Crafting foreign policy in a supranational organization: European Union lessons for the African Union
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While the role of supranational, regional institutions to enhance economic integration has long been accepted, its role in crafting foreign policy is still contested. It is understood that the sovereign state is responsible for developing its foreign policy in order to "achieve its goals in its relations with external entities."[1] In practice, supranational organizations have been extending their operational scope to define foreign policy corresponding to the preferences of its member states. Thus rather than assuming the realist perspective that the primary goal of states is to preserve sovereignty,[2] states in fact have different preferences when achieving their foreign policy objectives.[3]

In this paper, two supranational institutions, the European Union (EU) and the African Union (AU), are under examination. The two are compared as the AU structure reflects much of the EU model,[4] and both institutions were created to enhance the means towards achievement of common objectives of its member states. While they differ in their current power capabilities, the cases are worth comparing, as it is the end goal of developing foreign policy making capacity that is under inspection. Thus, the paper will focus on characteristics in a supranational organization that Enhance the definition and achievement of foreign policy. This is done by comparing the EU's trajectory and then drawing lessons for the AU, which is on the path to crafting a concerted foreign policy beyond its current security and defense policy.

In both the Unions, policies have been enacted to identify strategic interests and to define the broad terms under which these interests can be achieved. The EU's Common Foreign Security Policy (CFSP), originally conceived in 1992, now serves as the guiding policy for its 27 member states. The CFSP provides principles and guidelines to set a general political direction, common strategies to achieve objectives, joint actions to be implemented in specific situations, and common positions to prescribe an approach to a situation.[5]

In the AU, the Common African Defence and Security Policy (CADSP) is a broader policy to serve as a "common understanding among African states about their defence and security challenges and a set of measures they seek to take collectively to respond to those challenges."[6] The Peace and Security Council (PSC) created in 2004 is instrumental in implementing the CADSP, and it is likely that it will be the key agent in articulating the AU's foreign policy in the future. It must be noted that foreign, security, and defence policies, while interrelated, are different in their nature. The focus here is on the capacity to develop foreign policy in a regional institution.

The first section of the paper examines two sets of factors that enhance cooperation between member states in a regional organization, which has allowed for the development of the CFSP in the EU. These factors are the economic interests, preference for regional governance,

and identity of member states on the one hand, and the membership, decision-making process and socialization, and power autonomy in the institution itself on the other. Through the analysis, four lessons are drawn for the AU in the concluding section.

Rationale for member states

a. Economic interests
The EU finds itself better positioned to pursue a common foreign policy for a number of reasons. First, its original initiation as a regional institution was to enhance economic integration between its member states, creating high mutual interdependencies internally in the process. The success of the EU as an economic bloc has allowed it to stake its presence in the international arena as an indispensible economic actor. This has allowed the EU to be engaged in an "incremental process of institution-building," whereby "standard operating procedures" are developed, as well as a "collective view on some of the major issues of international politics."[7] Together, this allows the EU to have a range of capabilities, a viable operational structure, and a collective worldview to pursue a common foreign policy.

On the other hand, economic integration within the AU has yet to be strengthened. While the African Economic Community (AEC) is set out to promote "the integration of African economies in order to increase economic self-reliance and promote an endogenous and self-sustained development"[8] for AU member states, this goal has yet to be realized as widespread problems such as poverty continue to be a challenge. While economic integration within the AU is still weak, it is an ongoing process that will prove to be fruitful once realized.

b. Preference for regional governance
In Koenig-Archibugi's study of why sovereign states would choose to merge their national security with other states within a larger governmental structure, he finds that "strong regional governance increases the probability that governments prefer a supranational foreign and security policy."[9] Specifically, whether sovereignty is held as a concept in the constitution as a "unitary and indivisible attribute of a polity," or if "public power can be distributed among multiple territorial levels" indicates a state's preference for regional governance.[10]

While his case study was done specifically on the EU, this has wide implications for the AU and its success in developing a foreign policy. For African states, there is generally a more conservative attitude towards sovereignty, given the legacy of colonialism and the fear of foreign domination.[11] Colonialism left behind weak governmental structures incapable of exerting robust control over territories beyond the seat of central power in many states.[12] As such, there is a reluctance to devolve power to regional levels, which may hinder the willingness of member states to conform to the development of an AU foreign policy.

c. Identity
Where member states do not have strong regional governance, Koenig-Archibugi finds that "more Europeanized identities increase the probability that governments prefer a supranational foreign and security policy."[13] When the AU was conceived, the backbone of the institution was based on the idea of pan-Africanism.[14] According to Emerson, pan-Africanism is the idea that "all Africans have a spiritual affinity with each other and that, having suffered together in the

past, they must march together into a new and brighter future."[15] The wide agreement of African leaders to shape the institution on pan-Africanism reflects an unwavering pan-African identity amongst its member states.

Institutional design

a. Membership
When examining group behaviour, Olson's theory on collective action serves as a good starting point.[16] Where a group is small enough in size, each member will have an incentive to contribute in order to attain the collective good in pursuit, or that a group is small enough that other members will notice if one member is not contributing.

In both the EU and the AU, the decision-making process involves groups that are small enough in size to incentivize each member state to contribute. The main decision-making bodies involve 27 of the EU member states. In comparison, the AU has 54 member states. However, a decision was made to create the PSC as a smaller committee, comprising an equal number of member states from each of Africa's five regions. Overall, the formation of small-sized decision-making group enhances the likelihood of reaching their collective aim.

b. Decision-making process and socialization
When it comes to deciding on a policy, the EU and the AU differ on the requirement on consensus. While the EU allots veto power to each member state, in the AU's PSC majority rule by two-thirds is sufficient. Unanimity requirement, as displayed in the EU, may be more beneficial and has implications on the socialization effect. As Hurd states: "The key to successful and coherent foreign policy cooperation is persuading your partners of the force of your arguments, not resorting to the procedural means of a vote to overrule their point of view."[17] The emphasis on finding common ground fosters dialogue between member states, increasing the level of socialization that can occur in the institution.

Socialization can be described as the interactive process in which different actors learn and adopt shared norms, which "shared expectations about appropriate behaviour held by a community of actors."[18] Williams finds that the AU is currently engaged in a process of norm localization,[19] in which agents are engaging in what Acharya describes as a process whereby "local agents reconstruct foreign norms to ensure the norms fit with the agents' cognitive priors and identities."[20] Through increased interactions between member states in the AU, norms and principles of what is appropriate are becoming internalized in the institution. An adoption of the EU's unanimity requirement may therefore further deepen this process, creating a set of institutional norms and a collective worldview that can enhance future cooperation in foreign-policy making.

c. Power autonomy
Lastly, for a regional organization to be effective, it must be examined whether the organization can become a source of autonomous power, whereby the institution is autonomous from the member states that created the entity.[21] Once an organization is able to do so, they can "classify the world, creating categories of actors and action; they can fix meanings in the social world; and they can articulate and diffuse ideas, norms and principles around the globe."[22] In order to

achieve that goal, an organization must develop legitimacy and technocratic capabilities. It is then that the organization can become a significant player in world politics.

The EU has been able to achieve a level of power autonomy from its member states. For example, key individuals such as the High Representative, who is crucial in mediating discussion and fostering consensus, stand as personnel of the EU, rather than any one representative from a member state. Furthermore, the EU stands as a prestigious institution attracting high-skilled bureaucrats as employees.

In the AU, insufficient resources and commitment from its member states lessens its capability to develop autonomous power. The organization is underfunded, with the majority of contributions coming from non-AU partners abroad.[23] Moreover, there is a lack of an impartial individual, such as the High Representative of the EU, in the decision-making process. Creating AU-exclusive personnel with high power authority could enhance the capacity for the AU to develop power autonomy. In addition, the United Nations (UN) is given a substantive role in making a final decision over sanctioning an AU-led intervention, which may detract some independency from the AU in making decisions for Africa.

Conclusion
The paper has examined the EU and the AU to shed light on how a supranational institution can craft a coherent foreign policy. It has highlighted, firstly, the rationale for member states, in particular economic interest, preference for regional governance, and identity of member states; and secondly, the characteristics of the institutions itself, namely membership, decision-making process and socialization, and the degree of power autonomy. Through this comparison, it is found that the AU has an advantage in its strong African identity and in the membership structure of its PSC. Nonetheless, four lessons for the AU can be drawn.

To begin with, the strong economic power of the EU, through tremendous efforts in deepening integration between its members, has built up its capacity to stand as a significant player in the international arena. This foundation has served as the base on which the EU can utilize different tools at its disposal to develop a foreign policy. For the AU, the goal toward strengthening economic integration in Africa is essential before it can develop a robust foreign policy.

Secondly, as African states strengthen their governance, heads of states may be more comfortable in devolving some aspects of sovereignty to a supranational organization. While this is not a necessary condition, it will certainly increase the overall likelihood of support for the development of one unified African foreign policy.

Thirdly, the AU could benefit from adopting the EU's unanimity requirement in its decision-making process. This would allow for increased socialization between its member states, developing a common AU approach, norm and principles that are shared and internalized in the institution. With the development of an institutional norm, the likelihood of the formation of a coherent foreign policy is also increased.

Lastly, with increased investment and commitment of member states into the institution to create a cadre of AU technocrats, the capacity to shape the AU into a source of power autonomy is enhanced. The AU can become an organization independent from the UN with the ability to advance its own foreign policy to meet the objectives and interests of its member states.

All in all, the AU is on the path towards developing the capability to articulate a range of foreign policy for its member states. Although it will not be without its share of challenges, as the EU too faces hurdles in achieving consensus, the establishment of one unified African foreign policy will lend the continent a strengthened and assertive voice on the global platform. When that can be achieved, Africa will become a political and economic powerhouse in the international arena.

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