept its vulnerability, weakness and dependence when those are the only available options; and (iii) leverage available opportunities of interdependence and partnership.

Introduction

Several contemporary discourses on governance and development in Africa have focused on illustrating how pre-colonial principles of governance in Africa were very unique (Nyerere, 1971; Wiredu, 1980, 1998, 1999, 2007, 2008; Masolo, 1994; Metz, 2007, 2015, 2017; Ajei, 2016; Lauer, 2017). What has largely remained unassessed and therefore poorly articulated is the question of agency in terms of self-efficacy and performance of the continent. This paper presupposes that the time has come to move from discourse on identity presentation and justification, to discourses of self-efficacy and performance of Africans in Africa for Africa and the world. The first type of discourse invests massive efforts to craft and describe who Africans are and what unique cultural heritages they have; whereas the second assesses what Africans should do, as well as why and where they should be held responsible for their developmental state.

This paper theoretically assesses the question of agentic governance in Africa and applies the results of that assessment to respond to the fact that most discourses on governance in Africa are fraught with lamentations about how Africa, instead of being self-reliant, is being manipulated to remain dependent on the Global North (and more recently, parts of the Global East). This stands in counterpose to the globalist prescription and pull towards greater integration into the global political economy, resulting in various forms of dependence and interdependence on agents outside Africa. Seen from some perspectives, each of these positions is an extreme option, and the pull towards either of them results in tension. But how practical and sustainable is isolationism in the massively globalized and almost borderless 21st century in which several existential challenges are shared across continents?

Additionally, how best can Africa manage the fears of vulnerability and the need for interdependence in the same century of increased options available for the continent's self-reliance? To respond to these questions, this paper demonstrates how more agentic governance is necessary for a careful management of the tension between dependence and self-reliance in 21st century Africa.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Conceptualizations of the terms "agent" and "agency" cut across at least three disciplines: Philosophy, Sociology and Psychology. It is particularly within these three disciplines that scholars have tried to address the questions about rational theory of action, normativist theory of social order, degree of autonomy of individual actors, the interface between actors and their environment(s)/ social structures, the extent actors can change/alter their environment(s), and so on. The term 'agentic' is derived from 'agent' which itself is rooted in a Latin word, agere, agens, which means 'to do/ act'. The term agency is related to other such terms as self-determination, capacity (Meyer & Jepperson, 2000), self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997), causal conception and recognition of the self (Haggard & Tsakiris, 2009), creativity (Joas, 1996), purposiveness, intentionality, goal-directedness (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998), freedom and choice (Sartre 1996), responsibility (Sartre 1996; Haggard & Tsakiris, 2009), willful and undetermined to make decisions and enact them (see Campbell 2009) among others. Dietz and Burns (1992: 187) defined agency as "effective, intentional, unconstrained and reflexive action by individual or collective actors". According to Haggard and Tsakiris (2009), it refers to a person's ability to control their actions and, through them, events in the external world, suggesting that it is "a special case of causation in which one is oneself the cause of an external event" (Haggard & Tsakiris, 2009: 243).

What is common in most discourses about agency is that it is conceptualized as a given, whereas it is instead a construct and continues to be constructed (Dietz & Burns, 1992; Meyer & Jepperson, 2000; Bandura, 2001). Meyer and Jepperson (2000) gave a historical assessment and perspective to the issue of social construction of agency from the angle of what they termed 'modern actor'. According to them, many social theories of action take it for granted that modern actors – either as individuals, organizations, nation states, and so on – are "autochthonous and natural entities, no longer really embedded in culture" (Meyer & Jepperson, 2000: 100). Against this view, they contend that the development of the 'agent' in Europe is traceable to the taming and demystification of nature through the extraordinary development, expansion and authority of science, which in turn resulted in the marginalization or purging of animist and spiritual forces and the birth of a scientific outlook. This whole process, according to Meyer and Jepperson, can be understood as a rationalization process in which pictures of the natural world, the spiritual world, and the society are constantly expanded to recognize sets of entities and relations with functions and legitimate interests. The whole process boiled down to a situation Meyer and Jepperson (2000: 105) describe as:

> God took leave of time and space as its anthropomorphic qualities decline. God does not so much die (contrary to Nietzsche), but is deadened in the sense of greatly reduced agency... With the increasing transcendence and inertness of god, agency and authority are relocated immanently in society's structures and rationales. Some agency is built into [the] modern picture of the agentic authority and responsibility of the state and other organizations; much devolves to the modern individual, who is empowered with more and more godlike authority and vision.

The whole process in Western ontology described above is such that the human actor – individuals, organizations, states – carries the responsibility of the human project since the gods, other spiritual forces, ancestors and/or an animated nature had been drained of agency through the process of rationalization.

Rationalization led to differentiation, while differentiation at the levels of the individual, organization and state resulted in the construction of various modes of agency and of the agent. Thus, for instance, global and regional complexities, differentiations and conflicts are the roots of what is understood today by nation-states acting as rational actors. Similarly, as social and individual actors gradually attain recognition as entities, they acquire some standing, function and responsibility and then become "agents of higher principles", just as "structured social organizations arise to pursue with great legitimacy such validated individual and collective purposes and responsibilities" (Meyer & Jepperson, 2000: 105). These responsibilities result in various features of the modern agentic actor. These features are:

i. Agency for self: This involves being an agent for oneself and for one's own interest. It is the idea behind actorhood;

ii. Agency for others (or otherhood): This is the form of modern agency in which individual actors shift from being actors for themselves to become actors/agents for others, whereby these 'others' can be other individuals, states, organizations and so on. Good examples of this are circumstances in which individuals agree to serve as consultants to others; organizations offer agentic capabilities to groups and states; and nation-states are willing to provide assistance to relatively weaker states, all of which result in collaborations for collective activities;

iii. Agency for entities that are not actors: This feature of modern agency involves the mobilization of actors – individuals, organizations and nation-states – on behalf of non-actors such as the ecosystem, animals, plants, dying languages, fetuses, species with risk of extinction etc; and

iv. Agency for principles: In this case, modern actors take up legitimized responsibilities to act as agents for an imagined natural and moral law/order. This feature of agency involves becoming "purely agents of principles", and Meyer and Jepperson (2000:108) further described it as a "priestly stance", with the implication that "moral and legal theorists pursue and develop abstract models independent of any practical interest".

These classifications provided the basis for the position that, as nature continues to be rationalized, there is the constant discovery of new collective problems. The latter complicates the agentic pursuit of solutions to these problems as much as it fuels "the sweeping collective action of the modern system" (Meyer & Jepperson, 2000: 114). For the above reasons, Meyer and Jepperson (2000) held that agency is not a given, but necessarily socially constructed such that within the image they created of the origins for collective agency, there is a firm ground for the logic of collective action that then itself grounds regional, international and continental cooperation. The African Union is one such cooperation, and its treaties, agreements, instruments and structures are meant to enhance the realization of its goals as an agent.

The question of collective action is not as simple as it may seem. Gilbert (2010) explained that there are three approaches to it: there is the 'personal' approach, which involves each of those involved in the collective action appealing to the intentions of the others, such that in relation to the joint goal, each person is able to say 'I personally intend to/that'. Secondly, there is the 'we-intentions' approach, in which in unison those involved in the collective action make statements such as 'we intend to' or 'we intend that'. The third approach, championed by Gilbert, holds that rather than the personal or we-intentions, what lies at the heart of collective action is the idea of 'joint commitment', which is in several senses a contractual approach to the issues that necessitated the coming together in the first place. In this last approach, each of those involved in the collective action make decisions in relation to their reasons for coming together. By making such decisions, which are to be expressed mutually as common knowledge, those involved impose a kind of normative constraint upon themselves such that the commitment is binding unless it is intentionally revoked. One of the mutual expressions that can be involved in a joint commitment is the process of agreement. Thus, the joint commitment approach to collective action implies that "the making of an agreement is the making of a particular kind of joint commitment", which should remain valid and binding on the ground that "which the parties create together they must revoke together" (Gilbert, 2010: 72). It also comes with the implication that as long as it cannot be unilaterally rescinded by any of those involved in the commitment without some general common understanding, the parties owe each other conformity to the commitment. This commitment can become a type of structure that then guides actions.

Most discussions about the question of agency in the field of sociology, since Max Weber and Talcott Parsons, have carefully delineated between agency (or the agent) and structure. Whereas the agent was mostly conceptualized around the individual actor, the structure or environment is conceptualized to include whatever factors that can limit, influence, enable or constrain the opportunities that actors have in order to control or guide their behaviors. In response to the view that human actions are particularly determined by their environments, Joas (1996) drew attention to the idea of creativity in human actions. According to him, the two predominant models of human actions, namely "rational action and normatively oriented action" in several ways over-emphasize the influence of structures, and in the process downplay the ability of humans to creatively surmount these structures thanks to a third dimension of human actions, called the " creative dimension" (1996: 4). In related but more elaborate terms that emphasize this creative and structure-surmounting perspective to agency, Emirbayer and Mische (1998: 964, 970) defined agency as:

> an internally complex temporal dynamic... [t]he temporally constructed engagement by actors of different structural environments – the temporal-relational contexts of action – which, through the interplay of habit, imagination, and judgement, both reproduces and transforms those structures in interactive responses to the problems posed by changing historical situations.

These contexts of construction or embeddedness constitute various structures that can, at different points, constrain or enable contexts of action. The temporal features/dimensions of human agency imply various 'agentic orientations.' Hence, actors can be said to be oriented toward the past, the future, or the present; they can, however, switch between or recompose these orientations such that one who at one point in his/her life orients towards past experiences can, at another moment, orient towards the present, and so on.

The temporal orientation of social agents in terms of the past, future and present also implies that there are three distinct but interconnected structural contexts of action. The first is the cultural context. The second is the social-structural context; and the third is the social-psychological context. The first context encompasses symbolic patterns, structures and formations such as cultural discourses, narratives and idioms, which constrain or enable action by structuring their normative commitments as well as their understandings of the world and their possibilities within that world. The second context, the social-structural context, encompasses networks of social ties and relationships that define interpersonal, interorganizational or transnational settings of action. The third, the social-psychological context, is made up of psychical structures that channel the flow and investment of emotional energy, including structures of attachment and emotional solidarity. Each of these contexts can either constrain or enable action in different ways, at different times, based on the preferred orientation of the author at the particular time (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998). Emirbayer and Mische's (1998) conceptualization of agency is rooted in the background of a concept of agency in which scholars have, in the effort to explain how the concept relates with structure, ended up flattening and impoverishing the concept and/or making it so tightly linked with structure that "one loses sight of the different ways in which agency actually shapes social action" (963) as well as how the said "structural environments of action are both dynamically sustained by and also altered through human agency – by actors" (964).

This paper uses the term 'agent' here to refer to a person who performs an action and is attributed as the subject of the active verb in the sentence which describes the action. The term agency goes beyond the performer of the act (the agent) to look, philosophically, first at the capacity to and the actual act of being responsible for performing the said action. It is the capacity, condition or state of acting or of exerting power, action or activity/operation. Additionally, whereas both terms (agent and agency) are nouns, 'agentic' is an adjective that qualifies the process of acting to affect/produce a result. 'Agentic' implies that human actors are producers and products of the social systems that they are part of. What is central in the idea of agency is the fact that the producer of the effect is supposed to have chosen the action and is therefore responsible for the effect (Sartre, 1996) even when the effect is not particularly what was intended. Being responsible is a necessary component of being an agent, whereby to be responsible for an action or its effects is to be praise- or blame-worthy for that action or its effect. In view of this, Sartre conceptualized the human actor as the original cause of his states and acts: "I apprehend myself as the original source of my possibility, and it is this which ordinarily we call the consciousness of freedom" (Sartre 1996: 41). To further explain this link between the agent and the products of his actions, Sartre added that the act goes beyond the acting self but along the same road with that same self. It preserves this self; it is irreducible with that self; the self is recognized in his/her acts as "a father can recognize himself and find himself in the son who constitutes his work" (Sartre 1943,1996: 42).

To use the adjective 'agentic' to qualify a human activity, therefore, is to particularly emphasize that the human beings involved in that activity are linked to the results of the activity; that they are preserving themselves in those results; that they should be recognized in those effects and that they should hold themselves or be held responsible for those effects. This is the sense in which we use the term 'agentic governance' to differentiate it from and put it against the idea of governance which holds an 'outsider' responsible for the results of governance choices, practices and results.

Governance is an abstract and broader concept in relation to government. It includes the human beings who control the process, the system of controlling and the results of the control. Mo Ibrahim Foundation (2017: 9) defines governance as "the provision of the political, social and economic public goods and services that every citizen has the right to expect from their state, and that a state has the responsibility to deliver to its citizens". The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM 2019) held that the concept of governance is traditionally linked to ruling and control; specifically, the manner of exercise of power. On the basis of this 'exercise' of power, it defined governance as the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels. Governance in Africa involves human beings who represent individual countries; those who control what happens to their countries and the continent, the process of controlling events and circumstances on the continent by means of protocols, rules, charters etc., and the results of active or inactive implementation of these control mechanisms towards events and circumstances on the continent.

What has been largely ignored in most discussions on African governance is how African states are made up of human agents who should take control of their governance and development processes, practices and outputs and be praised or blamed for the results of their chosen practices. One of the issues that has been exaggerated is the cultural identity creation and justification for Africa, including how the governance system and process in pre-colonial Africa was better than what was available in the Global West and everywhere else (see Metz, 2007, 2015, 2017; Lauer, 2017). Additionally, the exaggeration includes how corruption is also an invention of the Global West to keep the picture of the African as 'morally lower' (Apata, 2018; Hoffmann & Hendricks, 2018). Positions like these distract attention from more important assessments of African leaders as proxy agents who should take control of what happens on the continent, and therefore be praise- or blame-worthy for the results of acting as control agents. These positions continue to ignore what is empirically and theoretically substantiated about human agency and actions.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that guides this paper is Agentic Theory of the Self, which is traced to Albert Bandura (1997; 2000; 2001; 2006). It is linked to a social cognitive theory which conceives individuals as producers of experiences and shapers of events. The theory conceptualizes three modes of agency: personal agency, proxy agency and collective agency. The first has to do with the direct exercise of agency by individuals, for themselves. The second has to do with situations where people either do not want to face the difficulties of taking responsibility, do not want to acquire certain new skills/expertise or do not have direct control over social conditions and practices that affect their lives. For such reasons, their wellbeing will be largely dependent on others who have a certain expertise or who wield some influence or power, to mediate on their behalf. These experts/mediators therefore exercise people's agency in proxy. The third, collective mode of agency, is rooted in the fact that many of the results people seek are achievable only through interdependent efforts such that they have to agree "to work together to secure what they cannot accomplish on their own" (Bandura 2000: 75). According to this theory, the most focal mechanism and foundation of human agency is the belief in personal efficacy (Bandura, 1997; 2000) because "unless people believe that they can produce desired effects and forestall undesired ones by their actions, they have little incentive to act", with the result that

"perceived collective efficacy fosters a group's motivational commitment to their missions, resilience to adversity and performance accomplishments" (Bandura, 2000: 75).

The interest in Albert Bandura's agentic theory of the self is, among other things, because it provides a theoretical basis for collective agency and collective action which are taken for granted when one talks about action in relation to a group. Hence, the term 'agentic governance in Africa' is rooted in the fundamental idea of Africans who agree on specific goals and therefore collectively decide (that is, commit) to pursue those goals. Margaret Gilbert's (2010: 67) explanation of collective action is useful here: "it may refer to a situation in which people act within what has come to be known as a 'collective action problem', whereby the 'payoff' to each depends on what is done by the others". Gilbert argued, however, that two other related terms – 'joint action' or 'joint activity' - are rather less ambiguous than collective action. However, what is central about collective action is that the individuals who decide to come together and to work together to solve collective problems such that the results of their efforts will benefit all, "have a special standing to rebuke one another for inappropriate action" (Gilbert, 2010: 68). This 'special standing' is rooted in the idea of 'owing', by which "those who do something together owe each other actions appropriate to the action in question. They also owe each other correction of inappropriate actions" (Gilbert, 2010: 68). To what extent, therefore, have the Member States that have collectively committed to make up the AU controlled their activities to consolidate or reduce their dependence on outsiders? How can governance in Africa be improved with a heightened sense of agency and responsibility to realize continental self-reliance?

Between Dependence and Self-Reliance: The Case of Africa

Arguments about whether Africa can/ should be self-reliant, and whether the continent is vulnerable and too dependent presupposes that nation-states in Africa are conceptualized – although only very weakly - as agents. This section focuses on how more agentic and responsible governance in Africa will balance the issues of dependence, vulnerability and self-reliance.

Agentic Governance...

The AU Agenda 2063 is titled 'The Africa We Want' (African Union Commission 2015). The third item on that Agenda highlights the initiative's focus: mobilization of the people and their ownership of continental programmes; the principle of self-reliance and Africa financing its own development; the importance of capable, inclusive and accountable states and institutions at all levels and in all spheres; the critical role of Regional Economic Communities (RECs) as building blocks for continental unity taking into account the special challenges faced by both island and land-locked states; and the need to hold ourselves and our governments and institutions accountable for results. The Agenda, generally, is both a call to action and a commitment:

> A call to action to all Africans and people of African descent, to take personal responsibility for the destiny of the continent and [serve] as the primary agents of change and transformation. A commitment from citizens, leadership, governments and institutions at national, regional and continental levels to act, coordinate and cooperate for the realization of this vision (African Union Commission, 2015: 13).

The articulation of what is meant by 'The Africa We Want' brings to mind all the core characteristics of agency and collective action, particularly, intentionality of and commitment to the chosen goals (see Gilbert, 2010). Yet, the realization of the goals and the coordination of said commitment can be achieved only in the context of governance. The Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG), provided yearly by the Mo Ibrahim Foundation since 2007, contains one of the most robust lists of components for measuring and monitoring governance performance in Africa. For instance, Table 1 outlines the four main components of governance and their sub-components.

Safety & Rule of Law	Rule of Law
	Transparency & Accountability
	Personal Safety
	National Security
Participation & Human Rights	Participation
	Rights
	Gender
Sustainable Economic Opportunity	Public Management
	Business Environment
	Infrastructure
	Rural Sector
Human Development	Welfare
	Education
	Health

Table 1
Components/ Indices of Governance

Source: Adapted from Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2017

This paper is primarily interested in the first (Safety & Rule of Law) of the four components because it is the precondition for all other components. Without accountability and security, there is no basis for participation and respect for rights, neither for providing economic opportunities, nor for making such opportunities sustainable, and none for the broad goal of human development. This justification for focusing on these two components of governance is related to the view of Mo Ibrahim: "The Index results confirm that Rule of Law and Transparency & Accountability are key to progress in governance and are strongly related to improving economic opportunities" (in Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2018: 6). More specifically, the focus of this contribution is on 'Transparency & Accountability' (with a particular focus on anti-corruption mechanisms) and on 'National Security'. For reasons of enhanced measurability, the IIAG further divides these two sub-components into further components as shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Sub-components of Transparency/ Accountability and National Security

Source: Adapted from Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2017

Transparency & Accountability	Access to Public and Legislative Information
	Access to records of State-owned Companies
	Accountability of Government and Public Employees
	Sanctions for Abuse of Office
	Absence of Corruption in Government Branches
	Absence of Corruption in the Public Sector
	Absence of Corruption in the Private Sector
	Absence of Favouritism
	Anti-Corruption Mechanisms
National Security	Absence of Government Involvement in Armed Conflict
	Absence of Domestic Armed Conflict or Risk of Conflict
	Absence of Violence against Civilians by Non-state Actors
	Absence of Cross-border Tensions
	Absence of Internally Displaced Persons
	Absence of Refugees

According to Mo Ibrahim, "governance on our continent [Africa], on average, is slowly improving. Approximately three out of four African citizens live in a country where governance has improved over the last ten years" (in Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2018: 6). A similar position was reiterated by the African Peer Review Mechanism: "the state of governance in Africa has generally improved" (APRM, 2019: 12). In specific terms, the Mo Ibrahim Foundation submitted that "looking back over the last decade (2007-2016), the average African score has improved by +1.4 score points from 49.4 (out of 100.0) to 50.8, reaching in 2016 its highest score since IIAG's first data year" (Mo Ibrahim Foundation 2017: 18). According to the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 'Safety & Rule of Law' is the first and primary component of governance, with an overall African average of 52.6 (out of 100) in 2017 and a reduction of 2.5 points between 2008 and 2017. The report revealed that 19 countries had improved in their performance in the areas of Safety & Rule of Law; 33 deteriorated; 1 experienced no change, and there was no information available for 1 country. Despite the improvements, the urgency of the need to look at governance in Africa from an agentic perspective can be highlighted by the position that governance on the continent "lags behind population growth and youth expectations" (in Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2018: 6). Closing the gap between the massive population growth and the governance deficit in Africa requires that governance should be more agentic: those governing should see themselves as controllers of events and circumstances on the continent, in the various regions and within the Member States on the continent. In the following sections, this paper focuses on two of the four sub-components of Safety & Rule of Law, namely Transparency & Accountability and National Security in the African context.

i. Transparency & Accountability - Anti-Corruption

Data from the Mo Ibrahim Foundation (2017; 2018) shows that the 2017 overall African average for 'Transparency & Accountability' is 35.3 (out of 100). When assessed within the timeframe of 2008-2017, the continent made a zero-point gain on Transparency & Accountability and this was characterized by the Foundation as 'slowing deterioration'. In this regard, particular attention is paid to illicit financial flows (IFFs) as avenues for loss or mismanagement of funds that should have been utilized to realize good governance on the continent. According to AU/ECA (2015), illicit financial flow refers to money that is illegally earned, transferred or utilized. These flows typically originate from one or more of the following three sources: (a) commercial tax evasion, trade mis-invoicing and abusive transfer pricing; (b) criminal activities such as the drug trade, human trafficking, illegal arms dealing and smuggling of contraband; and (c) bribery and theft by corrupt government officials. APRM (2019: 66) agrees that "illicit financial flows (IFFs) have an impact on good governance and Africa's development priorities". It also agrees that one of the drivers of IFF is poor governance, and that IFFs "undermine Africa's goals of self-sustainability and domestically financing its development priorities at the continental, regional and national levels" (67). APRM (2019) also submitted that: (a) the development impacts of IFFs from Africa are numerous; (b) corruption facilitates IFFs; (c) weak governance facilitates IFFs; and (d) lack of political will from governments sustain IFFs. The last two items (weak governance and lack of political will) over-ride corruption; those two are intentional, goal-directed and planned activities of agents on the continent. So, what has the AU done to revert the loss of funds that continue to negatively affect development priorities on the continent?

Evidences point to a supposition that the African Union has, over the last two decades, stepped up agentic governance roles in the areas of accountability and anti-corruption mechanisms. Two AU instruments that are of particular importance here are The African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption (CPCC) and The African Charter on Values and Principles of Public Service and Administration. The CPCC was adopted on 1 July 2003, entered into force on 5 August 2006, and last updated (that is, date of last signature) on 27 June 2019. The Convention was based on an acknowledgement that corruption undermines accountability and transparency in the management of public affairs, as well as on a concern about the negative effects of corruption and impunity on the political, economic, social and cultural stability of African states, along with its devastating effects on the economic and social development of the African people (AUC 2003: 2). Hence, in tones expressing agency, the state parties to the Convention were adopting a joint commitment (see Gilbert, 2010) to achieve the following objectives using the Charter:

i. To promote and strengthen development in Africa by each State Party, as well as to support mechanisms required to prevent, detect, punish and eradicate corruption and related offences in the public and private sectors...;

ii. To promote, facilitate and regulate cooperation among State Parties to ensure the effectiveness of measures and actions to prevent, detect, punish and eradicate corruption and related offences in Africa;

iii. To coordinate and harmonize the policies and legislation between State Parties for the purposes of prevention, detection punishment and eradication of corruption on the continent...;

iv. 4. To establish the necessary conditions to foster transparency and accountability in the management of public affairs. (AUC 2003: 5/6)

On the other hand, The African Charter on Values and Principles of Public Service and Administration (2011), also known as Public Service Charter, was adopted on 31 January 2011, entered into force on 23 July 2016, and last updated on 14 May 2019. It emphasizes the need to strengthen professionalism and ethics to ensure, among other things, that transparent service delivery is promoted. According to AUC (2019a), as of 28 June 2019, out of the 55 Member States of the AU, 49 have signed the CPCC, 41 have ratified it, and 41 had deposited it. With regard to the Public Service Charter, as of 20 May 2019, 38 Member States have signed it, 19 have ratified it, and 19 have deposited it (AUC 2019b). In addition to these, the conference held under the theme "Towards a Common African Position on Asset Recovery", taking place from 7th to 15th October 2019, was a move in the right collective agentic direction.

ii. Security

The 2017 overall African average for 'National Security' is 75.1 (out of 100) (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2018). When assessed within the timeframe of 2008-2017, this score indicates that the continent lost some points between 2008 and 2017 (-4.4) and as such, this sub-category is characterized as showing 'slowing deterioration'. Demands are made from several quarters as to what the African Union and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) can and should do to ensure Africa's self-reliance in the area of security. Available evidence shows that there are increasingly more agentic roles for the AU and RECs in crisis management, peace operations and consolidation of peace on the continent. For instance, there were the AU/REC-led peace operations in Mali (AFISMA), Somali (AMISOM), Guinea Bissau (ECOMIB), Central African Republic (MICOPAX/MISMA), Democratic Republic of Congo (SADC Brigade within MONUSCO), Dafur (UNAMID Hybrid Mission of UN and AU), and so on. Even the AU-led Security Architecture is another broad framework indicating efforts towards security self-reliance on the continent.

There is also the AU Peace Fund. Established in 1963 under Article 21 of the Protocol establishing the AU's Peace and Security Council (PSC), the Peace Fund is meant to finance the AU's peace and security operations, covering operational activities namely mediation and preventive diplomacy, institutional capacity and peace support operations. Kagame (2018) admitted that from its establishment in 1963, the African Union lacked a credible mechanism to fund its priority operations via the Peace Fund; it "depended too extensively on external resources". It was in an effort to change the trend of extensive dependence and attain some level of self-reliance that the AU Assembly decided in 2015 to finance 25% of the Union's peace and security activities as a way of revitalizing the Peace Fund, with a target that the Fund should reach $400 million by 2021. According to the Chairperson of the AU, the recently revitalized Peace Fund is a demonstration of the commitment to African ownership of peace and security operations on the continent (in Yambou & Feleke, 2019). There were also such documents as the January 2015 Addis Ababa Decision 561 (XXIV), and the June 2015 Johannesburg Decision 578 (XXV), both of which directed Member

States of the AU to fund three budget lines: (i) 100% of the operational budget, (ii) 75% of the programme budget, and (iii) 25% of the peace support operations budget. These and related efforts were aimed at ending dependency and creating more ownership and self-reliance.

However, the fact that the same AU Security Architecture is heavily dependent on external support reiterates another fact, namely, that self-reliance alone is not enough to tackle the security challenges that gradually and continually acquire globalized features. This thus emphasizes the almost inevitability of dependency, or at least, interdependency. Report has it, for instance, that as of February 2019, the African Union has only managed to collect $89 million for the Peace Fund. This amount was collected from 49 Member States and is a shortfall from the total amount needed. The initial plan was to collect $325 million towards the Peace Fund in 2017, rising to a total of $400 million by 2021 from the 0.2% levy. The difference in the shortfall warranted the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, to emphasize that any failure by Member States to finance the Union's peace and security operations is tantamount to leaving the issue of peace and security in the hands of others (Melkamu, 2019). As if in response to the Chairperson's words, on 22 July 2019, the European Union provided an additional €800 million to boost African Union peace and security operations (Yambou & Feleke, 2019). The purpose of this fund is to promote peace, security and stability in Africa, within the context of the continued implementation of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). In the words of the EU Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Neven Mimica, "Europe remains Africa's first partner in the area of peace and security. Since 2004, the African Peace Facility has provided €2.7 billion to support African solutions to African problems. Most of the additional €800 million announced today will go to peace support operations led by our African partners" (in Yambou & Feleke, 2019).

The detailed objectives of the EU's additional €800 million assistance to the AU's security apparatuses are to support: (i) the strengthening of conflict prevention, management and resolution structures and mechanisms of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA); (ii) AU efforts to establish a continental human rights and international humanitarian law compliance framework; (iii) an Early Response Mechanism (ERM) which will provide the AU with quick funding for preventive diplomacy initiatives, mediation, fact-finding missions and the first stages of peace support operations; (iv) the financing of African-led peace support operations, such as the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) against Boko Haram, the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) or the G5-Sahel Joint Force specifically, with regard to capacity building, troop allowances and non-lethal equipment. It will also support efforts of the AU to promote gender equality and human rights principles and practices in peace support operations (in Yambou & Feleke, 2019). This level of support from the EU is explicable from the perspective of the features, structures and dynamics of current global security trends which are characterized by four features, namely, (i) Multiplicity, (ii) Complexity, (iii) Unpredictability, and (iv) Volatility. These features are linked to three underlying structures of the 21st century, namely, the ever globalized economy, globalized security threats as well as localized security threats with global reach and impact. Multiplicity as a feature of global security trends implies that at every point in time, there are multiple security threats. Complexity implies that the structure and connectivity of the sources and agents of global security threats make the process of tracking and addressing them complex.

Unpredictability follows from the two previous features – multiplicity and complexity – such that global security threats, coming from various sources at different times, and from various interconnected sources, are becoming quite unpredictable. The last feature, volatility, implies that the trend of global security threats is becoming more dangerous, more extreme, out of control, and in relation to unpredictability, very sudden. These features are inter-related; they complicate one another and result in unprecedented security dynamics, as 21st century security threats occur within a globalized economy in which some countries provide security support for other countries simply for economic reasons. The sense of being under threat or in conflict can boost defense spending on countries and continents in order to secure business/ trade routes and commercial interests.

The implications from the above features of global security threats dovetail into one fundamental implication: only interdependent societies and regions can withstand the sweepingly destructive consequences of global security threats that have the aforementioned features. What this means, therefore, is that in the face of current global security threats, the only security architecture that can manage to keep citizens and nations safe is one that is primarily interdependent and goes beyond self-reliance. To some extent, therefore, it could be said that on issues such as security, the need for self-reliance has been overtaken by the greater need for interdependence. This last point is necessary in circumstances, as are present in most of Africa, where the technology (for instance, drones, helicopters, jet-fighters), skills (underground skills such as those found among the US Navy SEAL teams), and frameworks required to match the sophistication of highly connected security-breaching groups (such as complex networks of terrorists and criminals), can only be accessed from outside the continent.

The primacy of the interdependent approach to managing global security threats is even more evident when one considers other layers of security threats. These include environmental degradation, climate change, cyber security, health security, nuclear proliferation, massive migration and displacement, energy security and resource wars, religious extremism, international terrorism, organized crime, and so on. There is yet a third layer of security threats, namely, the new forms of radicalism: religious radicalism, political radicalism and ideological radicalism. These features and structural components of global security dynamics also imply that security efforts are no longer issues of solitary individual nations, regional economic communities or continents. Rather, they have become issues of shared global responsibility in which relatively more vulnerable countries can be assisted by stronger ones.

Agentic governance requires a closer look beyond the fears of vulnerability that define the clamour for self-reliance. It requires looking towards leveraging the partnerships that interdependency provides. This is particularly important because responding to global security threats and development demands are intertwined in relationships that could be summarized by a “visible back and forth movement between dependency/ vulnerability (that is, Africa vis-a-vis external actors) and self-reliance (that is, Africa’s desire for more ownership in dealing with its own security [and development] challenges)” (Ndiaye, 2019). This vulnerability is inevitable. It is a necessary part of partnership, as it involves an appreciation of the currently irreplaceable roles of external actors in strengthening and empowering African security infrastructures. For instance, since the past ten years, there has remained massive external support for the operationalization of the Africa Peace and Security

Architecture (APSA) as well as at the levels of RECs. There has also been external support that focuses on crisis prevention in the areas of early warning and response, preventive diplomacy, post-conflict reconstruction and development, civilian and police components of the African Standby Force (ASF), operationalization of ASF, border demarcation and cross-border cooperation, and so forth. In both crisis prevention and the operationalization of the APSA, the external support involved has been aimed at improving the mediation capacities of Africa at the continental and REC levels, as well as at the prevention of the proliferation of small and light weapons (SALW), which is itself a serious cause of crisis in several parts of Eastern and Western Africa. Partnership, therefore, has become a critical element of general governance structuring, development dynamics and of Africa's agency within the global security landscape (Ndiaye, 2019). The degree of dependency involved in such partnerships is different at continental, regional and national levels. To achieve this and more, there is need for a more demanding and impatient AU that also balances the sovereignty of its Member States with an overarching insistence on respect for the objectives outlined in its several conventions and charters.

Conclusion: Resolving the Tension

Sidibé (in Jere, 2019) was correct to have noted that to build healthy societies, Africa must be health self-reliant. In this case, financial dependency is a very serious concern. This linkage between self-reliance and finance is relevant in the discourse that has engaged this contribution: security as a dimension of governance in Africa is also heavily dependent on transparent and accountable management of finances by Member States. To be security self-reliant, Africa needs to be financially independent. Can the continent achieve the latter if accountability remains very low in the governance index and corruption remains high? As long as funds from Africa are diverted outside Africa for selfish purposes, there will continue to be shortfalls for the funds needed to ensure security on the continent; there will continue to be signs of inefficacy/ inefficiency; and there will continue to be needs for financial dependency, allowing the current cycle to continue. Agentic governance is the route to a largely self-reliant Africa, and it requires deep commitments that respect documented common positions and agreements. On the other hand, only proven evidences of self-efficacy result in a strengthened sense of agency and self-reliance. As long as Africa is not able to show that it is self-efficacious, it will not even believe itself when saying that it can be self-reliant. A positive sense of agency depends on self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 2001), just as "the perception of one's own agency depends on detecting spatio-temporal correlations between one's actions and its effects" (Haggard & Tsakiris, 2009: 243).

After a 2016 assessment of the experiences of AU's governance structure and intervention in two fragile African states, South Sudan and Lesotho, Martin Rupia (2016: 21) submitted that there are specific issues that need to be addressed before governance can improve on the continent. The three most significant factors are:

i. the generation of incumbents not willing to relinquish power and allow democratic processes to take root; b) the leaders' penchant to render marginal the executive, cabinet, governmental and legislative while concentrating power in their hands; c) the creation, by leaders, of partisan military capacity for power retention.

Even a shallow assessment of these challenges points to the fact that they are issues of agentic choices and preferences of African leaders. These challenges are not results of impositions and manipulations by external influences, but of the preferences of said leaders/ incumbents to remain in power for their own personal and selfish interests. This interpretation of Rupia's position is a criticism which many Afrocentrists would be unwilling to accept. A rejection of such criticism is based on an ignorance of the idea that as far as Africa is concerned, John Dewey's words are particularly germane in this time and era: "creativity is our great need, but criticism, self-criticism, is the way to its release" (in Joas, 1996: vii).

Based on the theoretical conceptualization of the term 'agent', the AU and RECs on the continent are examples of collective modes of agency. As much as an individual agent can be assessed, criticized and held responsible (praised or blamed) for a choice and its consequences, so can also the AU and the RECs be held responsible for poor governance and underdevelopment in Africa. As such, if holding an individual responsible implies criticism, Africa as a collective unit deserves to be criticized in order to make it more creative. There is a particularly strong tendency for any Pan-Africanist to look at Africa's agency in international relations in terms of what Africa is doing: the flagships, the charters, the protocols, and so on. Whereas this perspective on the issue of agency is good and encourages feelings of self-efficacy, it is however one-sided and not enough; Africa can do even more. Conceptually, agency involves taking control, but it necessarily includes taking responsibility (being blamed or praised) for the results of the set of choices, actions and inactions that are involved in the process of 'taking control'. To be blamed in this sense involves being criticized. This then serves as a form of demand for better choices.

Africa has not been criticized sufficiently, and several scholars who are supposed to provide the theoretical basis for this criticism have rather preferred to romanticize about Africa in the name of finding solutions to the problems of governance faced in the 21st century. Without a thorough criticism of the continent from within, creative approaches to the many problems on the continent will not be availed and the continent will continue to lag behind in verifiable indices of good governance and improvements in human wellbeing. More agentic governance in Africa will involve an AU that is authorized, among others, to stipulate the tenure of political leaders in individual Member States, to call to order incumbents who marginalize important arms of government in order to concentrate power in their hands, and to over-ride the effort of leaders who may try to use partisan military personnel to retain power. These points can be justified based on the idea of collective action explained earlier, which implies that each of the entities involved in the African project own the project and therefore "have a special standing to rebuke one another for inappropriate action" such that "those who do something together owe each other actions appropriate to the action in question. They also owe each other correction of inappropriate actions" (Gilbert, 2010: 68).

The saying that 'no man is an island' has never been more valid than in the 21st century, when all aspects of human needs and aspirations have developed one form of a global character or another. This is particularly worrisome on issues of security, where threats are consistently manifesting their interconnectedness both in their nature, evolution and response needs/ structures. At the moment, the only correct approach to these issues is for them to be assessed with four features in mind, namely, their multiplicity, complexity, unpredictability and volatility. One of

the prevailing dynamics is that all efforts towards achieving self-reliance, particularly for the African continent, are appearing to be elusive, with the implication that the quest for self-reliance is seeming less important when put side-by-side with the urgency for interdependency and partnership as the fundamental surviving option. Seen from this perspective, a fruitful, agentic and development-enhancing governance framework in Africa is dependent on looking beyond self-reliance for its own sake, and the fears of vulnerability, to access and make the best use of all options for partnership and interdependence among African countries and RECs, and with partners from around the globe.

On a more general note, interdependent and agentic governance seem to be the single option for managing the tensions and the disconnect that are culled up around the issues of dependency, vulnerability and self-reliance for Africa. On a more particular note, however, the degree of dependence, vulnerability and self-reliance of Africa varies from one sector to another, and it will continue to be so. This implies that in areas such as 'Transparency & Accountability', where individual Member States and RECs can actually improve governance and development by maximizing their self-reliance, the AU should continue to make consistent demands to ensure that human lives and wellbeing are improved without delay. However, the current situation of the continent warrants that in some other areas where the possibilities of self-reliance are particularly low, Africa should look beyond the sense of pride that results from self-reliance, and the fears of vulnerability, to wholeheartedly embrace dependency, interdependency and partnership as each circumstance demands. Thus, in the context of agentic governance, issues such as financing of continental/regional health and security architectures as well as technology transfers, will, for the meantime, not just require some level of dependence on external support but also demand a sense of engaged or agentic vulnerability, which makes the vulnerable party still responsible for whatever assistance it may receive.

References

African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) (2019). The African Governance Report 2019. Johannesburg: APRM.

African Union (2019). Peace fund. Retrieved from: https://au.int/en/peace-fund (Accessed: 24 August 2019).

African Union Commission (April 2015). Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want. (Popular Version). Addis Ababa: African Union Commission.

African Union Commission AUC (2003). African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption. Addis Ababa: African Union Commission.

African Union Commission AUC (2011). African Charter on the Values and Principles of Public Service and Administration. Addis Ababa: African Union Commission.

African Union Commission AUC (2019a). List of Countries Which Have Signed, Ratified/Acceded to the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption. Addis Ababa: African Union Commission.

African Union Commission AUC (2019b). List of Countries Which Have Signed, Ratified/Acceded to the African Charter on the Values and Principles of Public Service and Administration. Addis Ababa: African Union Commission.

African Union/ECA Conference of Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (2015). "Illicit Financial Flow Report of the High-Level Panel on Illicit Flows from Africa".

Ajei, M.O. (2016). Kwasi Wiredu's Consensus Democracy Consensus: Prospects for Practice in Africa. European Journal of Political Theory, 15(4), 445-446

Apata, G.O. (2018). Corruption and the Postcolonial State: How the West invented African corruption. Journal of Contemporary African Studies. DOI: 10.1080/02589001.2018.1497292.

Bandura, A. (1997). Self-Efficacy: The Exercise of Control. New York: Freeman.

Bandura, A. (2000). Exercise of Human Agency through Collective Efficacy. Current Directions in Psychological Studies, 9, 75-78.

Bandura, A. (2001). Social Cognitive Theory: An Agentic Perspective. Annual Review of Psychology, 51, 1-26.

Bandura, A. (2006). Toward a Psychology of Human Agency. Perspectives on Psychological Science, 1(2), 164-180.

Campbell, C. (2009). Distinguishing the Power of agency from Agentic Power: A Note on Weber and the "Black Box" of Personal Agency. Sociological Theory, 27(4), 407-418.

Dietz, T. & Burns, T.R. (1992). Human Agency and the Evolutionary Dynamics of Culture. Acta Sociologica, 35(3), 187-200.

Emirbayer, M. & Mische, A. (1998). What is Agency? American Journal of Sociology, 103(4), 962-1023.

Gilbert, M. (2010). 'Collective Action.' In T. O'Connor & C. Sandis (eds), A Companion to Philosophy of Action, pp. 67-73. West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons.

Haggard, P. & Tsakiris, M. (2009). The Experience of Agency: Feelings, Judgments, and Responsibility. Current Directions in Psychological Science, 18(4), 242-246.

Hoffmann, N. & Hendricks, F. (2018). African Perspectives on Corruption. Journal of Contemporary African Studies, 36(4), 425-432. DOI: 10.1080/02589001.2018.1584718

Jere, R. (2019). 'Interview: Michel Sidibé: "Africa is succeeding, but we must not drop our guard"'. NewAfrican – UNGA Special Report, 22 September 2019.

Joas, H. (1996). The Creativity of Action. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Kagame, P. (17 Nov. 2018). Remarks by President Paul Kagame at the Launch of the African Union Peace Fund at Addis Ababa. Retrieved: https://au.int/sites/default/files/speeches/ 35604-sp-20181117_au_peace_fund_launch_-_remarks_

by_president_kagame.pdf (Accessed: 24 August 2019).

Lauer, H. (2017). Global Justice as Process: Applying Normative Ideals of Indigenous African Governance, Philosophical Papers, 46(1), 163-189.

Masolo, D.A. (1994). African Philosophy: In Search of its Identity. Bloomington: Edinburgh University Press.

Melkamu, M. (07 Feb 2019). 49 African Countries Contribute $89m for AU Peace Fund: AUC Chairperson. Retrieved from: https://7dnews.com/news/49-african-countries-contribute-89m-for-au-peace-fund-auc-chairperson (Accessed 23 August 2019).

Metz, T. (2007). Ubuntu as a Moral Theory: Reply to Four Critics. South African Journal of Philosophy, 26(4), 369-387.

Metz, T. (2015). How the West was One: The Western as Individualist, the African Communitarian. Educational Philosophy and Theory, 47(11), 1175-1184.

Metz, T. (2017) Replacing Development: An Afro-Communal Approach to Global Justice. Philosophical Papers, 46.1: 111-131.

Meyer, J.W. & Jepperson, R.L. (2000). The "Actors" of Modern Society: The Cultural Construction of Social Agency. Sociological Theory, 18(1), 100-120.

Mo Ibrahim Foundation (2017). 2017 Ibrahim Index of African Governance – Index Report. Retrieved from: http://iiag.online/ (Accessed: September 29, 2018).

Mo Ibrahim Foundation (2018). 2018 Ibrahim Index of African Governance – Index Report. Retrieved from: http://iiag.online/ (Accessed: November 23, 2018).

Ndiaye, M. (2019). "Africa's Agency in International Security Relations: Leveraging Partnerships". Paper presented during a High-Level Conference organized by the Africa Programme, Chatham House, July 11-12, 2019. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Nyerere, J.K. (1971). Ujamaa: Essays on Socialism. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rupia, M. (2016). 'Regional Intervention in Fragile African States: Comparative Case Studies of South Sudan and Lesotho: Any Lessons Learnt?' Journal of African-Centered Solutions in Peace and Security (AfSol), 1(1), 1-26.

Sartre, J.P. (1943/1996). Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenology. Trans. H.E. Barnes. London: Routledge.

Wiredu, K. (1980). Philosophy and an African Culture. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Wiredu, K. (1998). State, Civil Society and Democracy in Africa. Quest: An International Journal of Philosophy, XII(1), 242.

Wiredu, K. (1999). Society and Democracy in Africa. New Political Science, 21(1), 34-44.

Wiredu, K. (2007). Democracy by Consensus: Some Conceptual Considerations. Socialism and Democracy, 21(3), 155-170.

Wiredu, K. (2008). Social Philosophy in Postcolonial Africa: Some Preliminaries Concerning Communalism and Communitarianism. South African Journal of Philosophy, 27(4), 332-339.

Yambou, E.T.A. & Feleke, B. (July 22 2019). Press Release – "African Peace Facility: African Union Peace & Security Operations Boosted by an Additional €800 million from the European Union". Retrieved from: https://au.int/sites/default/files/pressreleases/37047-pr-version_4_ reviewed_apf_ press_release.pdf (Accessed: 23 August 2019).