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Security Governance, Subsidiarity, and UN-AU Partnership in Somalia

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Abstract

This paper seeks to address three main questions, using Somalia as a case study:

1) How are non-Western regional organisations (ROs) engaging in peacemaking and peacebuilding?

2) How are local actors receiving and perceiving these interventions?

3) Do these ROs' approaches overlap, compete with, or complement approaches by traditional peacebuilders, such as the United Nations (UN)?

To do this, we apply the frames of regionalisation, subsidiarity, and UN-RO partnership. Investigating regionalisation allows us to identify trends in the division of labour in peace processes and peace missions amongst the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), African Union (AU), and UN. Situating the African Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) within the subsidiarity debate allows us to consider the factors that shape reception and perceptions of this AU mission. Finally, by interrogating UN-RO partnership dynamics in Somalia, we are able to highlight cooperative, competitive, and conflictual dimensions of UN-AU relations in Somalia and beyond. While the AU first mandated AMISOM, it also relies on UN authorization, and it is largely funded by the European Union (EU), UN, and major donor states. Troop contributing countries are primarily IGAD member states. IGAD and neighbouring states were most involved in the peace processes from the mid-1990s to the early 2000s, but the UN has been more active in peace processes since 2006 onwards. AMISOM exemplifies both the promises and challenges of subsidiarity in the African region, with neighbourhood politics shaping how it has been received and perceived in Somalia. AMISOM has advanced AU-UN partnership practices, especially through an innovative mechanism (UNSOS), but UN-AU relations are also characterized by competition and conflict over AMISOM's funding and mandate.

Acronyms

AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
APSA	African Peace and Security Architecture
ATMIS	African Union Transition Mission in Somalia
AU	African Union
CAR	Central African Republic
CCTARC	Civilian Casualty Tracking, Analysis and Response Cell
CEWS	Conflict and Early Warning System
ECOMOG	ECOWAS Monitoring Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ENDF	Ethiopian National Defence Force
EU	European Union
FGS	Federal Government of Somalia
FMS	Federal Member States
ICU	Islamic Courts Union
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IGASOM	IGAD Peace Support Mission in Somalia
IGO	Intergovernmental Organisation
OCHA	(UN) Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PSC	(African Union) Peace and Security Council
REC	Regional Economic Communities
RO	Regional Organisation
TCC	Troop-Contributing Country
TFG	Transitional Federal Government
TNG	Transitional National Government
UN	United Nations
UNITAF	Unified Task Force
UNSOM	UN Operation in Somalia
UNPOS	UN Political Office for Somalia
UNSC	UN Security Council
UNSOS	UN Support Office in Somalia
US	United States

Key Findings

- Peace and security governance in Somalia is currently highly regionalised in the domain of peace missions, due to AMISOM's fifteen-year deployment and the troop contributions of IGAD states. However, it is less regionalised when it comes to the complex space of peace processes. The peace process engagement activities of the UN, AU, and IGAD significantly overlap, with shifting leadership: IGAD facilitated the negotiations that led to the creation of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) in 2004. During the AMISOM era, the UN has been the most active facilitator. This reflects in part a division of labour between the UN and AU based on perceived comparative advantage, but the AU has increasingly contested this arrangement over time, attempting to carve out a greater political role for itself.

- AMISOM exemplifies both the promises and challenges of subsidiarity in the African region. In mounting AMISOM, the AU demonstrated its greater ability and willingness to deploy troops to conflict situations (compared to the UN). However, AMISOM relies on troops from Somalia's neighbours, and these states have vested and competing interests in Somali politics. The proximity of troop-contributing countries, and the history of regional politics, negatively impacts perceptions of the peace mission and complicates relations between AMISOM and political actors in Somalia. AMISOM's image has also been hurt by human rights violations and by anti-AMISOM messaging coming from the central government and Al Shabaab. Finally, the AU faces major resource constraints, necessitating extraregional funding and support for AMISOM.

- The willingness of the AU to deploy – coupled with resource constraints – creates the need for RO-UN partnership, and the mission in Somalia has developed an innovative mechanism to advance this partnership (UNSOS). However, UN-AU relations are also characterized by competition and conflict. Specifically, the AU has pushed, without success, for a funding arrangement with greater access to UN assessed contributions. There is also disagreement and competition regarding AMISOM's political mandate.

Introduction

Background

Since 1988, Somalia has endured multiple violent conflicts and insurgencies leading to a protracted period without any central government. Throughout this time there have been numerous peace processes and peace missions involving several regional and international actors. Djibouti facilitated and hosted national reconciliation conferences in 1991 followed by a reconciliation process facilitated by the UN and Ethiopia in 1993 (Menkhaus et al 2009, 10). During this same period the UN Security Council (UNSC) adopted resolution 751 in April 1992, creating the UN Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM). In December 1992, the United States (US) led an effort to deploy the Unified Task Force (UNITAF). UNOSOM would remain operational during this period and focus on political and humanitarian work whereas UNITAF would focus on security (United Nations n.d.- a). These efforts were eventually subsumed under UNOSOM II that was operational from March 1993 until 1995 (United Nations n.d. - b). Initially well received, the UN missions suffered several catastrophic failures. Following the withdrawal in 1995, the UN established the UN Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS) that operated out of Nairobi to continue to monitor the situation and support efforts indirectly. Diplomacy to address insecurity would instead be led by regional countries and the EU for the next five years (Menkhaus et al 2009, 13).

Ethiopia facilitated the Sodere talks from November 1996 to January 1997. The most enduring outcome of the Sodere process is the "4.5 formula" that is largely still used today as a mechanism to determine proportional representation by clan (Menkhaus et al 2009, 14). The 4.5 formula stipulates that "each of the major four clan families are accorded equal representation, and minority clans are accorded half of that" (Menkhaus 2017, 134). Other states that sought to mediate between Somali factions during the late 1990s included Yemen and Egypt. In 2000, the Djibouti facilitated a new process in the town of Arta that was endorsed by Egypt and the UN. An August 2000 power-sharing agreement from this process created the Transitional National Government (TNG). The power-sharing was based on the 4.5 formula, and the TNG was recognized to fill Somalia's seat at the UN. However, the agreement failed to win over neighbouring states and donors (Menkhaus et al 2009, 15-16).

Despite these efforts, Somalia is still a country very much in the midst of ongoing conflict and instability. In its 2021 report, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported over 2.6 million internally displaced people and 5.9 million people in need of humanitarian assistance. Beyond conflict, the plight of civilians was further exacerbated by climate-related emergencies, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, and the lack of governmental capacity to respond to crises (OCHA 2021). The brief background in this section leads up to the creation of the TFG in a process facilitated by the IGAD and the eventual creation of the AMISOM. Understanding the history of modern conflict and attempts at conflict resolution in Somalia is crucial to analysis of the interactions amongst global and regional (or Western and non-Western) organisations around conflict resolution and the broader patterns that these interactions fit into.

This paper is motivated by a set of research questions outlined in the series' framing document: 1) How are non-Western ROs engaging in peacemaking and peacebuilding? 2) How are local actors receiving and perceiving these interventions? and 3) Do these ROs' approaches overlap, compete with, or complement approaches by traditional peacebuilders (e.g. the UN)? While peacemaking and peacebuilding are contested terms (and explored in more depth across the wider series), we focus on peace processes and peace missions. In order to address these questions, we apply the frames of regionalisation, subsidiarity, and UN-RO partnership to the Somalia case. Investigating regionalisation allows us to identify IGAD, AU, and UN engagement trends and divisions of labour. Situating AMISOM within the subsidiarity debate allows us to consider the factors that shape reception and perceptions of this AU mission. Finally, by interrogating UN-RO partnership dynamics in Somalia, we are able to highlight cooperative, competitive, and conflictual dimensions of UN-AU relations in Somalia and beyond.

Methodology

This report uses mixed methods including a desktop study and descriptive statistical analysis. It is based on a review of primary and secondary sources related to peace and security in Somalia, including UNSC meeting records, briefings on AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) meetings, newspaper articles, organisational reports, and think-tank reports. We also include an analysis of the engagement of sub-regional, regional, and global intergovernmental organisations (IGOs) in peace agreements pertaining to Somalia based on an original dataset developed by Coe and Nash. The dataset is comprised of peace agreements from the Peace Agreements Database (PA-X) that mention the UN, AU, or African Regional Economic Communities (RECs) with engagement coded by facilitation, implementation, and monitoring among other categories. The authors carried out one interview with an AU official with knowledge of AMISOM. While more interviews were sought, the Omicron wave in New York City prevented planned fieldwork and the possibility of interviews with UN officials. The concluding section highlights additional questions that could be addressed with further interviews.

Peace & Security Governance in Somalia

Regionalisation refers to the growing governance roles of regional (rather than global) IGOs across a range of issue areas. While human rights governance is more regionalised in Latin America than in other regions in the global South, peace and security governance is more regionalised in Africa, both in terms of peace process engagement and the deployment of peace missions (Coe and Nash n.d.). In this section we consider how the case of Somalia fits into broader regionalisation patterns.

Peace Processes

IGAD has long been engaged in peace processes in Somalia, but it did not always have an institutional mandate for peacebuilding. Uganda, Sudan, Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Djibouti initially created the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD) in 1986 to combat and respond to the impacts of environmental degradation. However, in the early 1990s several critical events took place in the sub-region, including Somalia's descent into civil war, the end of the Derg regime in Ethiopia, and the creation of an independent Eritrea. To meet the evolving challenges of the region, leaders of the member states met in 1995 to begin the process to transform the organisation, and in November 1996, the newly named Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) launched with a new mandate that included conflict prevention and resolution (Bereketeab 2019, 139).

The process that ultimately led to the creation of TFG in Somalia was held from 2002-2004 in Kenya and facilitated by IGAD and the Government of Kenya. This process was supported by the UN and received substantial financial support from the EU. It involved military and political leaders as well as civil society and elders, and it also sought to bring together factions backed by different neighbouring states, namely Djibouti and Ethiopia (Menkhaus et al 2009, 16-17). After two years, the parties agreed the Transitional Federal Charter of the Somali Republic in February 2004. In August and September 2004, the delegates chose a 275-person transitional Parliament in accordance with the 4.5 formula. The Parliament then selected a President (Menkhaus 2018, 18-19). While several regional and global actors were involved, Ethiopia was the dominant force in IGAD diplomacy and achieved its goals for the process, which were a federal Somalia and a pro-Ethiopian government (Menkhaus 2018, 16).

Due to Ethiopian dominance, IGAD is not a neutral actor in Somali peace processes, with IGAD viewed by some Somalis as "a political platform to advance its interests in Somalia" (Ingiriis 2020,190). This conclusion is supported by Bereketeab (2019) who notes, "there is a widespread perception among some that Ethiopia has systematically exploited IGAD for its narrow national interests" (145). Ethiopia's success in doing this can partially be attributed to its strategic importance to the West, particularly in the global war on terror (Bereketeab 2019, 146).

Following the creation of the TFG, Ethiopia lobbied for the TFG and newly elected president at the AU Summit in 2005 and then proposed the creation of the IGAD Peace Support Mission in Somalia (IGASOM) (Ingiriis 2020, 193). However, events overtook the situation, and in 2006, the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) captured Mogadishu and briefly held most of South-Central Somalia. In December 2006, Ethiopian forces invaded Somalia, defeating the ICU and installing the TFG in the Somali capital (Menkhaus et al 2009, 17). IGASOM had been approved by the AU in September 2006. However, in late 2006, the AU agreed to discard the plans for IGASOM and instead create AMISOM, which is discussed in more detail below (Ingiriis 2020, 195).

It is at this point that the primary actors engaged in Somali peace processes begin to shift. According to our Peace Process Engagement data – generated via the coding of formal peace agreements – the UN was considerably more likely than the AU and even IGAD to be present at peace agreement negotiations and to facilitate those negotiations during the 2006-2016 period (see Table 1). About one-third of peace agreements concluded in the Somalia and Somalia-Puntland peace processes during these years were facilitated by the UN, but none were facilitated by the AU. IGAD has been slightly more active than the AU in this respect. The UN was also most likely to commit to serving as agreement guarantor during this period.

Table 1: IGO SOMALI PEACE PROCESS ENGAGEMENT (2006-2016)

IGO role in individual peace agreement*	UN	AU	IGAD	EAC
Present at agreement signing	18	8	8	0
Thanked/recognized in agreement	2	1	0	0
IGO law referenced in agreement	1	1	2	0
Facilitator of agreement	10	0	1	0
Implementation/guarantor commitment	9	5	4	2
Monitoring commitment	1	1	1	1

**28 agreements were concluded during this period*

These findings align with the conclusions of other Somalia observers during the AMISOM era, who describe the UN as having "the lead among outside actors for political mediation" (International Crisis Group 2021, 18) while AMISOM's political role here is "vague" (Dessu 2021, par. 11). Paul D. Williams (2018a) explains this division of labour in terms of perceived comparative advantage: "it was thought that the AU was best placed to conduct enforcement operations in a highly volatile and dangerous context, while the UN was best placed to act as a guarantor of the political process…" (312). This UN-RO division of labour is, however, increasingly contested by the AU (as we discuss in Section IV).

Importantly, Somali conflicts in need of resolution exist at multiple levels. While Al Shabaab is the main target of peace enforcement and counterterrorism operations in Somalia, inter-clan conflicts and tensions between the central government and federal member states contribute to violence and create unstable situations which Al Shabaab exploits (UNSC Chair 2021). A common refrain is that peace and security in Somalia requires a political solution. That is, AMISOM's efforts to degrade and defeat Al Shabaab, as well as its efforts to hand this mission over to the Somali Security Forces by the end of 2023, will only succeed if necessary political settlements are achieved.

Peace Missions

AMISOM was officially approved by the AUPSC on 19 January 2007. The UN approved the AU deployment on 20 February 2007. AMISOM replaced the proposed IGASOM (AMISOM n.d – a). The initial 2007 mandate was multidimensional, encompassing support for dialogue, protecting Somali transitional government institutions, support for stabilisation, and monitoring security while assisting with humanitarian efforts (AMISOM n.d. – e). Since then, AMISOM's mission has only gotten more complicated. Currently, AMISOM is tasked with reducing the threat of Al Shabaab, assisting with stabilisation and reconciliation, and facilitating the gradual take-over of security operations by Somali forces (AMISOM n.d. – b).

Countries in East Africa and member states of IGAD provide much of the personnel for AMISOM. The military component of AMISOM is made up of troops from Uganda, Burundi, Djibouti, Kenya, and Ethiopia (AMISOM n.d. – c). Countries contributing to the AMISOM police component include Uganda, Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Kenya, and Zambia (AMISOM n.d. – d). As detailed above, the Africa region, and in particular IGAD and Ethiopia, have long had an active interest in the security of Somalia. In essence, AMISOM is mandated by the AU and UN but implemented by IGAD member states as the majority of the troop contributing countries. Finally, AMISOM's funding comes from multiple extraregional sources: the EU pays troop salaries, the UN provides logistical support through its UN Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS), and bilateral partners provide training, equipment and other assistance. The next section will analyse how the proximity of actors engaged in conflict resolution impacts their legitimacy and credibility amongst Somalis.

The Subsidiarity Debate & Somalia

As ROs have taken on increasingly active roles in peace and security governance, we have seen a debate emerge around the meaning and merits of subsidiarity (Møller 2005; ECCAS-CMI 2016; Nathan 2016; Ndiaye 2016; Reinold 2019). While definitions of the subsidiarity principle vary, they share at least one of the following two components: the devolution of authority (decision-making power) to lower-level actors and the devolution of task-ownership to lower-level actors. The deployment of AMISOM has involved both types of devolution, to some degree, and so Somalia from 2007 to the present provides an opportunity to consider the supposed pros and cons of subsidiarity in the context of a concrete case. To what degree and in what ways does AMISOM illustrate the comparative (dis)advantages of "regional solutions to regional problems"? AMISOM fulfils one key promise of regional solutions in that the AU – unlike the UN – was willing and able to deploy this war-fighting force to a volatile conflict situation. The mission has performed a vital security role in Somalia for nearly 15 years and has managed to raise troop levels over time by adding contingents from frontline states. This neighbourhood ownership is a double-edged sword as deployment is motivated partly by the shifting interests and alliances of neighbouring states, reflecting contentious domestic and regional politics. Like many regional solutions, AMISOM relies on extraregional funding, and this introduces a variety of complications. Ultimately, however, while AMISOM has been the subject of criticism, no viable non-regional alternative exists for keeping Al-Shabaab at bay.

RO Willingness to Deploy

With the important exception of the MONUSCO Force Intervention Brigade, UN missions tend to adhere to the traditional peacekeeping principles of impartiality and limited use of force. AMISOM is a war-fighting mission and therefore does not adhere to these principles. AMISOM deployed to a situation that did not meet – and has not since met – the criteria for UN mission deployment, illustrating the touted early-deployment advantage of ROs in Africa. At the time that AMISOM was launched, there were several other ongoing crises in Africa, notably the conflict in Darfur and a process to transition the peacekeeping operation there from an AU mission to a hybrid mission with the UN. Given these dynamics, the UN was unable to secure enough political support to deploy a mission in Somalia, so the AU deployed its own regional mission (Lotze 2018, 224). The AU did not initially envision the long tenure that AMISOM has had. Originally, the mission was mandated for a mere six-month deployment, to be followed by a UN take-over.

The AU has continuously pushed for such a transition over the years, and the UN has periodically conducted assessments of Somali political and security conditions in order to gauge prospects for a UN deployment, however, the conditions have never been right (see Blyth 2019, 2-4).

Reception & Perceptions of RO Intervention

Another rationale for regional intervention is its greater legitimacy, based on regional solidarity norms (and as an alternative to neo-colonial and superpower intervention). The legitimation power of pan-Africanism is well-recognised. Bjørn Møller goes so far as to identify pan-Africanism as "a Foucauldian 'regime of truth'" that "forces leaders into a symbolic competition with each other, each trying to surpass the others in terms of pan-African credentials" (Møller 2009, 57). In the case of Somalia, the UN's legitimacy had specifically suffered from misadventures in the 1990s (and from the withdrawal of UNOSOM II in 1995), while African ROs had been growing their peace and security mandates. This resulted in "the initiative for peace" shifting to regional and sub-regional actors (Brosig 2015, 180). However, the legitimacy of AMISOM in the eyes of political actors in Somalia and of the Somali public has been undermined by several factors.

Perhaps most importantly, the AMISOM troop contributing countries (TCCs) are neighbouring states with which Somalia has, or has previously had, political disputes. This raises a commonly observed comparative disadvantage of regional peace operations related to the special interests of neighbours. On the one hand, their interests in the outcome of the conflict can motivate their engagement, making it easier for ROs to mobilise troop contribution. On the other hand, the interests of TCCs may be at odds with the goals of the organisation and mission, and any political tensions between the host government and TCCs can harm relations between the mission and the host government (as well as between the mission and the civilian population). The first TCCs (Burundi & Uganda) do not share borders with Somalia, but troops from Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya eventually joined, bringing with them their vested (and sometimes competing) interests in Somali politics – in addition to their commitments to countering terrorism and managing conflict spillover. For example, Ethiopia has an interest in maintaining its occupation of Ogaden, whose residents are ethnic Somalis, and in preventing Al-Shabaab-supported irredentism there. Kenya has also had concerns about irredentism and wants to secure its commercial interests in Somalia (e.g. port of Kismayo) (Okoli and Iwuamadi 2021, 47). The perceived threat of radical Islamism in the region motivates both Ethiopian and Kenyan engagement in Somalia.

Ethiopia invaded unilaterally in 2006 in order to protect the transitional government and to defeat the ICU, which it identified as a regional threat. The invasion was also motivated by Ethiopia's desire to curb the influence of its then-rival Eritrea which opposed the transitional government and which was allegedly supporting the ICU. Some characterise Ethiopian and Eritrean engagement in Somalia at this time as a proxy war (Demissie 2020). Ethiopia's invasion – with US backing – succeeded in restoring the TFG, but "given the history between Ethiopia and Somalia (vacillating between outright animosity and deep-rooted mistrust) …some Somali armed groups vehemently resisted the presence of Ethiopian troops in Somalia" (Wondemagegnehu and Kebede 2017, 202). Even before Ethiopia became an AMISOM TCC, its presence in Somalia hurt AMISOM's image. Somali experiences with Ethiopian troops during the years leading up to AMISOM's deployment contributed to scepticism about the AU force that replaced them (Fahlén 2015, 184). Then, during 2007-2009, Ethiopian forces remained in-country and worked alongside (but not as part of) AMISOM, resulting in "a considerable degree of guilt by association in the eyes of the local populace because of the [Ethiopian National Defence Forces] brutal approach towards local civilians" (Williams 2018a 267).

For its part, Kenya invaded the Somali state of Jubbaland unilaterally in 2011 (Operation Linda Nchi – "Protect the Nation") in order to fight Al Shabaab. Kenya borders Jubbaland and had been instrumental in its creation, "training some 2,500 militiamen and establishing an administrative structure" (International Crisis Group 2012, 2). As of early 2022, Kenya's commercial interests in Jubbaland (Majid et al 2021, 43), its cooperative security arrangement with Jubbaland President Ahmed Madobe, and its maritime boundary dispute with Somalia (International Court of Justice n.d.) all factor into tensions between Kenya and Somalia. Under president Farmaajo, relations have worsened between the central government and leaders of federal member states Jubbaland and Puntland. The central government maintains good relations with Ethiopia but not with Djibouti or Kenya. Farmaajo and Abiy share a commitment to centralised government, and Ethiopia has been providing military support to the FGS in the latter's efforts to shape electoral processes in the Federal Member States (FMS). Consequently, Ethiopia and Kenya now support opposing parties in Jubbaland (Majid et al 2021). In 2020, Somalia accused Kenya of interfering in its internal affairs and suspended diplomatic relations. GAD investigated these allegations via a Djibouti-led fact-finding mission in 2021, resulting in a report that did not support Somalia's assertions. The Farmaajo regime did not accept these findings and accused IGAD of bias (Demissie 2021).

Coming out of talks facilitated by Qatar, Somalia announced resumed diplomatic relations with Kenya in May 2021 (Hassan 2021). In a June 2021 UNSC meeting, the Somali representative accused Kenya of indiscriminate attacks against civilians, stating "An arsonist can never be a firefighter, just as a destabilizer can never be a peacekeeper. I therefore reiterate my call on the Kenyan authorities to consider their misguided actions in Somalia and work with us towards sustainable peace for the benefit of our people and all the countries of the region" (UNSC, 2021). According to the International Crisis Group (2021), "Mogadishu increasingly has considered an AMISOM withdrawal as a way to curb Nairobi's influence in Somali politics" (8).

Civilian deaths and AMISOM troop misconduct also factor into the mission's image problems in Somalia. Calls by civil society groups for AMISOM "to take allegations of civilian harm more seriously … and introduce transparent accountability measures" (Fahlén 2015, 188) led the AUPSC to authorize the creation of the Civilian Casualty Tracking, Analysis and Response Cell (CCTARC), pursuant to a series of UNSC resolutions (S/RES/2036 2012, S/RES/2093 2013, S/RES/2124 2013, S/RES/2182 2014, and S/RES/2232 2015). The CCTARC began operating in 2015. It has a mixed track record, and several ongoing challenges limit its effectiveness (Rupesinghe 2019). A 2017 study of civilian perspectives reported that many interviewees "testified about abuses committed by AMISOM forces, including sexual violence, arbitrary detention, incidents leading to the deaths of civilians and the discrimination against Somalis working for the mission." Although these specific allegations were not independently verified, they speak to perceptions among civilians. The study also reported a lack of awareness among civilians of AMISOM's mandate and of the CCTARC mechanism, suggesting this lack of awareness contributes to negative perceptions of the mission (International Refugee Rights Initiative, 4-5). According to more recent Crisis Group interviews with Somali citizens (August 2021), AMISOM continues to face "resentment" about human rights violations (International Crisis Group 2021, 4).

That said, the sources of anti-AMISOM sentiment are complex. Some AU officials are frustrated with the Somali federal government's use of anti-AMISOM messaging, interpreting it as a cynical domestic political strategy (Interview, 2022). Al-Shabaab has of course long portrayed AMISOM as an illegitimate foreign occupier and tool of the West. As a counter to Al Shabaab messaging, the UN and AU created a joint Information Support Team to take on strategic communications in this environment (Williams 2018c). At the end of the day, though, AMISOM remains a foreign occupying force, and so there are likely limits on the effectiveness of such public relations campaigns. Furthermore, AMISOM operates in an arena which Alex de Waal describes as a "disassembled patchwork of public authorities and political entrepreneurs" where the FGS and FMS do not actually dominate the political marketplace (de Waal 2020, 561 & 578). This state of affairs places important constraints on AMISOM's ability to make progress on stabilisation. Relatedly, calls for an accelerated handover of AMISOM operations to the Somali National Army do not always fully appreciate the severity of domestic force generation problems – problems linked to fundamental unresolved questions of federalism and relations between the FGS and FMS (Interview, 2022).

RO Capacity

Another drawback of lower-level ownership discussed below is the relatively limited capacity of lower-level bodies. This makes it difficult, and usually impossible, to deploy regional peace operations without serious financial and logistical support from extraregional actors, and such reliance on outside help in turn complicates mission command and control. It may also colour public perceptions of the mission as a tool of Western powers. In the case of AMISOM, coordination between the TCCs and the US military likely adds to these perceptions. TCCs receive security assistance from the US military via the African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance programme (Williams 2018b).

The Regional-Global Nexus & Somalia

The dual reality of RO willingness to deploy peace missions and RO capacity shortcomings necessitates UN-RO partnership. Traditionally, and per the UN Charter, ultimate authority for the maintenance of international peace and security rests with the UNSC. According to some interpretations of subsidiarity, the AU is therefore "fulfilling the legal obligations of the United Nations" via its deployment of AMISOM (Interview, 2022). This fulfillment in turn undergirds the UN's responsibility to support AMISOM, although the UN's specific responsibilities here are underspecified in Chapter VIII of the UN Charter.

Cooperation & Coordination

While it is easy to focus on UN-AU partnership problems, it is important to take note of the cooperation and coordination accomplishments of these organisations, especially in the case of Somalia. According to Malte Brosig (2015), the Somalia case stands out among African cases for being the site of a genuine "regime complex of divided but also shared tasks" (178). Scholars in particular point to the unprecedented nature of the UN Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS), which is the first – and only – of its kind to provide logistical support to a non-UN force (International Crisis Group 2021, 4). They describe it as "one of the most creative and innovative decisions by the Security Council" (Blyth 2019, 6) and credit the AMISOM mission for major advances in "the cooperation, coordination and strategic partnership between the UN and the AU in general on international peace and security" (Fahlén 2015, 191). AU calls for the UN to replicate the UNSOS model in Mali (2013) and CAR (2014) evidence the relative success of this arrangement (Williams 2018a, 233), at least early on. [Note: Until 2015 – when it was replaced by UNSOS – this office was called the United Nations Support Office for the African Union Mission in Somalia (UNSOA)].

Competition, conflict, and inter-organisational authority relations

Although AMISOM has produced major advances in UN-AU partnership practices, it has also been a site of inter-organisational competition and conflict. It is therefore a case that has much to teach us about evolving inter-IGO authority struggles and the possibilities and limits of RO challenges to UN(SC) primacy.

From the start, the AU has pushed for a UN take-over of AMISOM, and the UN has never agreed. This has given each organisation leverage over the other, in different ways. On the one hand, "A potential UN takeover and logistical support for AMISOM put the UN into a situation in which it could exert some influence over the AU" (Brosig 2015, 193). On the other hand, the AU has used the absence of a UN deployment "as a tool to request more direct support" for AMISOM (Brosig 2015, 186). Relatedly, the UN's "purse string" power is a source of friction. While the AUPSC provides the official mandate for AMISOM, the UNSC also provides authorisation, "which has everything to do with money" (Interview, 2022). The AU has consistently pushed for a more sustainable and predictable funding arrangement (see for example AUPSC 2016), and the spectre of EU donor fatigue makes this all the more urgent (Mahmood and Ani 2017). Related proposals are the subject of acrimonious debate within and between Councils, especially when it comes to the question of the use of UN assessed contributions (International Crisis Group 2020). Furthermore, the support package provided by the UN to AMISOM also puts the UN in a position to hold the mission to its own institutional standards, ranging from civilian protection to gender policies, and this is an exercise of authority (Brosig 2015, 194). For example, The UN Secretary-General's Human Rights and Due Diligence Policy calls for the human rights assessment of all non-UN forces that receive UN logistical support (UNSOM 2022; Burke 2017).

There has sometimes been an "unhelpful divergence" between the UNSC and AUPSC when it comes to interpretations of AMISOM's mandate; the UN side takes a narrower peace enforcement view and the AU side takes a more multidimensional view of AMISOM's role in Somalia (Williams 2019, 3). As mentioned above, this division of labour was originally based on perceived comparative advantages, but while the AU may have been content to cede leadership on political processes to the UN early on, it has since pushed for AMISOM to play a greater political role. Two recent examples illustrate this initiative. Pursuant to a May 2021 AUPSC communiqué (AUSPC 2021a), the AU Commission in collaboration with AMISOM began providing electoral assistance to Somalia in September 2021 (African Union 2021). This work was not supported by UN resources and reportedly received pushback from the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) in what one AU official describes as competition over "turf" (Interview, 2022)."

Further, in May 2021, the AU Commission Chairperson announced the appointment of former Ghanaian president John Dramani Mahama as High Representative to Somalia. This appointment came in response to a constitutional crisis in Somalia (Amani Africa 2021a), and Mahama was assigned a political mediation role, "work[ing] with the Somali stakeholders to reach a mutually acceptable compromise towards an all-encompassing resolution for the holding of Somali elections in the shortest possible time" (AUC 2021). The FGS rejected the envoy appointment, citing alleged ties between Mahama and Kenyan leaders (Mutambo 2021a).

In recent years, we see increasing calls from scholars and practitioners for a greater political role for African ROs in Somalia. In his 2019 policy brief, Jide Martyns Okeke (2019) argues for the AU and IGAD to "initiate the appointment of a high representative for Somalia to enhance joint political support for the country," reasoning that the mission personnel's many years on the ground have resulted in "a deep understanding of the politics of Somalia" (7). ISS-Africa's PSC Report (2020) echoes this call, proposing a shift in focus for the AU towards "a political solution to the crisis." This proposed shift would entail increased efforts aimed at "supporting outreach by the government," "community-level reconciliation," and "support [to] efforts by Somali stakeholders to consider negotiations with al-Shabaab" (par. 1).

According to an AU official, the RO is currently in the process of negotiating with the UN to support an expansion of AMISOM's non-military stabilisation role. UNSOM and other UN agencies have the mandate and resources to provide humanitarian assistance and rule of law institution-building in newly-liberated areas, but these areas are often not secure enough for UN personnel to enter. From an AU point of view, then, "those who can are not given the resources, and those who have resources cannot" (Interview, 2022).

These proposals fit into broader debates about AMISOM's strengths, weaknesses, and future. Disagreements about AMISOM's withdrawal or reconfiguration have animated ongoing tensions between the AU and UNSC, and other partners, as well as between the AU and FGS. The AU objected to the UNSC's 2020 appointment of an independent review team to assess international support to Somalia's security environment (S/RES/2520 2020, paragraph 38), because this assessment was not jointly commissioned by the AU. In response to this side-lining, "the AUPSC and AU publicly rejected the [resultant] review and prohibited AU Commission officials and AMISOM from providing the team with formal inputs" (Forti 2021, 31). The AU also commissioned its own, separate assessment of AMISOM. These competing assessments in turn produced competing proposals for the post-2021 future of AMISOM. The AUPSC endorsed the replacement of AMISOM with a hybrid AU-UN mission, justifying this proposal as a way to secure more predictable and sustainable funding (AUPSC 2021b). The FGS strongly opposed this option (Mutambo 2021b). The UN-commissioned assessment report endorsed a different option, essentially a reconfigured AMISOM. One key argument made in the report against the joint mission was that counterterrorism and peace enforcement do not align with the principles of UN peacekeeping (Amani Africa 2021b). At the time of writing, negotiations between the FGS and AU Commission are underway regarding the details of a planned March 2022 transition from AMISOM to the new (i.e. reconfigured) African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS).

The case of Somalia illustrates broader trends that have played out in peace and security authority relations at the global-regional nexus. The AU has broadly sought to assert itself as a peace and security actor not only through enhanced peace and security actions and capacities but through diplomatically pushing norm evolution. In particular, the AU has challenged "prevailing global peace and security norms" that are underpinned by notions of the UNSC sitting at the top of a hierarchy (Lotze 2018, 219-20). In 2007, members of the UNSC agreed to regular consultation with members of the AUPSC. This has taken the form of annual meetings alternating between the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa and UN headquarters in New York. However, the UNSC still viewed the relationship between the two organisations as hierarchical (Lotze 2018, 225). Since this time there has been a continual evolution of the relationship between the UN and AU with the AU consistently pushing for more equal partnership in peace and security matters. This has had implications not only for the role of the AU but more broadly for the relationships between the UN and ROs, and the interpretation of Article VIII of the UN Charter, which outlines the role of ROs in peace and security.

Further Research

This paper has focused on the global-regional nexus of conflict resolution in Somalia as a mechanism to analyse the interactions amongst Western and non-Western engagement in peace and security. Specifically, it has addressed three questions on how non-Western organisations engage in conflict resolution, the perceptions of interventions, and patterns of overlap, competition, and cooperation. The case study has illustrated different sub-regional, regional, and global actors leading at different times and varying patterns of divisions of labour and authority. For example, IGAD (with strong Ethiopian influence) was most active in peace processes during a time when the UN stepped back from multidimensional peace missions more broadly, but more recently the UN has played a renewed role in peace missions while member states of IGAD have asserted influence in Somalia in other ways. Turning to peace missions, while AMISOM was originally mandated by the AU, it was authorised by the UN and has been primarily funded by the external donors with African states (primarily from IGAD member states) providing troops.

Subsidiarity conceptualises which actors should have ownership and authority over peace and security tasks, with a push for devolution. However, in a complex conflict space such as Somalia, with local-level conflicts to conflicts between the state and federal level to nation-wide conflicts involving international actors, it is difficult to pinpoint how ownership and authority should be devolved and the implications for public perceptions. While IGAD and neighbouring states may be viewed as most impacted by the conflict, they also come with a host of national interests that have delegitimised their intervention in the eyes of some Somalis. Whereas global actors come with their own set of biases and interests, notably making progress in the global war on terror. How Somalis view the legitimacy and credibility of this complex web of actors is an area for further research.

The AU and some RECs have taken on more ownership of peace and security tasks and pushed for authority in recent years. While the AU has been consistently enhancing its capacity for peace and security since its creation in 2002, the capacity and willingness of RECs to take on peace and security work is uneven (Coe and Nash 2020). How subsidiarity is practiced between the AU and RECs and amongst RECs where there is overlapping jurisdictions is still evolving, and the relation between the UN and AU is also still evolving and will have broader implications for UN-RO relations on peace and security. As such, there are open questions on how much authority the UN will cede to ROs as well as the impact of ROs on global peace and security governance.

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