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The undoing of a unique relationship?

Peace and security in the EU-South Africa Strategic Partnership

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Abstract

When the EU and South Africa acceded to a strategic partnership, they expanded into new areas of partnership. One of these areas was peace and security, which is the focus of this article. The article argues that although there appears to be a shared understanding of what security means, the strategic partnership has not been utilised significantly to further this understanding in practice. This is largely due to the EU's preferences for a continental, multilateral approach over the bilateralism of a strategic partnership. At the same time, South Africa sees its strategic partnership with the EU as being outside of its broader commitment to regional security. As a result the peace and security element of the strategic partnership has not been leveraged effectively despite several entry points for action. The article thus concludes that both the EU and South Africa need to re-think the current arrangement.

Introduction

This article examines how notions of security in the European Security Strategy (ESS) and now the Global Security Strategy have interacted with the development of 'peace and security' in the context of EU-South Africa relations in the past decade of the EU-South Africa Strategic Partnership. To do this, the article addresses first the

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development of the EU's relationship with South Africa. It then demonstrates how the construction of South Africa, in particular its post 1994 identity, is externalised and situated vis-à-vis the rest of Africa.¹ This post 1994 identity has played a role in what the article argues is the discursive exclusion of peace and security in the strategic partnership with the EU. This exclusion within the partnership is however not a complete exclusion of peace and security within the broader remit of EU-South Africa (EU-SA) relations. Rather, in order to 'see' peace and security where the EU and South Africa are concerned, the argument is that it is necessary to look to the practice of security by the EU at the regional/continental level.

This preference for regional/continental security cooperation and practice can be explained by how the EU sees itself and the way it has constructed security as part of its international relations. This self-understanding informs the practice of security in the EU's engagement with South Africa and Africa more broadly on peace and security. Following an examination of how the EU enacts peace and security, the article highlights some potential areas of cooperation between the two strategic partners. In analysing whether, and the extent to which, the strategic partnership is used to enhance regional security, the article concludes with some reflections on what limited partnership in this area might mean for the future of the EU-South Africa Strategic Partnership on peace and security.

Before delving into the main analysis, it is worth considering the data collection and analysis methods used. The arguments made here and the analysis developed relies on a qualitative approach to research that includes process tracing and broad discourse analysis as methods. Process tracing is applied to official documents, press releases,

academic literature and third party reports. These sources create causal chains that help to organise data systematically. This allows for ease in identifying nodal points, each one ‘a privileged sign around which the other signs are ordered’². Utilising discourse analysis, this article seeks to understand these nodal points better.

In other words, the analysis within this article identifies the ways in which the meaning of EU-SA relations are fixed as unique, and consequently what implications this has in relation to peace and security in the context of the last decade of the strategic partnership. By undertaking discourse analysis, this assessment gives equal worth to text and speech as research sources, while providing insights into specific practices in EU-SA relations since the establishment of their strategic partnership, as well as some unintended consequences within this unique context.

Peace and Security – a discursive exclusion

In 2007, the European Union (EU) and South Africa signed a strategic partnership. This has already been identified as significant, with the recurring refrain that this is the only strategic partnership the EU has with an African country. This accession to the level of strategic partnership appears a seemingly monumental shift in relations between the two polities. However, the terms of the partnership, as articulated in the formal agreement, emphasised that the partnership was predicated on prior relations in trade, development, and science and technology innovations.

Importantly, however, the partnership framework also laid the groundwork for expanding on additional areas of cooperation and engagement. Here, there are new

commitments to transnational social issues, including the environment and information and communications technology (ICT), and an enthusiasm for more joint foreign policy positions especially through multilateral practice in trade, international crime and regional integration. At the time that the EU and South Africa signed the partnership, however, peace and security was deemed, along with other areas of cooperation, to be aspirational, contrary to the EU's broader engagement in the rest of Africa.

South Africa, like the North African countries,³ was often seen as outside the core focus of Africa-EU relations during the Cold War. South Africa was typically excluded from Africa-EU relations owing to its apartheid system of governance, normatively and ethically rejected by an ostensibly post-colonial European Community. This has meant that unlike its engagement with the African countries in the context of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) trans-regional bloc, historically EU-South Africa relations were positioned as unique.

This material and discursive construction of a South Africa unique in Africa and in international relations is reproduced by South African elites, accepted by the EU and made visible in the official agreements. In short, the way that South Africa narrates itself in terms of its material capabilities and various policy discourses suggests a country that is set apart from the rest in the African context and, consequently, in its foreign policies. When the Trade, Development and Cooperation Agreement (TDCA) was first established between the EU and South Africa, the sharp separation of South Africa from the rest of the Africa-EU context further crystallised the notion that South Africa was different. South Africa, just a few years officially out of apartheid, chose

not to negotiate development cooperation, political dialogue or trade through the typical Africa-EU framework of ACP agreements.

This was a deliberate strategy; after all, South Africa actually acceded to the Georgetown Agreement between the ACP countries in 1997. And although it did not fully come into force until 2004, the TDCA was signed in 1999, two years after Pretoria began its official membership in the ACP-EU relations. Yet, an official statement about membership in the ACP declares that '[South Africa] is not a party to the trade chapters of the Cotonou Agreement because South Africa already had an agreement with the EU'.⁴ Thus, while South Africa sees the ACP as a forum to negotiate with other developing countries, it was not the vehicle of choice for Pretoria's engagement with the EU. The subsequent negotiation and accession to the EU-South Africa Strategic Partnership, the only such bi-lateral relationship the EU has with a single country in Africa, further underscores the narrative of South Africa as different, distinct or unique.

This separation from the rest of the continent has had concrete implications, one of which is the exclusion of a tangible joint peace and security agenda in the context of the EU-South Africa Strategic Partnership. The longevity of the relationship between the EU and South Africa means that South Africa is also witness to, and catalyst for the broader evolution of Africa-EU relations, and importantly the development of the EU's capabilities as a global actor⁵. Moreover, the inclusion of peace and security as an area of cooperation with Africa constitutes an extension of the post 1994 relationship between the EU and South Africa. It is thus not surprising that the EU has

had a preference for engaging in security with specific states or at the regional-continental level.

The argument here is that because of the evolution of the relationship between the EU and South Africa, peace and security cooperation is substantively excluded from the EU-South Africa Strategic Partnership. Its mention within the documentation of the strategic partnership suggests a tendency towards the inter-textuality⁶ on peace and security found in the numerous texts that account for the EU's external relations, especially towards Africa. The first and most prominent of these is the European Security Strategy of 2003. In consideration of the ESS, it is argued that the unique history of EU-South Africa relations bears responsibility for the lack of development of the peace and security area of cooperation within the strategic partnership. Although a new space had been created for more than just trade and aid, including increased political dialogue, the discursive absence of peace and security beyond mention as a substantive area of cooperation has been notable in the first decade of the partnership. This absence has not been an exercise in deception. Rather, it is the direct consequence of a relationship that builds on a specific history of interactions, on the EU's broader approach to Africa, and on South Africa's self-perception as a security actor.⁷

The discursive exclusion of peace and security from the strategic partnership however, does not translate into its exclusion in EU-South Africa relations. Rather, South Africa, like the other strategic partners, plays a role in shaping the EU's perceptions of what constitutes insecurity and the global challenge this presents. However, due to its own internal dynamics and the evolution of its relationship with

the rest of the African continent, the EU situates the importance of South Africa as relevant within a complex regional security landscape that requires multilateral responses.

If one accepts this understanding of EU-SA relations (and within those relations, the strategic partnership), and of Africa-EU relations, then a more nuanced understanding of the position of peace and security begins to emerge. To gain a full understanding it is most fruitful to look outside of the strategic partnership, turning to practices at the regional/continental level. In doing so, it is then possible to identify the evolution of the EU's construction of security as part of its regional identity, and its preference for particular priorities in security practice by drawing on the experiential and normative dimensions of security.

Constructing the EU in Africa: An extra-regionalist case for human security

The starting point for the EU's engagement in Africa is the ESS. Through this framework, the EU articulates its normative responsibility to promote a world that enjoys peace and security. The EU's understanding of security is thus experiential. Therefore, 'peace and security' is conceptualised as not just a national good, as is typical of states in their practise of international relations, but a regional one.

Regional approaches to political practices are well grounded within the Areas Studies and International Relations literature. Regionalism refers to strategic coordination and cooperation within a given region.⁸ This does not exclude national preference or action. Rather, it reflects the institutionalisation of certain discursive and material

practices that allow us to speak of ‘the EU’ as a security actor on the one hand, but that also help us to understand the national policies of South Africa that make the African region a focus of its foreign policy identity.

International Relations theories offer competing explanations for why regional security cooperation happens. For neo-realists, the pressures of certain security ‘threats’ allow states to come together in response to the threat.⁹ In other words, security cooperation is based on the relative interests of the states and is only sustained as long as that interest remains. Some critical security theorists suggest other explanations through the Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT).¹⁰ RSCT was conceptualised by Barry Buzan and further developed with Ole Waever as part of the broad theorising of the Copenhagen School approach to security.¹¹ They argue that trends in international security practice are increasingly regionalised. This is due to both the nature of security threats, and the responses to these threats, which are constrained from travelling over long distances. While RSCT conclusions on the nature of insecurity are downright problematic, especially with respect to its portrayal of the subaltern, RSCT represents some theoretical and empirical justifications for notions of security as regional.

It makes sense, then, that the EU’s understanding of security is informed by its self-identity as a regional entity. This is especially based on the perception that a regional approach has guaranteed security for Europe and thus, this is a perspective that the EU seeks to export.¹² In other words, it aims to conduct its foreign security relations at the regional level. This is the practice that has been observed in EU engagements on security in Africa. The result is that even in its bilateral relationships in Africa,

including its strategic partnership with South Africa,, peace and security cooperation is conducted within this lens. Its explicit function is to enhance the regional dimensions of security.

Overall, this vision appears consistent with South Africa's own foreign policy rhetoric. While South Africa itself does not have a singular national security policy, across a variety of key documents such a framework begins to emerge.

In 1994, the White Paper on Intelligence, which sets the tone for South Africa's security vision stated:¹³

The intermingling and transnational character of modern-day security issues furthermore indicates that *solutions to the problems of insecurity are beyond the direct control of any single country*

In the 2011 White Paper on South Africa's Foreign Policy, the following is noted:¹⁴

Our struggle for a better life in South Africa is intertwined with our pursuit of a better Africa in a better world. Its destiny is inextricably linked to that of the Southern African region. Regional and continental integration is the foundation for Africa's socio-economic development and political unity, and essential for our own prosperity and security.

Moreover, its 2014 National Defence Review clearly articulates these responses as being regional. The document states:¹⁵

South African national security inextricably hinges on the stability, unity and prosperity of the Southern African region, and the African continent in general. Africa is at the centre of South African policy...

The 2003 ESS, from the onset, sets Africa in the EUs sights for 'doing' security. Following a description of the crippling power vacuum experienced in many countries of the world, and the impact of AIDs on different societies, the ESS states specifically that,¹⁶

Sub-Saharan Africa is poorer now than it was 10 years ago. In many cases, economic failure is linked to political problems and violent conflict.

Security is a precondition of development.

Here, the EU sets the tone for how it understands responses to insecurity as a link between traditionally divergent areas. What is further striking is that whereas five distinct threats were identified, only one of them is positioned as being linked or triggering the others. This is regional conflict. The ESS states:¹⁷

Conflict can lead to extremism, terrorism and state failure; it provides opportunities for organised crime. Regional insecurity can fuel the demand for [weapons of mass destruction]. The most practical way to tackle the often-elusive new threats will sometimes be to deal with the older problems of regional conflict.

In taking a regional approach to security, states create an opening for the combining of traditional security and economic issues, given the politics of regionalisation itself. Specifically, the idea that conflict has destructive implications for development is not surprising, and indeed a statement of fact.¹⁸ The so-called security-development nexus is now well recognised in global policymaking discourses.¹⁹

In South Africa's 2014 National Defence Review, which further reinforces the ESS approach, we find the following statement:²⁰

[...] security and development go hand in hand; the two are inter-linked and intertwined; and both are the continent's biggest challenges. South Africa, in partnership with likeminded African states, has a vested interest in contributing to the rooting of democracy, the promotion of economic advancement and the pursuit of peace, stability and development on the African continent.

The 1994 White Paper on Intelligence similarly notes:²¹

[Insecurity] cannot be rectified by purely military means. The international security agenda is shifting to the full range of political, economic, military, social, religious, technological, ethnic and ethical factors that shape security issues around the world. The main threat to the wellbeing of individuals and the interests of nations across the world does not primarily come from a neighbouring army, but from other internal and external challenges such as

economic collapse, overpopulation, mass-migration, ethnic rivalry, political oppression, terrorism, crime and disease, to mention but a few.

Discursively then, there is a common vision of the components of peace and security between the EU and South Africa. At the very least this justifies the ‘mention’ of peace and security in the strategic partnership. In other words, this is the spirit in which ‘peace and security’ appears within the strategic partnership. Of course, this is not to suggest that this linkage between security and development itself is uncontested or that it is executed to the best ethical standards and benefits of those deemed insecure. As Stern and Öjendal have identified, those who adopt the security-development nexus frame have not adequately captured the imbued meaning and use of this widely accepted concept.²²

In identifying security as a precondition for development, EU policy, as articulated by the ESS, is further explicit about its prioritisation of regional responses to insecurity. The ESS for example states that regional organisations like the AU are important for ‘a more orderly world’.²³ This further underscores the EU’s normative approach to tackling insecurity through regional approaches. This of course means that meaningful engagement in the area of peace and security must in part appear to accept this normative frame. Indeed, following the 13th Ministerial Dialogue between the EU and South Africa (2016), the official record of the meeting – a joint press release – addresses peace and security only within the context of regional cooperation. Specifically, item 9 titled Regional Cooperation states: ‘South Africa and the European Union agreed to continue co-operation on peace and security in the continent’.²⁴

This is important because, while the strategic partnership does not elaborate significantly on peace and security, it allows the space for dialogue while emphasising its continental/regional relevance rather than a national one. The press release continues:²⁵

South Africa welcomed the European Union's significant political and financial support to the African Peace and Security Architecture as a means to deliver African solutions to African problems.

The promotion of peace and security, as an explicit area of cooperation at the continental/regional level, dates back to the early 2000s. The EU's own engagement in areas of traditional security actually dates back to 2003 through the EU's military mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Operation ARTEMIS. This early period also coincided with the transition of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) to the African Union (AU). At this time, AU leaders also asked the EU to finance the African Peace Facility funding mechanism for the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA).²⁶ In 2007, peace and security became an explicit area of cooperation and perhaps the most important element of Africa-EU relations, through the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES). Through the JAES the EU's security engagement on the continent was reinforced as a regional concern; the involvement of the EU as the 'extra-regional' actor makes security truly inter-regional,²⁷ challenging the RSCT logic to an extent. Importantly however, the AU (whose member states include South Africa) becomes the key interlocutor for the EU's peace and security aspirations in Africa.

Security in this frame then has a specific meaning. Security, understood within this motivation to ‘do something’ that effectively ensures the realisation of security and development, is worthy of some reflection. Having shown that regions matter in understanding security dynamics, and that commitments to ensuring security and development positively reinforce each other, what exactly is security?

What security means in the context of what some refer to as the ‘security-development nexus’ does not exist outside of the meanings attached to the term by practice. Stern and Ojendal effectively map several narratives.²⁸ In reviewing the ESS (2003), its review (2008), and the recent Global Security Strategy (2016), it is fair to argue that the EU conceives of security through a human security lens. The decision to ascribe human security to the EU comes from the Barcelona Report²⁹ of the Human Security Study Group,³⁰ created by the former EU High Representative Javier Solana. In the report, its authors propose that the EU adopt human security as a strategic doctrine of the EU. This recommendation invoked the commitment of the ESS. It focuses on the implications of EU security practice in instances of humanitarian emergencies and political violence. In addition to emphasising the primacy of human rights in security practice, the Barcelona Report also recommended that the EU’s approach be regionally focused, with emphasis on multilateralism and partnership with ‘locals’.³¹

In a follow up report that presented a path towards implementation of the doctrine, the study group argued that:³²

Human Security has the potential to operate as a dynamic organising frame, which could give new direction and coherence to European efforts to address the challenges set out in the European Security Strategy.

Moreover human security is invoked as morally right. It is further defined to mean ³³

[...]individual freedom from basic insecurities. [These include] genocide, wide-spread [sic] or systematic torture, inhuman and degrading treatment, disappearances, slavery, and crimes against humanity and grave violations of the laws of war...

This definition is similar to definitions used in the African regional context. For example, the African Non-Aggression and Common Defence Pact defends an African vision embedded in a notion of human security, defined as: ³⁴

.the security of the individual in terms of satisfaction of his/her basic needs. It also includes the creation of social, economic, political, environmental and cultural conditions necessary for the survival and dignity of the individual, the protection of and respect for human rights, good governance and the guarantee for each individual of opportunities and choices for his/her full development.

The 2011 White Paper on South Africa's Foreign Policy also notes that: ³⁵

national security would [...] depend on the centrality of human security as a universal goal, based on the principle of Batho Pele (putting people first).

Moreover, South African scholars Cheryl Hendricks³⁶ and Jakkie Cilliers³⁷ have argued convincingly that, with reference to South Africa specifically, human security is the frame for security that takes the region as the site of its foreign security policies. It is worth noting that while there is no consensus among scholars on the definition of human security,³⁸ the narrative of security that includes different threats and referents beyond the state captures this approach. The EU approach further states that ‘massive violations of the right to food, health and housing may also be considered in this category, although their legal status is less elevated’, and like the African one, ‘offers a language for addressing different experiences of (in)security’.³⁹ In addition to the links made between traditional security concerns and areas usually framed as development, the EU’s take on human security reflects its regional (and extra-regional) aspirations. The Madrid Report justifies the EU’s normative security aspirations in this way:⁴⁰

A human security approach for the European Union means that it should contribute to the protection of every individual human being and not focus only on the defence of the Union’s borders, as was the security approach of nation-states.

We thus see how human security can be used as a framework for regional security practice within the security-development nexus. The security-development nexus that draws on human security is what Stern and Ojendal refer to as a ‘deepened, broadened and humanised’⁴¹ notion of security. It is an alternative narrative to state-based deterministic security, making it fitting for a range of regional insecurities. It is able to ‘attend to the localised experiences (fears, desires, needs etc.) of vulnerable

peoples'.⁴² At the regional and national levels in both the EU and South Africa, this is indeed the discursive aspiration for peace and security.

However, given the substantive exclusion of peace and security in the strategic partnership, it is worth questioning what a joint vision on peace and security means in practice. In particular, to what extent do these understandings of security inform the EU's practice of security in (South) Africa? What are the opportunities for collaboration and to what extent do they occur?

Thus, to answer the above questions, the subsequent section explores three areas of responses to insecurity in which the EU has demonstrated interest and practice, and attempts to 'find' South Africa within them. Specifically, these are areas that both the EU and South Africa have exhibited knowledge of, have articulated as important, and in which there is convergence. These areas include: capacity building, crisis management, and the promotion of gender equality as an intersecting security priority.

Capacity building through institution building

The support of the EU for capacity building initiatives in the African security context was first articulated in the first action plan of the JAES. In addition to supporting the establishment of a predictable funding source for peace support operations, the EU made a commitment to enhance dialogue on peace and security challenges and fully operationalise all aspects of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). In the years since the establishment of the JAES, the EU has remained a significant actor in developing the capabilities of the APSA.⁴³

This regional context is important because the EU has given no indication that peace and security within the EU-South Africa Strategic Partnership has deviated from this primary priority. This has seen the EU and its member states focused on being the largest financial contributors to the APSA. As noted above, the EU, through the African Peace Facility (APF), finances this AU organ. The majority of the funding that goes towards Africa's peace support operations in the last decade has come from this scheme.

Nevertheless, without South Africa (along with Egypt, Ethiopia, Libya and Nigeria), the APSA itself would not exist as an ambitious framework for tackling the regions many security challenges. For example, the research by van Nieuwkerk shows the former South African president, Thabo Mbeki, acted as an important norm entrepreneur among other members of the AU in lobbying for the creation of a strong architecture.⁴⁴ Rhetorically, South African foreign policy is premised on unconditional support for the APSA, and therefore the EU, in its support of the institution. This is further evident in the specific context of the strategic partnership where the development of the APSA was the subject of peace and security cooperation in the last EU-South Africa Strategic Partnership summit.⁴⁵

However, the substantive content of the promotion of a regional approach within the strategic partnership is perhaps most tangible in the creation of its dialogue facility. The area where the strategic partnership has been useful is in enhancing dialogue; as part of structures borne out of the EU-South Africa Strategic Partnership, the Dialogue Facility was established to 'raise awareness of the special relationship between the EU and SA'.⁴⁶ This special relationship is used to support 'dialogue and

cooperation in bilateral, regional, African and global matters between the Government of SA and the EU (and its Member States)'.⁴⁷

The Dialogue Facility has provided the support to negotiations that bring together formal representatives of governments in Africa, the EU and indeed civil society organisations. Most recently, this has been the space for bringing together different views on how to bring peace and justice to Burundi.⁴⁸ At a workshop hosted by the South African Liaison Office (SALO), under the auspices of the Dialogue Facility, a range of stakeholders including official representatives of the Burundian government, women's groups, civil society organisations and representatives of other international institutions shared their views about the crisis in Burundi.⁴⁹ In this example, the substantive impact of the Dialogue Facility, however, relied on the work of other actors outside of the EU-South Africa Strategic Partnership, given the regional dynamics of the Burundi conflict. Consequently, to enact this dimension of the strategic partnership itself, the region must remain a priority.

In the commitment to capacity building for peace and security in Africa, there are some areas of overlaps in EU and South Africa perspectives. Specifically it is in the area of dialogue that the strategic partnership has been utilised. Arguably, this is the case because it provides the space for dialogue and it is relatively benign compared to typical hard security areas. It is a forum through which the discourse of the security-development nexus and human security can be articulated. In this area, South Africa has the opportunity to shine without incurring negative feedback about its preferences for bilateralism. At the same time, the EU is able to use the strategic partnership as a part of its broader strategy for promoting regionalism in its external relations.

Whereas the creation of the Dialogue Facility can be measured as a positive outcome of the strategic partnership, its work as an instrument of peace and security on the continent is one of many.

Leveraging the strategic partnership in crisis management?

Unlike states or the United Nations (UN), the EU does not have autonomous military capabilities and many of its member states have a preference for keeping their assets under the auspices of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). Yet, the EU has been active in crisis management and especially in Africa through its Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), where it relies on the good will of 'locals'.

The CSDP is a key component of European peace and security architecture. In its external duties, the EU through the CSDP (and the European Security and Defence Policy before it) places emphasis on both military and civilian conflict prevention, crisis management and peacebuilding. The EU aims to use a range of tools to address incidents of insecurity within and beyond Europe. Since 2003, the EU has actively supported or participated in peace support missions ranging from military [intervention], support or assistance, rule of law, monitoring, border or police missions. The EU especially remains heavily invested in the DRC since its first military mission there in 2003, codenamed Operation ARTEMIS.⁵⁰

Operation ARTEMIS was deployed in the summer of 2003 as a humanitarian military mission to the Bunia area of the DRC. It was a direct response to the many years of political violence, and specifically to the escalated violence between militias in Bunia.

ARTEMIS was deployed as part of the international community's response to this crisis as an interim emergency multinational force (IEMF) instigated by France. It is in this mission that the potential advantages of an EU-South Africa strategic partnership on peace and security are first evident. South Africa was the only African country to contribute directly to an ESDP mission and one of only three non-EU states.⁵¹ Of course the 2003 operation predates the formal strategic partnership. Still, its spirit was very much present when Catherine Ashton, former EU high representative for foreign and security policy, supported by new powers in the Lisbon Treaty, began negotiating to formalise with 'third' countries including South Africa an agreement that would allow external participation in CSDP missions.⁵² South Africa and Morocco would have been the only African countries engaged in direct EU CSDP missions. Thus, what ARTEMIS did was create a context for a strategic partnership in traditional practices of peace and security between the EU and South Africa.

From the perspective of the EU, South Africa's long-standing role in peace support operations in Africa and as regional security actor is advantageous to its own aims of peace and security on the continent.⁵³ To use the strategic partnership as the basis for crisis management provides the opportunity to underscore that normative commitment of both actors to a specific understanding of security. Furthermore, it allows the EU to fulfil its commitments to promoting the local ownership of peace and security processes.

However, since ARTEMIS, and despite the development of the strategic partnership, there has not been a move to deepen EU-South Africa engagements on crisis

management. Indeed, when the EU thinks of a crisis management partner in Africa, the AU remains the preferred choice.⁵⁴ Thus, while South Africa's experience in regional and military crisis management is valued, presently, it is through the AU that the EU envisions its contributions.

From the above two examples, there are clear challenges inherent in channelling specific areas of security through the strategic partnership itself. But is this the same story when investigating new normative frameworks associated with the kind of security promulgated by the EU-South Africa Strategic Partnership? In answering this the following section examines the promotion of the Women Peace and Security Agenda by the EU and what it has meant in the context of the strategic partnership.

The Women, Peace and Security Agenda: An avenue for gender equality promotion?

Many scholars have identified that the EU views itself as a gender equal actor across all its policy domains.⁵⁵ While not always successful in adhering to practices that ensure equality, this narrative of the EU as a gender equal actor forms a fundamental core of its regional identity. Indeed, the EU has consistently endorsed the UN's gender equality framework on peace and security, the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda.

The WPS Agenda was established through an initial UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 in 2000. The subsequent 7 resolutions that make up the framework constitute 'an innovative tool-box to leverage more equitable peace'.⁵⁶ The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) defines WPS thus:⁵⁷

This Agenda has transformative potential - the potential to escape cycles of conflict, to create inclusive and more democratic peacemaking and to turn from gender inequality to gender justice. Women's agency, voice, and capacities are critical to local dialogues, better policies and more equitable peace deals.

In other words, the WPS aspires to a peaceful system that caters to all humans, values rights and demands justice.

In a 2016 speech to the UN Security Council, the EU's Special Adviser on Gender and the UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security Mara Marinaki highlighted four priorities of the EU in implementing the WPS Agenda. These were improving women's participation and leadership in peace missions; combatting sexual and gender based violence in conflict; integrating gender perspectives into the work against terrorism and violent extremism; and finally strengthening cooperative frameworks.⁵⁸ This last priority is especially pertinent to understanding the opportunities inherent in promoting the WPS Agenda within the EU-South Africa Strategic Partnership.

The desire to ensure a multilateral approach to implementing the WPS Agenda should make the EU-South Africa Strategic Partnership a good fit for implementing the framework. The EU views third parties as essential to its own role in promoting (and implementing) the WPS Agenda. In a 2014 report of the Council of the European

Union, endorsed by the member states through the political and security committee, the EU's position was made clear:⁵⁹

Keeping the issue of women, peace and security high on the international agenda is an important role of the EU. Tangible results can only be achieved through co-operation among international and regional organisations (particularly the United Nations, NATO, African Union, OSCE, etc.) and other actors. The EU encourages operational co-operation and strategic partnerships, as well as information sharing, training and co-operation on the ground. This collaboration between third countries, Member States, and other international organisations is vital to progress on the matter of women, peace and security.

In the foregoing, however, it is important to pay extra attention to the utility of language and its inadvertent narrative. The EU makes allowance for instituting strategic partnerships for the specific purpose of implementing the WPS Agenda; but it only names other regional and international organisations as partners. Third countries feature as generic. WPS here is thus not prioritised as a space for engagement within existing strategic partnerships but rather a site for forging new and specific strategic partnerships.

Moreover, while both the EU and South Africa subscribe to this normative framework, gender concerns have not featured as an integral part of public utterances on peace and security cooperation within the strategic partnership. For example, although the strategic partnership was signed seven years after UNSCR 1325 was

enacted, the only reference to gender (mainstreaming), the first action plan, is in the areas of employment and youth and social work. On the one hand this might reflect a superficial commitment to the WPS agenda on the part of both partners. On the other, as scholars of EU foreign policy have argued,⁶⁰ this is simply another indication of the EU's lacklustre record on implementing the WPS Agenda. It is perhaps unsurprising then that in the strategic partnership this is hardly mentioned. Yet, what is interesting is that the WPS Agenda features very prominently in the context of the work the EU does at the continental level. Indeed, the JAES features the implementation of the agenda as a priority goal of peace and security cooperation⁶¹.

By examining three different areas where the EU has had the opportunity to leverage its strategic partnership with South Africa and fulfil its own regional security imperative this article presents a comprehensive view of EU peace and security capabilities. Yet, the dominant narrative that emerges from this analysis is that this unique relationship is rarely used coherently. The EU continues to have a preference for channelling its regional security partnership in Africa primarily through other partners like the Africa Union, despite the opportunities available. The extent, then, to which a strategic partnership on peace on security actually exists is questionable. Moreover, the current state of affairs potentially creates some gaps in the EU's ability to be a successful security actor in Africa.

Conclusion: Exploring the Unintended Consequences

In today's rapidly evolving security landscape, people, states, regions and indeed the global order is confronted with a host of challenges. In Africa, conflict is a main challenge to peace and prosperity, while everyday insecurities like gender inequality

and poverty further entrench the constraints on security. In Europe, existing and potential conflicts in the EU's eastern neighbourhood, the self-inflicted 'migration crisis', terrorist attacks, and domestically, the rise of right wing populism, among other dynamics, pose significant challenges for the role of the EU as an international security actor. Yet there is clear acknowledgement and evidence that many of these challenges are sources of concerns for both South Africa and the EU. They are thus opportunities for cooperation.

In this context, it is unsurprising that the EU remains the premier extra-regional actor on the African continent. To do this it relies on many entities, especially in its goals to combine security and development and ultimately effect human security regionally. Given the strategic partnership with South Africa, one would expect the EU to leverage the relationship to meet its goals. However, its choice to not use an existing strategic partnership, strategically, is puzzling.

As the second section of this article shows, security cooperation is viewed as an extension of previous Africa-EU relations in the context of ACP-EU relations. For most of its history however, South Africa was mostly absent from that particular configuration. This has created a tension between the bilateralism of the EU-South Africa Strategic Partnership and the multilateralism of the EU's regional approach to security. Moreover, the EU's own investment in the development of a continent-wide security architecture has meant that pragmatically, developing peace and security as an exclusive area of bilateralism has not been a priority despite potential entry points, as shown by the examples above. Rather, where the EU sees its leverage with South Africa is in its roles as a regional rather than bilateral partner.

Yet, although South Africa itself prioritises the region, when it comes to its relationship with the EU it still seeks to maintain that unique standing which is represented by bilateralism in a lot of policy areas. This seeming schism between the perceptions of the two actors, however, extends beyond the nature of their bilateral relations. With the EU using its regional approach to engage with other countries amenable to the regional approach but lacking the partnership it shares with South Africa, this might create tensions between South Africa and other Africa countries, and indeed, the AU itself.

Thus one major unintended consequence of pursuing peace and security within the strategic partnership context is its potential to fragment security cooperation. This is assuming that the peace and security element of the strategic partnership grows beyond its current dormant state. But perhaps more telling is that due to the lacklustre actions undertaken under the auspices of the strategic partnership, if Pretoria insists on its bilateral nature, South Africa may be side-lined in favour of more amenable African partners on peace and security on the continent.

South Africa has been an effective partner on dialogue and this is evidenced by the creation of the Dialogue Facility. But if both partners do not agree to a shared understanding of a regional, multilateral approach to security, this may very well be the extent of peace and security cooperation within the strategic partnership. While South Africa's reach does extend beyond Africa, in the context of how the EU views its role, it may well be constrained to being a regional actor.

This article argues that despite a shared normative framework on security, the strategic partnership between the EU and South Africa excludes for the most part the areas of peace and security. This is due to the EU's preference for engaging on issues of peace and security as a regional good. Although South Africa is one of the core countries shaping the continental security agenda, this leverage is actually constrained by the specific context of the ten-year-old strategic partnership.

For a truly strategic partnership on peace and security to thrive, South Africa should consider that in this area of policy, multilateralism through collaboration with African partners is paradoxically the best way to preserve the bilateral nature of the strategic partnership. It is through this that a meaningful relationship beyond trade and aid can be forged. Countries like Nigeria and Algeria, even without formal strategic partnerships, are already considered to be integral to many of the peace and security efforts on the continent. At the same time, the EU must put in the work of convincing South Africa of this way forward; otherwise, it could lose an important partner for security in Africa. While the 2016 EU-South Africa Summit already points towards this, practices of both partners between 2017 and 2027 will determine the extent to which this is tolerable to South Africa given its current privileged partnership.

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¹ Chris Landsberg has referred to this as South Africa's Africa First Agenda; see Landsberg, C 'South Africa's "African Agenda": Challenges of Policy and Implementation' Prepared for the Presidency Fifteen Year Review Project, n.d. Available at:

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/d-za/dv/3_african_agenda/3_african_agenda.pdf [accessed 16 May 2017]

² Jørgensen, MW and Phillips, LJ (2002). *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method* London: Sage Publications, p.26

³ These include Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia

⁴ Embassy of the Republic of South Africa, 'ACP Section' accessed 21 July 2016,

<<http://www.southafrica.be/acp/>>

⁵ Whitman, R and Haastrup, T (2013) 'Locating the EU's strategic behavior in Sub-Saharan Africa: an emerging strategic culture?' in Maurizio Carbone ed. *The European Union: Incoherent Policies, Asymmetrical Partnership, Declining Relevance?* Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp. 57-76

⁶ By intertextuality, I refer to the practice of how one text influences another by shaping the meaning of a particular idea, or concept of practice. In this case, it is the idea that the EU has aspirations to be a global security actor and thus includes a desire to cooperate on peace and security in the majority of all its external relations by recalling its various instruments either verbatim or in context.

⁷ Republic of South Africa (Department of International Relations and Cooperation), *Building a Better World: The Diplomacy of Ubuntu – White Paper on South Africa's Foreign Policy*, 2011 Available at: http://www.gov.za/sites/www.gov.za/files/foreignpolicy_0.pdf [accessed 18 May 2017]

⁸ Fawcett, L, 'Exploring Regional Domains: A Comparative History of Regionalism', *International Affairs*, 80: 3, 2004, p. 433

⁹ See for example Mearsheimer, JJ 'Structural Realism' in Tim Dunne, Milja Kurki, and Steve Smith, eds., *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity*, 3rd Edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013, pp. 77-93

¹⁰ Buzan, B and Wæver, O. *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*, 2003 Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

¹¹ Buzan, B, Wæver, O and de Wilde, J. *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*. 1998, Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner

¹² Manners, I, 'Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?'

¹³ Emphasis added. Republic of South Africa, *White Paper on Intelligence*, 1994, pp.6-7 [accessed 17 August 2016]

¹⁴ Republic of South Africa (Department of International Relations and Cooperation), *Building a Better World: The Diplomacy of Ubuntu – White Paper on South Africa's Foreign Policy*, 2011 Available at: http://www.gov.za/sites/www.gov.za/files/foreignpolicy_0.pdf p.20 [accessed 18 May 2017]

¹⁵ Republic of South Africa, *South African Defence Review*, 2014 Available at: http://www.gov.za/sites/www.gov.za/files/defencereview_2014_intro.pdf [accessed 8 November 2016]

¹⁶ Council of the European Union, *European Security Strategy* Brussels: European Union, 2003, p. 6.

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ This is certainly the perspective of former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan cited in United Nations, *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility*, Report of the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change. New York: United Nations, 2004; A similar perspective is articulated in

¹⁹ Stern, M and Öjendal, J, 'Mapping the Security-Development Nexus: Conflict, Complexity, Cacophony, Convergence?' *Security Dialogue*, 41: 1, 2010, pp. 5-30

²⁰ Republic of South Africa, *South African Defence Review*, 2014 Available at: http://www.gov.za/sites/www.gov.za/files/defencereview_2014_intro.pdf [accessed 8 November 2016]

²¹ Republic of South Africa, *White Paper on Intelligence*, 1994, pp.6-7 [accessed 17 August 2016]

²² Stern, M and Öjendal, J, 'Mapping the Security-Development Nexus: Conflict, Complexity, Cacophony, Convergence?' *Security Dialogue*, 41: 1, 2010, pp. 5-30

²³ European Union Council, *Security Strategy*, Brussels: European Union, 2003.

²⁴ South Africa Department of International Relations and Cooperation' Joint Press Release: 13th South Africa – European Union Ministerial Political Dialogue (MPD) Meeting held on 26 February 2016, in Pretoria, South Africa' SA-EU Strategic Partnership. Available at: www.dfa.gov.za/docs/2016/eu0229.htm [accessed 2 August 2016]

²⁵ Ibid

²⁶ Stern, M and Öjendal, J, 'Mapping the Security-Development Nexus: Conflict, Complexity, Cacophony, Convergence?' *Security Dialogue*, 41: 1, 2010, pp. 5-30

²⁷ See Haastrup, T. *Charting Transformation through Security: Contemporary EU-Africa Relations*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013 for an account of the development of interregional security cooperation.

²⁸ Stern, M and Öjendal, J, 'Mapping the Security-Development Nexus: Conflict, Complexity, Cacophony, Convergence?' *Security Dialogue*, 41: 1, 2010, pp. 5-30

²⁹ *A Human Security Doctrine for Europe: the Barcelona Report of the Study Group on Europe's Security Capabilities* was produced by a group of experts led by LSE professor Mary Kaldor, 2003. It is available here:

<http://www.lse.ac.uk/internationalDevelopment/research/CSHS/humanSecurity/barcelonaReport.pdf>

³⁰ Hereafter referred to as Study Group

³¹ Fukuda-Parr, S and Messineo, C 'Human Security: A critical review of the literature' *CRPD Working Paper* No. 11, January 2012, Leuven: KU Leuven Available at:

<https://soc.kuleuven.be/web/files/12/80/wp11.pdf>

³² *A European Way of Security The Madrid Report of the Human Security Study Group comprising a Proposal and Background Report* was produced by a group of experts led by LSE professor Mary Kaldor, 2007. It is available here: [http://www.world-](http://www.world-governance.org/IMG/pdf_0078_A_European_Way_of_Security.pdf)

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³³ *A Human Security Doctrine for Europe: the Barcelona Report of the Study Group on Europe's Security Capabilities* was produced by a group of experts led by London School of Economics (LSE) professor Mary Kaldor, 2003. It is available here:

<http://www.lse.ac.uk/internationalDevelopment/research/CSHS/humanSecurity/barcelonaReport.pdf>

³⁴ African Union, *African Union Non-Aggression and Common Defence Pact*. Addis Ababa: African Union, 2005. Available at:

http://www.au.int/en/sites/default/files/treaties/7788-file-african_union_non_aggression_and_common_defence_pact.pdf [accessed 18 August, 2016]

³⁵ Republic of South Africa (Department of International Relations and Cooperation), *Building a Better World: The Diplomacy of Ubuntu – White Paper on South Africa's Foreign Policy*, 2011 Available at:

http://www.gov.za/sites/www.gov.za/files/foreignpolicy_0.pdf p.4 [accessed 18 May 2017]

³⁶ Hendricks, C, 'South Africa's Approach to Conflict Management in Burundi and the DRC: Promoting Human Security?' *Strategic Review for Southern Africa*, 37: 1, pp. 9-30

³⁷ Cilliers, J, *Human Security in Africa: A conceptual framework for review*, 2004, African Human Security Initiative. Available at: <https://www.issafrica.org/uploads/AHSIMONO1.PDF> [accessed 17 August 2016]

³⁸ A September 2004 special section of the journal *Security Dialogue* perfectly captures the divergent and ambivalent perspectives of scholars concerning human security as a security paradigm.

³⁹ Stern, M and Öjendal, J, 'Mapping the Security-Development Nexus: Conflict, Complexity, Cacophony, Convergence?' *Security Dialogue*, 41: 1, 2010, p.15

⁴⁰ *A European Way of Security: The Madrid Report of the Human Security Study Group comprising a Proposal and Background Report* was produced by a group of experts led by LSE professor Mary Kaldor, 2007. It is available here: http://www.world-governance.org/IMG/pdf_0078_A_European_Way_of_Security.pdf

⁴¹ Stern, M and Öjendal, J, 'Mapping the Security-Development Nexus: Conflict, Complexity, Cacophony, Convergence?' *Security Dialogue*, 41: 1, 2010, p. 18

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Africa-EU 'Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES)', 2007, Available at: http://www.africa-eu-partnership.org/sites/default/files/documents/eas2007_joint_strategy_en.pdf [accessed 18 August 2016]

⁴⁴ Van Nieuwkerk, A. 'South Africa and the African Peace and Security Architecture' *Norwegian Peacebuilding Resources Centre Report*, Oslo: NOREF, March, 2014. Available at: http://noref.no/var/ezflow_site/storage/original/application/8e49f907f05d51bc0a848dcf3745a11c.pdf [accessed 8 November 2016]

⁴⁵ Ibid

⁴⁶ SA-EU Strategic Partnership: The Dialogue Facility 'About Us'. Available at: <http://www.dialoguefacility.org/about.html> [accessed 18 August 2016]

⁴⁷ Ibid

⁴⁸ South African Liaison Office, Dialogue on Burundi, 28 July 2016, Pretoria. Available at: <http://www.salo.org.za/dialogue-on-burundi-thursday-28-july-2016-pretoria/> [accessed 9 November 2016]

⁴⁹ Ibid

⁵⁰ http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/csdp/missions-and-operations/artemis-drc/index_en.htm

⁵¹ Tardy, T, CSDP: Getting Third States on Board, Brief Issue, Paris: European Union Institute for Security Studies, 2014, Available at:

http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/Brief_6_CSDP_and_third_states.pdf [accessed 9 November 2016]

⁵² Ibid

⁵³ Zandee, D, Hoebeke, H, Merket, H and Meijnders, M. *The EU as a Security Actor in Africa: In-depth study Clingendael Monitor 2016*. The Hague: Clingendael, Netherlands Institute of International Relations, 2015. Available: http://www.clingendael.nl/sites/default/files/clingendael_monitor2016-the_EU_as_a_security_actor_in_africa-eng_0.pdf [Accessed 28 October 2016]

⁵⁴ In the majority of the concept notes that describe current EU missions in Africa carried out under the auspices of the CSDP, the EU always makes reference to the Joint Africa EU Strategy; its Peace and Security aims; and the role of the AU as its primary interlocutor. On its official website, the AU along with NATO, the UN, and ASEAN are named as essential peace and security partners as part of the multilateralisation of peace and security the EU pursues. Available at:

https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/common-security-and-defence-policy-csdp/5392/csdp-structure-instruments-and-agencies_en (accessed 28 October 2016)

⁵⁵ MacRae, H. 'The EU as a gender equal polity: myths and realities', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 48: 1, 2010, pp. 155–74.; Guerrina, R. and Wright, K.A.M 'Gendering normative power Europe: lessons of the Women, Peace and Security agenda'. *International Affairs*, 92: 2, 2016, pp. 293–312.

⁵⁶ Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. Why Women Peace and Security? - Solutions: Innovative WPS agenda, 2016. Available at: <http://www.peacewomen.org/why-WPS/solutions> (accessed 30 October 2016)

⁵⁷ Ibid

⁵⁸ EU Delegation to the United Nations. *EU Statement – United Nations Security Council: Resolution 1325 Women, Peace and Security*, 25 October 2016, Available: <http://eu-un.europa.eu/eu-statement-united-nations-security-council-resolution-1325-women-peace-security/>

⁵⁹ Emphasis added. Council of the European Union *Second Report on the EU-indicators for the Comprehensive Approach to the EU Implementation of the UN Security Resolutions 1325 & 1820 on Women Peace and Security* Brussels: Council of the European Union, 2014, Available at: <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-6219-2014-INIT/en/pdf> (accessed 29 October 2016)

⁶⁰ Guerrina, R. and Wright, K.A.M 'Gendering normative power Europe: lessons of the Women, Peace and Security agenda'. *International Affairs*, 92: 2, 2016, pp. 293–312.

⁶¹ Section 21 of the JAES clearly references UNSCR 1325; subsequent references to the broader content of UNSCR 1325 appear in Sections 41; 55; 63 – which deals specifically with gender equality and reiterates the provisions of the WPS agenda around sexual and gender based violence; and finally in Section 70 with deals with EU-Africa cooperation on human trafficking especially of Women and Children. For more context see: Africa-EU 'Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES)', 2007, Available at: http://www.africa-eu-partnership.org/sites/default/files/documents/eas2007_joint_strategy_en.pdf [accessed 18 August 2016]