

POVERTY, INSECURITY, AND CLIMATE CHANGE STARE AT THE EU-AU RELATIONS

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The renewed relationship between the European Union (EU) and the African Union (AU) presents a platform for mutuality of benefits and responsibilities. Regional security is one area where both can learn based on recent and present experiences. The EU can learn from the AU from the post-Arab Spring arms proliferation, which led to internal conflicts, transborder crimes, and insurgency across Africa. The AU, on its part, can learn from the EU on civil governance, leadership, and transborder checks. The Regional Security Complex Theory aids our understanding of regional security. This paper examines some challenges confronting both regions and recommends panaceas of mutual benefits.

Keywords: African Union, climate change, European Union, fragility, poverty, security

Pobreza, insegurança e mudanças climáticas encaram as relações UE-UA

A relação renovada entre a União Europeia (UE) e a União Africana (UA) constitui uma plataforma para a mutualidade de benefícios e responsabilidades. A segurança regional é uma área em que ambas podem aprender com base em experiências recentes e atuais. A UE pode aprender com a UA através da proliferação de armas pós-Primavera Árabe, que levou a conflitos internos, crimes transfronteiriços e insurgências em África. A UA, por seu lado, pode aprender com a UE em matéria de governação civil, liderança e controlos transfronteiriços. A Teoria do Complexo de Segurança Regional ajuda à nossa compreensão da segurança regional. Este artigo examina alguns desafios que enfrentam ambas as regiões e recomenda panaceias de benefícios mútuos.

Palavras-chave: União Africana, mudanças climáticas, União Europeia, fragilidade, pobreza, segurança

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Security is a cardinal purpose and function of government. Securitisation has often been and still is a crucial state plan and a principle related to state-state and state-non-state relations knitted into the fabrics of practices, policies and politics of the state from ancient times. Although its definition could be vague, especially when its referent is not definitive (Manunta, 1999), security includes striving for freedom from threats (Buzan, 1991). Security is a state or condition, a process or practice and a target or an endpoint of protection. As a state or condition, it could be objective or subjective. The objective is that it is the temporal absence of a known threat. That is the assumed condition of total security, achieved by deactivating known threats and activating protection. It includes preventive measures and avoiding contact with dangers (Zedner, 2003). The recurrence of “threat” in these definitions indicates that it is sacrosanct to security.

In the subjective sense, security connotes feeling safe, the availability of adequate protection or the temporal perception of the absence of threats often instigated by reference to insecurity (Zedner, 2003) – the connection to insecurity points to a subjective meaning of security. During the Cold War, most security studies focused on the military (Baldwin, 1997). After the Cold War, understanding security more encompassed the subjective meaning. The September 11 terrorist attack has further broadened the concept to contain the unique idea of security. Therefore, threats and insecurity are cardinal in understanding security and achieving it. This shows that events shape the understanding of concepts. Contemporarily, security includes objective and subjective feelings and meanings as Baldwin (1997, p. 13) defines security as “a low probability of damage to acquired values”. Security today means more than the safety or protection of lives and property. It refers to the protection from scarcity or risk of not having something like food security, which refers to the reality of having sufficient food without the threat of hunger or malnutrition. Material security, in the same way, refers to the availability of material resources without the threat of material scarcity. Financial security also refers to the constant availability of financial resources without its lack of poverty.

Changing climatic conditions have effects on security directly or indirectly. Climate change manifestations in the form of excessive droughts and inconsistent rainfalls have led to poor agricultural performance that has necessitated farmers’ movement into alternative economic activities – some of those who continue farming struggle to survive. Pasture-seeking pastoralists, known as herders, have continued to migrate to greener or wetter areas to get better pastures for their animals and sustain their livelihood. This migration has often been met with resistance from farmers protecting their farmlands, which animals often

destroy. Over the years, such clash has become widespread in many parts of Central and Western Africa, so herders have learnt to move in groups and coordinate themselves to attack resisting farming communities. The peaceful co-existence threatened by these clashes affects the security condition of the affected African countries and sub-regions, thereby making it a regional security threat (Baderinwa, 2019; Brottem, 2021; Maiangwa, 2017; Ogbonnaya, 2021). These and other factors increase fragility at the micro and macro levels of the states and societies in many parts of Africa.

Climate change and Africa's increasing insecurity

As a multidimensional global reality of this age, climate change impacts various layers and aspects of society, from remote rural communities to metropolitan cities. Climate change commonly manifests as weather extremes, especially prolonged droughts, fewer rains, and heavy torrents. These climate inconsistencies affect water and food security, and political crises and economic inequality spur migration (Nyiwul, 2023; Stoler et al., 2021). Climatic conditions which affect the economic conditions and livelihood of people equally influence their ability to sustain their existence in a specific location, hence the decision to migrate. There is no end to this now, as climate is expected to affect most parts of semi-arid and arid rangelands, comprising over 70% of Africa. It would affect millions of farmers, herders, farming, and pastoral communities (Ikhuoso et al., 2020).

African countries contribute the least to greenhouse gas emissions but suffer the most from its effects (Adegbeye et al., 2020). Due to the high vulnerability and poor exogenous shock management conditions of the people in the continent, especially in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), they suffer the consequences of the impact more. About 65% of the labour force in SSA depends on agriculture, which contributes 32% of the region's gross domestic product (GDP). Dependence on traditional rainfed agriculture practised in the region exposes the region to climate change impacts. Other factors include poor access to and low applications of chemical fertilizers, and low or non-technology in agriculture, which affects food production in the region (Mncube et al., 2023). These factors, among others, make the region food insecure amidst its growing population. Climate change will affect Africa's food security in these critical areas, availability, accessibility, utilisation and stability of supplies (Oyelami et al., 2023).

Although food insecurity is a global reality, as 26.4% of the global population in 2018 was food insecure (FAO et al., 2019). The figure is higher with the recent pandemic, supply chain crisis, Russia-Ukraine war, and the current post-2022

cost of living crisis. The rate is much higher in Africa, where over 50% of the population is either moderately or severely food insecure (Thome et al., 2019). East Africa has a more critical situation, with over 63%, which is 272 million of its population affected. Southern Africa is not left out as 54%, around 34 million of its food insecure population. In West Africa, 48% of the population, around 183 million, is food insecure, while in northern Africa, 30% of its population, around 70 million people, are food insecure (Gebre & Rahut, 2021). In East Africa, like in most other parts of the continent, climate change-propelled food insecurity has resulted in low agricultural productivity, the tragic loss of crops, livestock, water bodies, and biodiversity that has forced many to migrate due to the inability of their persistent agriculture to sustain them, the shocks in a milieu of little or no adaptation strategies and limited access to financial resources (Ackerl et al., 2023). This shows that most parts of Africa have a good population that does not have nutritious and sufficient food to live a healthy and productive life.

Water insecurity is another cardinal climate change impact and key migration spur. Due to droughts, floods, and climate inconsistencies, individuals, households, and communities have had to migrate for survival. Climate change-induced groundwater shortages have affected water availability for human, animal and biodiversity sustenance in many parts of Africa, especially in areas with water bodies where agriculture-dependent communities have had to migrate (Nyiwul, 2023). Farmers, fishers and pastoralists depend on water to sustain their trade. The drying of water bodies and groundwater resources in places where wells are dug for water accessibility has resulted in searching for a more conducive ecology for their livelihoods. Such search, which usually involves movement from one place to another, has resulted in conflicts between farmers and herders, resulting in destruction and deaths. Most settler farmers often try to prevent animal herds from preying on their crops. Such preventive measures have often been resisted, perpetuating the infamous farmers-herders conflicts in West and Central Africa (George et al., 2021; George & Adelaja, 2022; Wiederkehr et al., 2022). East and West Africa are more water insecure with recent events of increasing droughts, waterbody depletion, and drying up like Lake Chad. Water insecurity has ignited riots and, in some cases, violent conflicts that have resulted in losses (Almer et al., 2017).

Security situations as crime or crisis propeller

A single security situation could assemble so many weapons within a geographical space, say, a state, which could degenerate into propellers for transbor-

der crimes and crises through pockets of non-state networks, often resulting in lasting local, national, regional, and global concerns. The Arab Spring remains a classic African example, especially the Libyan struggle to oust the then long-standing dictator Colonel Muammar Al-Ghaddafi. The rise of the Islamic Brotherhood in the US, UK and other countries came to prominence in Egypt with the advent of the Brotherhood into the country's domestic politics and their choice of a US returnee, Mohammed Morsi, as the Brotherhood's and party's flagbearer who contested and won the election on religious grounds (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2011b). The victory of Morsi, who became Egypt's first democratically elected president, ignited the recent fire of radical spiritual uprising from the north to West Africa and the Middle East.

Europe has not been without its domestic security issues. With the post-Second War tensions in West Berlin and the communist party's success in Czechoslovakia, Arthur H. Vandenburg called President Truman to demand a security treaty with Western Europe outside the UN Security Council. The move was to circumvent the Soviet Union's veto power on the Council, which spurred the formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The United States pioneered the alliance with Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Great Britain, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway and Portugal in 1949 when the treaty was signed in Brussels (NATO, 2022). The alliance was the world's most robust security alliance outside the UN that had the critical aim of securing Europe from the Soviet Union and, now its descent, Russia.

The transcontinental western body has continued to admit new members: Greece and Turkey in 1952, Germany in 1955, Spain in 1982, Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland in 1999, Estonia, Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia in 2004, Albania and Croatia in 2009, Montenegro in 2017, North Macedonia in 2020. The latest are Finland and Sweden membership applications currently under consideration. The defining principle of the alliance is the attracting factor that keeps turning in members to it and expanding it. Article 5 of NATO stipulates that an armed attack against an ally is an attack on all allies. In the spirit of solidarity, every other member has a collective responsibility to defend the victim. This principle of collective defence contained in the Washington Treaty (article 5) is why the NATO response to the September 11 attack in the US led to the invasion of Afghanistan (NATO, 2022; U.S. Department of State, 2022).

The Western world was threatened by the activities of the Taliban-backed Al-Qaeda terror group that carried out a series of coordinated religious terrorist attacks in the US on September 11, 2001, which killed over five thousand people (Aljazeera, 2020). That single event reshaped the nature of security, securi-

ty architecture and securitisation globally. It propelled a Western operation in Afghanistan that pulled down the terrorist Taliban government, set up a national government and spent billions of dollars maintaining a military presence. After huge costs and efforts to diffuse the terror networks, cells and forces, the campaign exterminated September 11 arrowheads nationally, regionally and globally. However, terrorism fuelled by its religious sympathisers has continued to re-emerge (Azani & Duchan, 2020). The re-emergence of several cells and networks occasioned waves of regional and global terror campaigns, often affecting Westerners and non-Westerners. The climax of such re-emergence in recent times was the Taliban rebound in Afghanistan. The pockets of the Islamic state spread in Africa, which holds a futuristic threat to the regions and global security.

Interestingly, international relations deal with the relationship between states, governmental and non-governmental institutions, organisations, agencies and actors. The subject of this study relates to regional governmental institutions. While presenting some country-specific experiences in the recent past, the paper approached the international relations issues between continental governmental bodies as whole entities with independent member states as constituents. Barry Buzan and Ole Waever (2003)'s regional security complex theory becomes a tool for understanding their respective regions' actions, roles, and responsibilities. They have viewed collectively rather than the traditional relations between independent states. The paper focuses on the security issues in both continents and how socioeconomic and environmental factors like poverty, climate change, and political matters are cardinal points to the security and future of continental government bodies and their respective regions.

Foreign policy relations between regional governmental organisations like the African Union (AU) and the European Union (EU) have often relied on historical pathways prioritising historical antecedents, which often attach superiority clout over such relationships. The recent AU-EU summit poised to address such mental, political and social construct christened it a forum of equals, probably aware of the weaknesses and limitations associated with a familiar path. Both sides benefit significantly from recent and current security experiences in both regions, whether practical or not. Relying on extant literature, academic and non-academic outputs from institutions, governments, think tanks and media houses, this qualitative study explores recent socio-political events that gave rise to the security challenges in Africa and how they can serve as lessons to the EU.

The thesis of this paper is that the EU especially has much to learn from the AU's recent security challenges as insecurity now hits its doorbells. The futuristic aspect of its internal security needs lessons from AU's internal and external

security handling over the last decade, especially its failures. The phenomenal departure from its non-security or non-arms funding operandi consequent upon the Russian War in Ukraine requires cardinal AU lessons. The latter has been handling security issues for a long time. The current proliferation and assemblage of weapons in its region means the EU has much to learn from Africa's past. Ukraine has neither a control mechanism for the guns it receives nor a terminal date to the ongoing conflict. More so, the extent to the accentuation and propagation of this campaign and its spread is yet unknown. The inclusion of Chechnya by Russia and Ukraine, the Ukrainian foreign legion that neither vets its volunteers nor controls their activities, the Syrian mercenaries on the Russian side and other volunteers on both sides provide leakages for weapons spread beyond both borders.

Revisiting the Arab Spring spread

Inflation, corruption, economic difficulties and police brutality in the era of a 23-year-old dictatorial regime tolerated with deep silent resentment from the populace spurred a 26-year-old young wheelbarrow vegetable vendor, Mohamed Bouazizi, to self-immolate on December 17, 2010, publicly. That singular act ignited the resentful silence against the regime to a nationwide protest in which many protesters died. The anti-government demonstrations awakened many to join the growing outcry to topple the regime. The government initially introduced a hard-line response before it accepted, on January 13, 2011, to leave at the end of its tenure in 2014. The persistent protest forced the president to dissolve his cabinet and call for legislative elections on the 14th, but that did not satisfy the protesters. The state media announced the same day that President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali resigned and escaped to Saudi Arabia in fear of the people's fury. Like wildfire, the anti-status quo outcry against dictators spread to other Arabian states, including Egypt (Ianchovichina, 2018).

On January 25, 2011, young people, with the aid of social media and inspired by the Tunisian success, began protests against the then-Egyptian dictator, Hosni Mubarak. Like the Tunisians, Egyptian law enforcement responded harshly to the protesters. However, at the end of the month, the military refused to use force against protesters. It became a departure point for the three-decade-long regime, and the movement as Mubarak lost the support of the army, which led to his resignation on February 11, 2011. The Arab Spring revolution in Egypt was initially a success with the election of the country's first democratic President, Mohamed Morsi, of the Islamic Brotherhood's party, Freedom and Justice Party,

on June 17. It came to power on June 30, 2012. Following a series of protests against Morsi's anti-judicial policies in November 2012, the country was divided between pro and anti-Morsi lines. Worsening economic situations, poor services, and sectarian issues spurred protests against Morsi on his first anniversary in power, resulting in his removal by the country's military head, Gen. Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, on July 3, 2013 (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2011b).

The protest spread between January and March 2011 from Yemen, Bahrain, and Syria to the Middle East. In Yemen, the protest began on January 27, 2011, against President Ali Abdullah Saleh, requesting a democratic Yemen. The call for the president's resignation failed but led to the transfer of power to his Vice President, Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, in November 2011 and finished in February 2012 after an election where he was the only candidate. The failure of Hadi's government to improve the people's condition led to an armed crisis in 2014, degenerating into a civil war.

On February 14, 2011, civil rights activists and some members of the country's Shi'i majority, who have often been left out of governance in Bahrain, led the protest. The state responded harshly with the support of the regional (Gulf Cooperation Council Security) force, with about a thousand Saudi soldiers and five hundred United Arab Emirates (UAE) police officers brought in in March 2011. Governments in the region feared a similar movement in their countries and supported Bahrain in nuzzling the campaign and setting a standard for others. They aided the state in quelling the movement. Many protest leaders were convicted and jailed by the state, hundreds of Shi'i workers accused of supporting the protest lost their jobs, and some Shi'i mosques were destroyed. Afterwards, the state continued its anti-opposition attacks (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2011b).

On February 15, 2011, a Libyan protest propelled by the Tunisian success and another ongoing uprising in the Arab world began against the over four-decade-long Libyan leader Colonel Muammar Gaddafi's regime. Gaddafi came to power on September 1, 1969, after leading a coup d'état that ended the rule of Idris Senussi monarchy, which leaned to the West and enjoyed their support (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2011a). The protest snowballed into an armed conflict about to be quieted in March when the West, under an international coalition led by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces, intervened, bombing down Gaddafi's forces and inner circle. Libyan officials protested NATO's bombardment, accusing the West of trying to kill Gaddafi, and his son Saif al-Islam and his three grandchildren were killed in an April bombing. No one has been held responsible for these. Gaddafi held sway in Tripoli's capital until August 22, 2011, when the rebels took over the city. He was captured and killed on October

20, 2011, at the Battle of Sirte (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2011a). The Rebel's leaders formed a Western-supported Transitional National Council (TNC).

The Libyan war was a historical path dependence event in the security – especially in illegal arms, criminal activities that had hitherto existed at a low scale, internal and transborder conflicts, and terrorism – of African countries within the ancient trans-Saharan trade route. It witnessed the assemblage of various types of weapons in the country, which remained in the hands of non-state actors after the war. Since no one could account for these weapons after Ghaddafi's fall, the movement of these heavy and light weapons fuelled existing crises, and non-state actors had access to these weapons, employed to strengthen their causes and networks (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2011a; Ianovichina, 2018). Countries within the trans-Saharan route paid the price of illegal arms moving through the wars, crises, and attacks that followed to date. The strengthening of networks and trade in unlawful weapons became a lucrative clandestine activity that aided in rekindling the Darfur militia, the Malian crisis, the terror activities and the herders' attacks in the countries in Central and West Africa.

Although the Arab Spring spurred protests in Sudan, Mali, Niger, and some other countries, it did not bring the same results as in Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, and others. The Bahraini government's ability (supported by the regional security force) to control the protests and jail the leaders and the prolonged nature of the Libyan war might have been responsible for the success in checking the wildfire that aimed to remove all dictatorial leaders and instil Western democracy. However, the spring elements were not buried adequately in some Middle Eastern and African countries, judging by its resuscitation and success in retaining the fight in Syria, Yemen and Tunisia and its re-emergence in Sudan and Mali. Sudan remains a classic example, given that it recently succeeded in removing the long-standing dictator, Omar Al-Bashir.

In general, the Arab Spring succeeded in inspiring anti-status quo protests in many countries around the world, including Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bolivia, Brazil, China, Djibouti, Ecuador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, France, Gabon, Iran, Iraq (Kurdistan), Israel, Ivory Coast, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Malawi, the Maldives, Mali, Mexico, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nigeria, North Korea, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Bosnia Herzegovina, Greece, Russia, Spain, Turkmenistan, Tibet (government in exile), Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam. The impact in many democracies questioned corruption, poor leadership, or other domestic policies, issues, and systems that challenged many countries' internal peace and security during the Arab Spring.

Post-Arab Spring and regional insecurity

As a consequence of the protracted Libyan war and the unexpected flow of weapons into the continent to orchestrate the defeat of state forces by Western forces, western-sponsored non-state actors and illegally imported weapons, the region and its neighbouring areas, especially North and West Africa and the Middle East witnessed an unprecedented resurgence of criminal activities (Tartir & Florquin, 2020). These activities range from criminal cells to terror networks: militia groups, illegal weapon trade syndicates, smuggling, and other unlawful trans-border activities. Existing porous borders in these regions made it easy for these groups to operate and move in and out of cities and other human settlements where they carry out their activities and retreat quickly.

Although the porous nature of the borders in sub-Saharan Africa is a contributory factor to the easy movement of goods and services legally and illegally exchanged, the availability of illicit weapons, drugs and human trafficking within these terrains increased illegal activities and crises (Obah-Akpowoghaha et al., 2020). Criminal networks and undertakings continue to thrive in the face of these weaknesses. For example, the prolonged closure of the Nigerian borders to limit unlawful, illegal and terror activities along the borders failed to prevent them entirely because those involved in these activities keep devising new routes and avenues to carry out their activities. Criminal networks started using remote areas to carry out their activities. Illegal importers travel through villages and rough roads using unconventional means like motorbikes to carry their goods to accessible locations and load them into vehicles.

Rather than stopping smuggling activities, the border closure created a business for locals who aided in transporting illegal or contraband goods on smaller vehicles, including motorbikes, via remote routes, usually at odd hours or when they knew security patrols were not on their roads. These predominantly agrarian rural dwellers with limited income also profit from these trades by passing goods through their communities (Ogbonna et al., 2023; Omotuyi, 2022). In this way, they evade the authorities and the usual confrontation with the authorities. They avoid the regular routes and state control for making and implementing such policies.

Illegal, criminal, and terror cells and operations beyond national borders function by either incorporating individuals familiar with the terrain or familiarising themselves with the landscape to plan, execute their activities, achieve their aims and operate outside the radar. Terror cells, for example, take advantage of radical teachings and preachers to initiate unsuspecting loyalists into their cells with the assurance of a religious cause being pursued (FATF-GIABA-GABAC, 2016). The

founder of Boko Haram began in the same way. Others legitimise themselves by getting affiliation with AQIM (Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb) or the recent ISIL/ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant or the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) or Daesh to form the ISWAP (Islamic State of the Western Province) (Zenn, 2019). Criminal elements, on their part, take advantage of vulnerabilities in getting people in need to join their cells or part of their activities. In recruiting people into their networks, these cells expand their actions and influence with more loyalists.

Unfortunately, the locals are usually unaware of the details of the luggage they aid in transporting. Unknowingly, they also transport weapons packaged as conventional goods and sold to criminal and terror networks after arrival at their target destinations (Cantens & Raballand, 2017). The high cost of these weapons and the lucrative nature of the trade make it attractive and almost irresistible that people forget their consciences in a quest for gains. Due to the consequences of these illegal trades, those engaged in them maintain a high level of secrecy. Some of these weapons are employed in attacking rural communities like their carriers.

Attacking groups usually kill adult males, take hostages for ransom, and take the females as sex slaves (Pearson & Zenn, 2021). Whether as terror groups or herders, the attacking groups usually reside in deserts or forests and have little or no supply for survival. The attack on communities is usually to steal food, kidnap for ransom to get money for their upkeep, purchase drugs and weapons for their operations, and get sex slaves to satisfy their animalistic desires. Although the terror groups profess extreme Islamic beliefs, goals, and reasons, consuming substances betrays even the slightest religious discipline. These substances control and define their activities. Religion may begin the cause, but that is usually lost along the line.

Generally, post-Arab Spring security realities in the African continent created the crisis the region has struggled with since the Libyan regime's fall. These weapons made their way to the northern African country and illegally exchanged hands (Tartir & Florquin, 2020). The network of transborder activities led to the movement of weapons across borders to feed criminal networks, smuggling gangs, radical religious groups, ethnic militias, and terror networks that exploit the arms available for their activities and put pressure on the state security apparatus. The porous nature of borders and poor checks and control systems around borders in Africa and the Middle East, among other factors, prevent the arrest of the spread of terror activities of the Islamic State and their affiliates like Boko Haram, Fulani herders, Al-Shabab and Tuareg rebels in these regions (Chinedu, 2019; Obah-Akpowoghaha et al., 2020; Oluic, 2009).

Economic shocks, poverty and AU-EU relations

Economic shocks are events and experiences that alter an economy's usual activities and flow. Such events and experiences might be a supply disruption, dry-up of demand, meltdown, pandemic, price crash, or war. The outcome often affects people in the society's low-class or low-income cadre (Zvokuomba & Kabonga, 2021). The eight-week-long lockdowns implemented in 32 African countries prohibited all forms of social gatherings or functions, including public transport operations, schools, workplaces and markets, from opening. The closure of businesses came with the most economic impact, considering the size of the informal market in sub-Saharan Africa and the fact that many households depend on a daily income system (Olamide et al., 2022; Teachout & Zipfel, 2020; Zvokuomba & Kabonga, 2021). The freezing of formal business activities greatly impacted even those who do not depend on the daily income system.

Consequent to the COVID-19 pandemic, stimulations reveal that 9.1% of the population in the countries in sub-Saharan Africa fell into extreme poverty, and the lockdowns caused 65% of them. The eight-week-long lockdowns caused deprivation and increased hunger on the continent. An estimated 31.8 million people, representing 3.6% of the population, including 3.9 million children below five years of age, suffered high food insecurity at the end of the lockdown (Teachout & Zipfel, 2020). The United Nations (UN) Economic Commission on Africa's Economic Report on Africa (ERA) 2021 reported that the pandemic disruptions moved an estimated 55 million Africans into extreme poverty in 2020 and upturned over two decades of progress made in reducing poverty in the region (ERA, 2022). Invariably, 2020 was a watershed for households and businesses in Africa.

Before the pandemic, external economic shocks occasioned by oil- and commodity-price fluctuation that affect monetary policies had dwindled the finances of commodity-dependent economies, including Africa. This setback prompted an unstable macroeconomic ecology, which affected sub-Saharan Africa's goods and services output. Climate change has affected domestic food production, hence the prevalence of hunger in communities, especially in rural areas. Many countries needed to meet their necessities and expenses and assist their suffering population at the height of the pandemic. The demand prompted many governments to search for loans from the few available lenders, thereby increasing the debt level of many countries.

The supply chains stretched to their limits as grocery shops, other essential services, and manufacturing industries operated a wartime work pattern. Many whose work allowed worked from home, schools and offices closed, and infla-

tion set in. Welfarism became the new system for governments across the world. While European countries in the EU looked up to Brussels for increased funds, the African countries globetrotted in search of lenders and got some from China and Russia. The West held on to what it had, like the proverbial five wise virgins who would not share their oil with the lacking five. The response to the pandemic increased the debt burden of most African countries.

Households in the continent are struggling with food insecurity issues that began during the pandemic and worsened by the Russian war in Ukraine, limiting imports. Russia's blockade and bombardment of stored foodstuff in silos, containers, and ships have hindered wheat exports from Ukraine. Although the US is accusing Russia of using food as a war weapon, it would not take any direct action. Should it be a country in Africa that attempts a blockade or anything close to it, the West would have uninvitedly intervened like it did in Libya. Suppose the West (EU inclusive) would be honest in expressing equality regarding its relations with the AU. In that case, it owes the AU an apology for its role in Ukraine, allowing households to suffer and lives lost for a blockade it could have prevented or intervened to rescue. Otherwise, it should apologise to the AU for its role in Libya, which has kept that country in conflict until today.

Fragility and the AU-EU

Africa's fragility transcends its political and institutional spectrum. Fragility is one prime factor that cripples the continent's tranquillity, growth and civil society (Haastруп et al., 2021; Meagher et al., 2014). The frequent conflicts in the continent and the inability of state and regional governments to prevent disputes, especially armed conflicts in many African countries, have further pushed many African states to a breaking point. The question of colony sovereignty versus the people's choice has continued questioning many African states' legitimacy (Sebhatu, 2020). The renewal of secessionist activism, armed conflicts against the state, and suppressed national identities, whether majorities or minorities within nation-states question many African countries' legitimacy and governments. Moreover, it further increases the friction and fuel fragility as breaking points could be ignited at any moment. The AU must learn from Europe to promote freedom of choice through referendums rather than supporting suppressive systems that keep countries in unsustainable, fragile ecologies.

Analysts blame institutional fragility for most of Africa's socioeconomic woes, perilous poverty, and political crisis that has resulted in avoidable conflicts, institutional erosion and a fragility trap (Delechat et al., 2015; ERA, 2022; Moe,

2010; Ncube & Jones, 2013; Uzoechina, 2008). These institutions have not gone into extinction. Current realities shape many to help them rebound or rebirth to attain relevance. Economic institutions make profits, guarantee the safety of public funds, maintain good monetary policies and balance of payment records, and manage the economy through the apex bank to sustain the local economy for businesses to thrive and create jobs. An open market enables local production and services to thrive amidst healthy competition with foreign products and services.

Civil society organisations in most African countries need proper enlightenment even if they have recently been relevant in shaping the political ecology of many nations. There is a need to widen the civil space and the number of people they can reach to enlighten the populace further. An independent judiciary aids in strengthening civil processes, punishment of offenders, maintaining checks on other arms of government and creating viable judicial institutions that punish offenders and sustain their independence. Through experiences over the decades, some levels of resilience have emerged, and growth has been attained. As institutions matter, they continue to play their roles, while recent developments have left scars on some formal and informal institutions in the continent amidst fragility.

Acemoglu et al. (2005, p. 400) argue that geography could determine income differences. He referenced Jeffery Sachs' position on the importance of geography and technology to agricultural development. Comparing developing countries, including Africa and Western countries, Sachs stated that "by the start of the era of modern economic growth, if not much earlier, temperate-zone technologies were more productive than tropical-zone technologies" (Sachs, 2005, p. 2). Similarly, geography determines technological development and access to the people's technology of a geographical location. Sachs suggests eradicating global poverty, especially in Africa, through the massive deployment of science and technology with the advancement of technologies to meet the situation of developing countries (Sachs, 2006). This feat is yet to be taken seriously.

Each geographical location has a specific climatic condition that determines and impacts its realities and growth. The development of each is therefore affected by its climatic condition. In the 1974 Economics Nobel Prize, Gunnar Myrdal stated that "serious study of the problems of underdevelopment [...] should take into account the climate and its impacts on soil, vegetation, animals, humans and physical assets – in short, on living conditions in economic development" (Myrdal, 1968, vol. 3, p. 2121, as cited in Acemoglu et al., 2005, p. 400). Marshall, one of the fathers of modern economics, in Acemoglu's explanation opined that

“vigour depends partly on race qualities: but these, so far as they can be explained at all, seem to be chiefly due to climate” (Marshall, 1890, p. 195). He opined that despite inherent biological characteristics that make some races stronger, the climate in which they live and their social realities affect how much work they can do, how creative they can become, and how developed they become. Africa’s hotter climate, therefore, impairs its growth and development. The worsening climatic conditions make it one of the most affected by climate change and vulnerable to the increasing greenhouse emissions from more industrialising and developed regions. The fragile global climatic condition and environment darken Africa’s future and would make a living on the continent less bearable.

Map of the African Union showing the current member states



Source: https://www.123rf.com/photo_20531783_african-union-on-actual-vintage-political-map-of-africa-with-flags.html

Poverty reduction efforts in the continent were marred by political, environmental, climatic, economic and institutional fragilities (Beegle et al., 2016; Bertocchi & Gerzoni, 2012; Bicaba et al., 2015; Folarin & Adeniyi, 2020; Hoeffler, 2019). Conflicts and political instability encouraged it. Though most African

countries are now democratic, many have recently witnessed a military intervention (some are still under military governance), a botched military attempt to intervene in civil government, an authoritarian democracy or weak civilian rule. These typify the fragility of the political space in developing countries to which all African countries belong. With the recent economic losses, civil governance and peace would likely affect public outcries, conflicts, and terrorism, making fighting poverty and restoring calm for growth difficult.

Map of the European Union showing current member states



Source: https://european-union.europa.eu/easy-read_en

Considering their respective historical antecedents, straight-jacketing all 54 African countries into such a political prism would not be a fair analogy. Instead, these inadequacies should serve as lessons for leaders in the AU to learn from their EU counterparts through this partnership, primarily through their histories, leadership, inadequacies, management techniques, and contemporary realities. There are many lessons to learn on the efficiencies and inefficiencies from both sides.

Climate change realities in Africa

Environmental fragility manifests contemporarily as weather extremes have the worst effects in Africa, based on the 2022 Climate Change Report. It asserts that Western and Eastern Africa account for the worst affected regions by the realities of a changing climate. The fragile climatic conditions of the present age have increased food insecurity in the continent, so farmers can hardly grow crops due to droughts (Miyandazi et al., 2018). The Horn of Africa and some island countries in the southern and eastern parts of the continent are brutally hit. Farmers in the Horn of Africa, especially Kenya, Ethiopia, Somalia and Eritrea, have been unable to farm for lack of rain and herders are losing their animals due to lack of water and pasture. Households are suffering from unprecedented malnutrition, hunger, ailment and death of children and livestock in record numbers. The fragile climatic condition makes survival and living more difficult due to climate change propelled by increased greenhouse emissions from more advanced economies, especially China, India, Russia, and Western countries.

This renewed AU-EU partnership can allow both sides to learn from the climate crisis in both regions and help each other supply effective mitigation strategies to reduce the sufferings of the local communities, whether rural, suburban, or urban settlements. Currently, the situation is difficult on both sides of the divide yet more life-threatening in Africa. Humanitarian, the EU has a task at hand to consider the lives lost weekly to annually in the Atlantic for poor migrants fleeing poverty and the effects of climate change. They contribute more to and help finance projects in communities to help households and businesses survive the high tide consuming them.

Building bonds with bridges

In furtherance of the historical and contemporary bonds between both sides, Africa and Europe, and promotion of better trade, human, the cultural and trans-continental relationships between both, a bridge between Europe and Africa is a good project at this stage. The close land distance between both continents would be ideal, say between Tangier-Tetouan-Al Hoceima, Morocco, and the Island of Tarifa, Cadis, Gibraltar or between the banks of the Atlantic at Tetouan Province or Jbel Moussa Forrest, Morocco and the Tarifa Island, Cadis, Gibraltar.

Map of South Europe, North Africa and Near East showing national capitals

Source: https://www.123rf.com/photo_39809649_mediterranean-basin-political-map-south-europe-north-africa-and-near-east-with-capitals-national-bor.html

A massive project of such magnitude could spur companies to locate manufacturing enterprises close to the continental divide and move them into Europe through the land or ferry them through the Strait of Gibraltar into Europe. Such investments would solidify the intercontinental relationship and strengthen weak institutions in the long run. It would set the road map for a sustainable transcontinental bond.

Russian-Ukrainian war: What EU needs to learn from Africa

The ongoing Russian military campaign in Ukraine has consequences for arms movement, crime, and conflict in the continent's future. These consequences are clear from how arms are assembled in and around Ukraine for use by both sides. The assemblage of weapons is not the main problem, but its effective retrieval and control after the war if not coordinated by agencies and institutions of state from both sides. The prosecuting and defending states would lead to arms movement, primarily through non-state actors like the Chechnya militia on both sides of the war. This is one area where the EU needs to learn from the errors of the AU concerning the Libyan war, where the prosecuting side was a Western-backed non-state actor.

Comprehensive disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR) after the war may not sufficiently prevent the proliferation of weapons and penetration of arms, small arms, and light weapons (SALW) into the custody of individuals and groups beyond the borders of Ukraine. The likelihood of crime increasing in Ukraine, Russia, and their surrounding territories after the war is a task to consider if the EU seriously views the security of lives and property within its

borders. Vigilance is necessary for the political and social activities of extremist groups and groups with uncommon ideologies in the surrounding countries. Access to the SALW supply line from Ukraine, Russia, or both could lead to weapon stockpiling within the EU to prosecute such uncommon ideologies and silent biases or differences. A strict check on transborder activities is necessary, although the Libyan case is not comparable because of porous borders in Africa, including the trans-Saharan axis.

Regional security complex theory and the AU-EU security

Supranational security concerns like the EU are typical regional security complex cases requiring caution. Traditionally, security is a priority of each nation-state to protect its geographical territory and sovereignty from attack or external influence. The realism ideology and the classical realism approach to politics and governance entrust the security of lives and properties and the protection from threats on the shoulders of the state as a sovereign entity. The state strives to secure its citizens, territory, and sovereignty with its military power. However, neorealism as a traditional international relations theory considers the role of military and economic capacities in defining and influencing international (including state-to-state) relations and balance of power.

Neoliberal international relations theory, which the social constructivists' international relations theory considers as material, understands power relations in terms of markets and consumers precisely, free market competitions and capitalism, and, recently, the environment. The social constructivists argue that international relations are social, not material, since they are human creation that depends on the human ideology that conducts political actions and actors on the international stage (Detel, 2015). However, neorealism is less prominent today due to the dwindling of a bipolar world system whose balance of power postulation has its pillar. Its rise in the 1970s and 80s suited the arms race era of the Cold War. The increase of regions in post-Cold War politics set the pace for a multi-polar world order, hence the suitability of the regional security complex (RSC) theory in the contemporary context.

The regional security complex theory, extensively updated by Buzan and Wæver (2003), addresses the complexity between individual states and the entire international system, including regional bodies, on a sub-system level of analysis. Buzan and Wæver (2003) offer the state as the basis for analysis and military and political power as key security platforms. Regional security relations are independent systems that function concerning the state. The main aim of the the-

ory is to equip area specialists with the language and concepts for helping comparative studies across regions, which is a gap in the literature it fills. Moreover, it disallows the tendency of power theorists to undermine the region's essence in international security. In this study, the EU's security and the AU's security are cardinal spheres of concern in their respective areas; hence, such relations are essential to further understanding their unique experiences, namely, the Cold War and Arab Spring. The peace and future of both regions depend on individual and collective security and the fruits of their shared partnerships.

The complexity of European security and politics vis-à-vis NATO, the non-military clause of the EU, which is changing with the Ukraine experience, and its changing economic relations with Russia, as it weans itself off Russian oil and gas, are new realities. The complexities of its realities require a new phase in its internal policies and external relations. Africa has become an easy choice for proximity reasons and historical antecedents. Hence, the expression of equal partners, yet no African country is among its ten leading trading partners. The new terminology needs real economic benefit. It is essential to know that the AU is a composition of 54 independent states with a young and promising population that can be harnessed to support Europe's ageing population and sustain its big, organised, and sophisticated market in a mutually beneficial relationship.

Conclusion

The regional intergovernmental relations between the EU and AU are expected to be an opportunity for issues and challenges confronting the continental bodies to be mutually presented to pave the way for synergies and solutions. The ongoing war on Europe's doorstep has wakened the peaceful region to the growing realities and risks stirring its member states that are not within the wings of NATO. The transcontinental security alliance it has enjoyed needs a supranational buffer within the context of its currency union. More so, comprehensive post-war disarmament and demobilisation are necessary, but conflicts, crimes, and terrorism are the outcome if not properly handled. Africa is still a lesson for it to learn, given its recent experience following the end of the Libyan war. The re-group of terror cells and the re-fortification of extremist networks is another cardinal security concern where constructive collaboration between these regional governmental bodies is essential.

This text examined security situations as crime and crisis propellers from earlier experiences and the Arab Spring. It further looked at the regional security in the post-Arab Spring, and the impact of economic shocks on poverty in Africa,

especially as the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated impact has upturned success records in recent decades on poverty alleviation. The AU-EU relations could learn and aid in improving the situation in Africa. Climate change, a global issue, has Africa as one of the worst affected regions and the most minor contributor to its causes. The article looked at the impact climate change is having and would continue to have on livelihoods in the continent and opined that there is much for this constructive interaction to do to alleviate the impacts and responses. The Russian “military operation” in Ukraine presents an opportunity for the EU to learn from the AU how to prevent further conflicts and crimes emanating from weapon movement when the war in Ukraine ends. It concludes by looking at regional security complex theory as a tool of analysis that provides an understanding of security at the regional level.

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