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Causes, rationales and dynamics : exploring the strategic security partnership between the European Union and Africa

Siradag, A.

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Author: Siradag, Abdurrahim

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CHAPTER ONE

STRATEGIC SECURITY FOR AFRICA AND EUROPE

1.1 RATIONALE, MOTIVATION AND CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

Conflicts, conflict resolution and post-conflict restitution have for some time been major political concerns in Africa, demanding increased attention from the African Union (AU) as well as major external actors, such as the European Union (EU). Prior to the Cairo Summit in 2000, the EU's involvement in Africa was mainly in terms of trade and aid, but at the Summit the notion of a new strategic partnership emerged to shape Africa-EU security relations, to be strengthened by a second Africa-EU summit, held in Lisbon in 2007. Both summits paid much attention to conflicts on the African continent, emphasising their obstruction to peace and stability, and the threat to regional and international security. For the EU, Africa's geographical proximity, the spread of international terrorism following the 9/11 attacks on the United States of America (USA), mass migration,¹ the effects of the recent global recession, as well as current popular uprisings in North Africa, underline the importance of security.

According to the Council of the EU, "Europe and Africa are bound together by history, by geography, and by a shared vision of a peaceful, democratic and prosperous future for all its peoples."² These strong historical relations have played a significant role in developing security relations between the two continents, recently reinforced by the establishment of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) in 2003 and the African Peace Facility (APF) in 2004. For post-colonial Africa's part, the difficult struggle to eradicate regional and local war, bloodshed, genocide and ethnic cleansing, whilst obtaining and/or sustaining peace and security, has been among the greatest challenges its people face. Success so far has been minimal, and much more needs to be done to eradicate the scourges of conflict and war from the continent. The EU's involvement is an important, new and dynamic development, given its increasing importance as an international player and African partner. This development warrants systematic academic analysis and explanation, in particular from the standpoint of African countries themselves, many of which are attempting to develop a more unified continental voice.

¹ See *European Security Strategy* adopted by Council of the European Union on 12 December 2003.

² See the official report published by Council of the European Union (2005), *The EU and Africa: Towards a Strategic Partnership*. Brussels, 19 December 2005, 15961/05 (Presse 367).

The purpose of this study, therefore, is to analyse and explain the rationale behind the Africa-EU strategic security partnership (SSP), and assess its real and possible impact on conflict-stricken areas. It will also consider possible directions of change in African politics and development, stability in general, and the possible spill-over to other areas of interaction and cooperation. Against a broader background of increasing influence on, and interference in the African continent from international actors (including China, India, Brazil, Turkey, the USA and others), the dissertation will examine the motives behind the EU's own involvement in Africa, and will explore the insight of this new evolving SSP. The main research question this dissertation will aim to answer is: What are the main driving forces and elements of security cooperation between the EU and Africa? Why does the EU pursue an SSP with Africa?

Closely related sub-questions that also need to be addressed are: What determines the patterns of cooperation between African regional organisations and the EU? How can an SSP be established between unequal actors?

1.2 THEORETICAL APPROACH

As Seale (2004:417-418) underlines, good research does not lie in a specific philosophical or theoretical consideration, but rather in an eclectic blend of theories relevant to the problem being examined. In this dissertation a number of theories provided useful insight into the pursuit of a strategic partnership between different actors, with three in particular, namely *realism*, *liberalism*, and *constructivism* to be discussed in this section. The theoretical framework will be discussed explicitly in chapter two but a short overview of each of these three theories discussed in chapter one.

Jervis (1986:78) points out that international security cooperation in an asymmetrical power relationship is possible because weak actors feel that if they are not cooperating with powerful actors this can bring more challenges for themselves. According to Lipson (1984:12-22), international security cooperation is more difficult than international economic cooperation because security issues are too complicated and there are no tangible rules or norms to resolve them. Great or rising powers cooperate with weak actors in the fields of peace and security in order to protect their own economic interests, thus linking the two fields. The idea of security cooperation lies at the heart of economic considerations (*ibid.*, pp.12-22).

Waltz (1979) argues that:

... when faced with the possibility of cooperating for mutual gain, states that feel insecure must ask how the gain will be divided. They are compelled to ask not “Will both of us gain?” but “Who will gain more?”

Mistrust among states is a large impediment that blocks international cooperation, and great powers have a tendency to exploit weak states. In addition, the international structure is settled on the premise of “take care of yourself!” (ibid., p. 107). Therefore, according to this reasoning, it is difficult to achieve fair international cooperation in the fields of peace and security between Africa and the EU. Dougherty and Phaltzgraff (2001:505-507) contend that cooperation can emerge as a result of the relationship between a powerful and a weak actor. Hegemonic actors can provide international security by cooperating with weak actors for mutual goals. Cooperation can also arise from mutual interests of actors not based on compulsion or oppression. Critics of realism point out that it overemphasises the role of states in world politics and does not take into account the role of international organisations in maintaining peace, security and stability. Therefore, realism restricts the numbers of international actors (Kauppi & Viotti, 1999:84-85).

Geo-economic and geo-political interests of the global powers have been playing a significant role in cooperating with weak actors. Conflict of interests and struggle for power among actors in the international system will continue to be the order of the day, and international cooperation will thus be undermined by lack of trust between states and non-states actors. Powerful actors will invariably aim to gain more from their strategic partnership when they cooperate with weak actors, and issues related to common threats and common interests are overshadowed by the notion of state interest (Morgenthau, 1967:5-7). According to realism, it would be naive to expect a fair and genuine SSP between the EU and Africa, the rationale of which essentially favours the economic wellbeing of the former over that of the latter.

Burchill (2005:120-121) contends that cooperation between actors can reduce risks concerning conflict or war and increase a broad range of relations between different actors, including economic, security, academic, and technological. International institutions can weaken the concept of self-interest among states and create international cooperation. However, maintaining a true sense of cooperation among different actors is difficult. Particularly, international agreements and procedures made between states or international organisations remain weak. Neoliberal institutionalists argue that cooperation can emerge with or without a hegemonic power (ibid., p.122).

According to Carey and Salmon (1996:33), cooperation is of crucial importance for the development of the modern world. However, implementing international cooperation between actors is very costly and risky. International organisations can promote international peace, security, and prosperity but at the same time they can diminish uncertainty that leads to asymmetrical relations in world politics (ibid., p.33). Neoliberal institutionalism suggests that successful cooperation among actors in a particular field can contribute to other fields, such as the socio-economic and political (Keohane, 1984:6-13). From this point of view, the success of strategic partnership in security matters among Africa and the EU is important for strengthening socio-economic and political structures in Africa. The Africa-EU SSP can reduce insecurity in both continents, if the EU aims to create a genuine partnership with Africa. However, implementing such cooperation between the two continents remains difficult because powerful actors pursue absolute gains while cooperating with weak ones.

Milner (1992:469-70) states that mutual interests and political adjustments are vital for the emergence of international cooperation. Keohane (1984:16,135) emphasises the importance of mutual interests created by economic interdependence as one of the most significant elements in triggering international cooperation. Neoliberals also affirm that international institutions can eradicate all the impediments that inhibit international cooperation. The sharp critiques of liberal theory maintain that liberalism only focuses on the fields of *low politics*, such as financial, social, and environmental issues, and neglects the fields of *high politics*, such as security concerns and the role of states in world politics. The critics of liberal theory also contend that liberalism overemphasises the importance of moral principles (Kegley, 1995:153; 2009:38-9).

By comparison, constructivism emphasises that reconstructing a common identity and culture among actors is very important in paving the way for the establishment of international cooperation, and underlines that social rather than material factors shape world politics (Wendt, 1992:392-95). Whereas neo-realists and neo-liberalists focus on material factors, constructivism focuses on social factors in international politics. Landolt (2007:394) points out that both social and material factors play key roles in shaping international politics and are not divided. According to constructivism, the notion of international cooperation is made by inter-subjective understandings, culture, beliefs, and identities. Wendt holds that the future of international cooperation depends upon “human consciousness.” International organisations have beliefs, culture and identities, which before they perform in international politics play a significant role in their decisions and actions. Although international organisations create

peace and security, they can also lead to wars and conflict. More significantly, they are established by “structures of identities and interests” (Wendt, 1992:398-9).

Checkel (1998:325) asserts that constructivism made a momentous contribution to the study of IR with its sociological insight, however, it downplays the importance of material factors by overemphasising the role of social factors. Criticism of constructivism charges it with not explaining the concept of change or answering the questions of why, when, and how changes occur in inter-subjective understandings, identities, beliefs, and cultures. Furthermore, constructivism is not clear about which factors affect identity, beliefs, and shared knowledge (Kegley, 2009:42). The theoretical framework guiding this dissertation will be described in more detail in chapter two and specific hypotheses drawn from it will be derived.

1.3 SECURITY AND EU-AFRICA RELATIONS

Much has been written about the foreign policy of the EU and peace and security in Africa, and on strategic partnership. However, a survey of the literature on the current Africa-EU security partnership reveals little published on it specifically. The available literature in this regard mostly examines peace and security in Africa, not the SSP between Africa and the EU.

1.3.1 The concept of strategic security partnership

Balon (2002:138-141) signifies that to define concepts is always a difficult and challenging task because they do not have precise limits or rules, and attempts to present them as simple definitions are problematic and misleading in academia. The content of the concept of “strategic partnership” is about cooperation of parties within the framework of international organisations, seen by Balon as based on cooperation and equality between partners. Without equality, strategic partnership cannot be actualised, and the basic goal is “to maximise benefits and minimise losses” (ibid., p.141). The question of how two unequal actors will maximise the mutual benefits and resolve challenges while cooperating in the areas of peace and security is problematic. The main challenge behind the Africa-EU SSP is that neither the EU nor Africa made a common definition, thus causing ambiguity among the actors and undermining the development of cooperation. Each actor has its own definition about the current cooperation.

Crossick and Reuter (2007:7-8) stress that internal parameters of a country, such as socio-economic and political developments, NGOs, think tanks, academia, and business, are also vital for shaping strategic partnership. It also requires a clear objective and long-term relationship. Importantly, the aim is not only to serve international actors’ common interests,

but also to address issues around international peace, security and prosperity. The concept ought to take into account the internal parameters of Africa, such as socio-economic and political conditions and differences between it and Europe. Baldwin (1997:9-12) states that academic works based on security have neglected the/a conceptual analysis of security, therefore the concept of security faces challenges and it is necessary for security studies to relate to, examine and analyse it in a conceptual way. For Brauch (2005:18), the concept was used in too narrow a perspective during the Cold War, however it has been reinvented since 1990 and is nowadays seen from a wide range of perspectives, including military, political, economic, environmental and social.

Since the 9/11 attacks on the USA, the concept of security has been further redefined. Soko (2007:16) asserts that the character and language of security are blurred and risk has replaced threats. In this respect, “the character and language of security” has been critical to understand the security relations between Africa and the EU. The concept of security should also consider the challenges and threats of the modern world, such as poverty and HIV/AIDS. Security cooperation should not only focus on conflicts and wars in Africa, but also on the root causes of the structural problems of Africa. Luciani (1998:151) explains that security is dominated by economic interests and security issues are linked to economic problems. Peace and security are necessary for development and a broad approach to security and development is crucial for security studies. According to the author, the EU’s current security strategy towards Africa does not pay sufficient attention to the balance between security and development.

The current literature on the concept of SSP is limited, and does not link the concept of security to that of strategic partnership or the current changes in Africa and in the world. The existing work is mostly far from assessing the Africa-EU security relations theoretically or critically, so this dissertation will try to address this deficiency.

1.3.2 The Africa-EU strategic security partnership

Olivier (2006:151) assesses the adoption of the Cairo Declaration and the Cairo Plan of Action of 2000 as having replaced the old paradigms with a new one, based on the concept of strategic partnership between Africa and the EU, which for Sidiropoulos (2007:2-3), ought to be based on equality, mutual responsibility and mutual accountability. According to the author, the EU needs to change its traditional relationship with Africa, that of a donor-recipient relationship. However, Vasconcelos (2009:10) states that “the responsibility to protect” is the main aim of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) of the EU and that the EU’s security policy is based on human security. The European Security Strategy

(ESS) was approved by the European Council (EC) in December 2003, and underlines three important strategic goals: addressing threats, establishing security in the EU's neighbourhood and strengthening an international order based on effective multilateralism. However, Gnesotto (2004:52) and Vasconcelos (2009:27) emphasise that the EU needs to redefine its international role and should increase its responsibility in maintaining global security and constructing a better world.

Empirical evidence shows that the EU has a significant economic interest in Africa. In particular, the UK, France, Italy, and Germany have strong economic relations with African countries, with Africa being the largest trading partner for the EU. Research has found that the EU's economic interests in Africa have played an important role in shaping its security relations with Africa. The EU tends to regard foreign and security policies with Africa as secondary to its own economic and political interests. Furthermore, the new actors in Africa, including China, India, Brazil and Turkey, have also increased their economic and political relations and established strategic partnerships with African countries and organisations since 2000. Their active involvement in Africa has changed the EU's economic and political relations with the continent. At the same time, the 9/11 attacks on the US played a significant role in modifying relations between Africa and the EU, which before 2000 had no institutional relationship with Africa beyond aid and trade.

After the 9/11 tragedy the EU dramatically transformed its relations with Africa as it began to consolidate its relations with the continent on an institutional level. This provided significant opportunities for the EU, the first of which is that the EU strengthened its global position in Africa through the Africa-EU SSP, despite the impact of the global economic crisis of 2007. Secondly, the EU has maintained and even increased its economic and political interests in Africa against the new emerging actors on the continent by establishing new strategic partnerships. Thirdly, the EU aims to fight with new threats and challenges more effectively by cooperating with African regional and sub-regional organisations. Fourthly, the EU has developed effective mechanisms to spread its own values and norms in the world. Finally, the EU wants more global responsibilities to contribute to global peace and security through strategic partnerships. Empirical data shows that the EU has strengthened its institutional relations with African organisations through its financial means, however strengthening African organisations with donations is not an effective strategy to establish an SSP with Africa. It merely increases the dependency of African countries and organisations on the EU and undermines the development of a true SSP with Africa.

Empirical evidence also demonstrates that the EU made a structural change in its foreign and security policy towards Africa after 2000. Before 2000, the EU mainly used economic aid as a strategic means to develop its economic and political relations with Africa, but after 2000 it decided to take on more global responsibilities and to become actively involved in conflict management, resolution and prevention in Africa. It therefore deployed peacekeeping operations in the conflict areas of Africa, including the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Chad, the Central African Republic (CAR), Guinea-Bissau and Somalia. It can be said that the EU's foreign and security policy has been transformed from "soft power" to "hard power" in line with its economic, political, global interests and global developments. New threats and challenges, potential EU enlargement, the EU's strong economic and political relations with Africa, the new actors' growing relations with Africa, and the 9/11 tragedy have all had a significant impact on the transformation of the EU's foreign and security policy towards Africa.

1.3.3 Regional organisations and security in Africa

In the view of Marchal (2009:2-4), however, African governments must deal more effectively with security problems, supporting the principle of African solutions to African problems. In particular, the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) and sub-regional organisations, such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) might create their own security agenda to prevent potential conflicts and wars in Africa. Landsberg (2007:51) argues that the AU should strengthen its political structure and institutions in order to consolidate democratic and sustainable development and to build up an African continental union. He adds that the serious "challenges of the Twenty-First Century" facing Africa include peace, security, governance, democracy and development (ibid., pp.51-52).

Structural problems of Africa and financial and logistical constraints have been damaging the African organisations' security policies, a lack of a unity and solidarity among whose members has been a major problem in evolving a strategic partnership. While Africa is becoming more dependent on the EU, the latter appears to be becoming an increasingly dominant power in this partnership. For Cooper (1994:1545), crises in Africa, that derive from the legacy of colonialism and the use by colonial regimes of power for their own interests, continue to influence Africa's security and future. Chevalier (2006:6-8) cites the example of France, which as an international power has played a considerable role in terms of

security and economics in Africa. It has recently strengthened its military role in order to play a more strategic role on the continent, as well as in the wider international system, such as the EU and the UN. According to Chevalier, like other former colonial powers, it maintains strong diplomatic and strategic ties with Africa and plays an important role in peace and security, but France has been the most significant actor in forging the Africa-EU SSP, the main reason being that France has strong historical relations with Africa, which if lost would bring more challenges and threats to the EU. Conversely, reinforcing them would bring more opportunities for the EU in general, and for France in particular (ibid., pp.6-8).

Literature on the Africa-EU security partnership has not considered the effects of other international actors, such as, China, Brazil, India and Russia. These newly emergent international actors have strengthened their economic and political relations with African states and its regional and sub-regional organisations in recent years, and their involvement in Africa has had a momentous impact on the changing of the EU's strategic policy towards Africa. Therefore, while evaluating security relations between Africa and the EU, it is necessary also to investigate the political and economic effects of other international actors on this partnership.

1.4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The research strategy adopted in this dissertation is the method of process-tracing (PT), which was developed systematically in George and Bennett's *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (2005). PT is viewed as one of the most significant tools of qualitative analysis by George and Bennett (2005:6), according to whom it investigates "the links between possible causes and observed outcomes" (ibid., p.13). For Collier (2011:2), PT is "the systematic examination of diagnostic evidence selected and analysed in light of research questions and hypotheses posed by the investigator." It aims to understand driving forces behind political and social events and in so doing pays special attention to description, which is a fundamental tool of PT. This dissertation systematically examines diagnostic evidence in light of research questions and hypotheses, at the same time paying particular attention to description so as to understand driving motives behind the Africa-EU SSP.

Collier (ibid., p.823) also contends that:

Process tracing inherently analyses trajectories of change and causation, but the analysis fails if the phenomena observed at each step in this trajectory are not adequately described. Hence, what in a sense is "static" description is a crucial building block in analysing the processes being studied.

Even though the Africa-EU SSP was established in 2000, it is still in progress. Therefore, this dissertation will analyse a dynamic process and “trajectories of change and causation.” PT not only observes change or sequence, but also takes a good picture of a specific event in the process. To describe a process, PT portrays key steps behind a social or political phenomenon (ibid., p.824), and will help to understand change behind the strategic partnership in the areas of peace and security between two continents and characterise key steps behind this partnership.

PT is a significant method for testing theories in which a case is addressed in a wide-ranging manner. The method of PT scrutinises histories, archival documents, official documents, interview transcripts, and other sources in order to find evidence for hypotheses (George & Bennett, 2005:6). In this research, it is used to focus on reasons the EU is sustaining an SSP with Africa and the motives behind its establishment. It will examine factors affecting the emergence of the Africa-EU SSP and sequence of events and apply them against the principles of the IR theories, realism, liberalism and constructivism. The relevance of the theories can be interpreted and extrapolations either confirmed as irrelevant or potentially noteworthy.

According to Grinnell and Stothers (1988:219), “a research design is a plan which includes every aspect of a proposed research study from the conceptualisation of the problem right through to the dissemination of the findings.” It will also define key concepts, namely “strategic partnership”, “international organisation”, and “security”, prior to applying them to the topic. Understanding of the combined concept, SSP, will therefore provide a theoretical background for the research questions.

Primary, secondary and tertiary sources will be used in this research project to find evidence in support of the hypotheses. Primary sources are formal documents that include key materials of international organisations and governments (McNabb, 2004:475), and include official documents published by the European Commission, the Council of the EU, the European Parliament, the Western European Union, the AU, the IGAD, the SADC, and the ECOWAS. Burnham, Lutz, Grant and Layton-Henry (2008:188) state that if the primary documents are inaccessible, the subject is impracticable. Primary sources will provide the firsthand information for the evolvement of the SSP between Africa and the EU. The first categorisation of the evidence in this research project will consist of primary sources.

Secondary and tertiary sources of the study will consist of research papers, books, journal articles, African, and European newspapers, government reports, and MA, MPhil and PhD theses. Pierce (2008:80-1) points out that secondary and tertiary sources provide secondhand information, through analysis, synthesis, interpretations, and evaluation of primary sources. For Burnham et al. (187-8:2008), there is no perfect classification system that accommodates all kinds of documents precisely, however, the approach of the literature review of the study will start by assessing primary sources, followed by secondary and tertiary sources.

1.5 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

This study comprises ten chapters. The chapters will systematically provide evidence for or against the hypotheses drawn from the theoretical framework. The current chapter includes the introduction, the description of the research problem, methodology, and it outlines the general structure. Chapter 2 presents the theoretical framework of international cooperation in IR theories and clarification of the concept of strategic partnership. Furthermore, it includes detailed information on methodology and research design. On the basis of theoretical insights, it examines and analyses why the EU pursues cooperation with Africa in the area of peace and security. Chapter 3 explores theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the security concept, and scrutinises the link between notions of security, development, freedom, identity, justice, and governance. In addition, this chapter investigates the relationship between the Africa-EU SSP and security values.

Chapter 4 examines the historical background of the EU's foreign and security policy and objectives. It explores the challenges that undermine it and discusses whether it has enough power to establish a fair and genuine strategic partnership with. Chapter 5 evaluates the impact of colonial powers on security cooperation between Africa and the EU, particularly the interests of the former colonisers, including France, England, Portugal, Belgium, Italy, and Germany in the Africa-EU security partnership, and how they play an important role in Africa's peace and security. Chapter 6 analyses the EU's foreign and security policy towards Africa. Importantly, it aims to discover the driving forces behind the Africa-EU SSP.

Chapter 7 explores challenges and prospects that influence security in Africa, including the way challenges affecting security in Africa will shape the current SSP between the continents. Chapter 8 scrutinises African regional and sub-regional organisations' security policies and strategies, in particular those of the AU, the IGAD, the SADC, and ECOWAS. It examines the way in which Africa builds a strong regional security framework, and the impediments

that influence the African organisations' security policy. It discusses whether these organisations have sufficient power to work with the EU to build up a strategic partnership. Chapter 9 analyses security cooperation between Africa and the EU and examines a series of socio-political, economic and geo-strategic issues behind it. The final chapter concludes the study by providing a summary and evaluation of the main points raised throughout the study and implications for the Africa-EU partnership in the fields of peace and security. It will also provide recommendations for the future of the Africa-Europe security partnership.