



**Universiteit
Leiden**

**African Agency or Postcolonial Power Relations?
A Decolonial Analysis of the African Union and United Nations
Relationship in UNAMID**

**Master Thesis
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This thesis was submitted to the Faculty of Humanities of Leiden University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the MA International Relations

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July 2020

Word count: 15,081

ABSTRACT

As the involvement of regional organizations in peacekeeping has significantly grown over the past decades, the relationship of these organizations with the United Nations has been reconfigured. This is particularly the case for the African Union and the UN, that set up their first peacekeeping mission with joint ownership in 2007 with UNAMID, the UN-AU hybrid mission in Darfur. The UN-AU relationship is not only determined by global-regional power relations, also postcolonial power relations play a role. As a result of these power relations, the AU is often perceived as being rather agency- and powerless. This thesis will counter this narrative, by studying the way in which the AU exercised agency over the set-up of UNAMID. It finds that while the AU was constrained by material capacity and the influence of powerful actors, it was still able to exercise agency and have influence on the UN, by using discursive strategies and the contestation of norms. Following these findings, this thesis advocates for a decolonial shift in the understanding of the AU that makes space for African agency and African contributions in international affairs, particularly, but not only, in peace and security matters.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. M.E.L. David for all her constructive feedback which really helped me further in my writing and thinking process throughout. In addition, I would like to thank my family and friends for their continuous support and encouragement, as well as for providing a supportive atmosphere for me to write this thesis, even during the Corona pandemic. Special thanks go to Jessica Schwarz, for being my sparring partner, study buddy and friend since the beginning of this Master's program onwards. Without all of you, this thesis would not have been what it has become.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION	5
Chapter 2 LITERATURE REVIEW	8
The International Security Architecture.....	8
Structure and Agency.....	9
The Liberal Peacekeeping Model	13
Conclusion	14
Chapter 3 METHOD.....	16
Conceptual Framework: Agency, Discourse and Norms.....	16
Critical Discourse Analysis.....	17
Rationale for Selection.....	19
Scope of this Thesis	20
Chapter 4 AGENCY AND DISCURSIVE TACTICS	21
The Transition from AMIS to UNAMID.....	21
Discursive Contestation in the Transition from AMIS to UNAMID	22
Constraints on the AU's Agency	25
Conclusion	27
Chapter 5 AGENCY AND THE CONTESTATION OF NORMS.....	29
Women Peace and Security: a Case of Norm Contestation	29
The Rule of Law: Norm Contestation or a Difference in Interpretation?.....	32
Conclusion	34
Chapter 6 CONCLUSION	36
BIBLIOGRAPHY	39

Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION

The past few decades have seen an increase in the involvement of regional organizations in international peace and security issues, including peacekeeping operations (Abass, 2004; Nathan, 2010). This is particularly the case in Africa: next to the already large involvement of the United Nations (UN) in peacekeeping operations in Africa, the African Union (AU) and subregional organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) are also becoming increasingly active in the peace and security issues on the continent (Gelot, 2012; Nathan, 2010). A certain pattern seems to be emerging here, in which the AU takes up the role as first responder to regional security threats and the operation is consequently taken over by the UN (de Coning, 2017; Gelot, 2012). Most often, it is suggested that this is because the AU is constrained by its operational and financial shortcomings, and that the UN is in a better position to coordinate the bigger peacekeeping operation (de Coning, 2017; Weiss & Welz, 2014). Most scholars studying the UN-AU relationship approach it this way, focusing on operational capacities. While this is certainly relevant to study, this approach risks ignoring the power issues that are involved in the relationship between the UN and regional organizations such as the AU. There have been some studies that focus on this, however most of them view this relationship as merely hierarchical, as a relationship in which regional organizations are subordinate to the UN and have little agency themselves (Gelot, 2012; Hettne & Söderbaum, 2006). This is particularly the case for studies on the AU. Even though African agency as a research agenda has gained traction, there have not yet been studies that focus on African agency as exhibited by the AU. In particular, there is a gap in studies on the AU's relationship with the UN, and studies that understand agency as constituted of more than material capability. This is the approach that this thesis will adopt, by understanding agency as being exercised through discourse and norm interpretation.

Therefore, the research question that this thesis aims to answer is: **What can the AU do to exercise agency in the relationship with the UN and how did it do so in the transition from AMIS to UNAMID?** The importance of this question lies in the contribution to existing research and in the decolonization of the image that persists of the AU. As stated above, the AU is not often studied in terms of agency. Most often, the AU is perceived as being constrained by the unequal distribution of power and resources in the postcolonial world, in particular its lack of material capabilities. The objective of this thesis topic is to sketch a more nuanced picture of the role of the AU in international politics. By focusing on the AU's agency and

understanding it as being exercised through discourse and norms, this thesis allows for a shift towards larger involvement of African voices and contributions. This enables an understanding of the AU as an actor in its own right, instead of a 'victim' of structural inequalities. In this way, this research question moves beyond postcolonial power relations, without ignoring their effects. Developing a better understanding of the AU and its relationship with the UN is important in light of its increasingly large role in African peace and security and peacekeeping operations. The case of the transition from the African Union Mission in the Sudan (AMIS) to the United Nations-African Union hybrid mission in Darfur (UNAMID) is most suitable for studying this, as it is the only case in which an AU mission was transformed into a joint AU-UN mission. It therefore allows for studying the negotiations between the UN and the AU about their respective roles and the discourse that reflects this process. The findings from this case can consequently be used to understand the AU-UN relationship better, also in other peacekeeping operations.

This thesis thus aims to add a critical voice to existing research, by challenging the common understanding of the AU as agency-less and subordinate to the UN. In addition, and not insignificantly, it demonstrates that alternative understandings of agency as something more than just material capability are possible, as it studies agency as exercised through discursive tactics and the contestation of norm interpretation, and how this can be effective. The contribution of this thesis to existing research lies therefore in its illumination of the extent and nature of agency of the AU in its relation to the UN in peacekeeping operations, and the method employed to identify and study that agency.

The main argument this thesis will set out is the following: even though the AU is often constrained by its lack of material resources and its disadvantaged position in international politics, it can still exercise agency over its own role in peacekeeping and that of the UN, by using discursive tactics and norm contestation. This argument will be developed throughout this thesis in the following way. In the current chapter the research question was introduced, and the relevance of the question was sketched. In chapter 2 the literature about the relationship between regional and global organizations in peacekeeping will be reviewed and it will identify gaps in the existing research. Chapter 3 will provide an explanation of the method that will be used in this thesis, which is a critical discourse analysis. It also provides the rationale for selection of the case and method. In chapters 4 and 5 this method will be used to study the AU's agency in the relationship with the UN during the transition from AMIS to UNAMID. Chapter

4 will specifically focus on the discursive strategies that the AU used to exercise agency in the set-up of UNAMID, taking into account constraining factors on this agency, as well. Chapter 5 will narrow in on instances of contestation between the AU and the UN, by studying the interpretation of norms in UNAMID discourse. The final chapter, chapter 6, will tie all the chapters together and provide an answer to the research question. The expected conclusion is that the AU was able to exercise agency in the transition from AMIS to UNAMID and that it did so by using discursive strategies. However, it can also be expected that the analysis will provide nuanced conclusions and challenge those findings in the existing literature that adopt a starker, less nuanced stance when describing the relationship between the AU and the UN.

In sum, this thesis will study the agency of the AU in the relationship with the UN during the transition from AMIS to UNAMID. The relevance of this topic lies in the contribution to existing research and the influence it can have on the perception of the AU and its relationship with the UN, especially in respect of power asymmetries. In particular, it can help in moving beyond a perception of the AU as being persistently disadvantaged by postcolonial power relations and instead to viewing the AU as an actor in its own right, with recourse to more tools to assert its agency than is recognized in the mainstream International Relations literature. The next chapter will review existing literature and debates on this topic, as well as identify existing gaps in the literature. It will also specify how this thesis fits in the existing body of research.

Chapter 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The preceding chapter has introduced the topic of this thesis and set out the research question. The current chapter will outline how this question fits in the existing literature about this topic. In addition, it will establish that there is a gap in the literature of studies about African agency in the international security architecture, focused on the African Union and its relationship with the UN. In this chapter, three debates in research on peacekeeping and the relationship of regional with global organizations will be identified. First, the discussion about the roles of regional and global organizations in peacekeeping will be explained. Then, the debate about structure and agency will be highlighted, focusing specifically on African agency. Finally, the debate on the liberal peacekeeping model and associated norms will be discussed.

The International Security Architecture

Regional organizations have become increasingly active on peace and security in the past decades (Abass, 2004; Nathan, 2010). Particularly in recent conflicts in Africa, regional organizations such as the African Union (AU) and ECOWAS have played an important role (Gelot, 2012; Nathan, 2010). The AU, most notably, has become more active in peacekeeping after it let go of the non-interference principle of its predecessor, the Organization of African Unity (OAU). The United Nations Security Council (UNSC), having the primary responsibility for international peace and security, often collaborates with these organizations. As established in international law, there is common consensus that the relationship between the UN and regional organizations is a hierarchical one with the UN on top (Hettne & Söderbaum, 2006; Gelot, 2012). This means that while regional organizations can be involved in peace and security issues, they are subsidiary to the UN. However, the consensus on this relationship of subsidiarity does not mean that the division of roles and powers between the UN and regional organizations is not under discussion.

In particular, there is a discussion about whether the UN and regional organizations relate to each other in terms of a principal-agent relationship, in which the UN bestows legitimacy on regional organizations to intervene in conflicts (Hettne & Söderbaum, 2006; Gelot, 2012). The reason for this discussion is that regional organizations sometimes intervene without seeking UN approval beforehand, particularly when the UNSC does not act itself, such as in the case of Darfur (Gelot, 2012). Even then, however, the UNSC is still responsible, due

to its primary responsibility over international peace and security. As such, the UN is sometimes dependent on the behavior of regional organizations, which can boost or weaken the UN's legitimacy (Gelot, 2012). Regional organizations also criticize the UN sometimes. The AU, for instance, criticizes the UN for its selectivity and postcolonial bias in responding and therefore strives for a larger role for regional organizations, as stated in the Ezulwini consensus (Murray, 2004). This would, then, suggest that the relationship between the UN and regional organizations is not (only) a principal-agent relationship, but that regional organizations can also impact upon the UN. So far, there have not been any studies that analyze the relationship between the UN and the AU in peacekeeping with a focus on power relations. In order to study this, we need to look at discussions of structure and agency, for this enables illuminating the power relations involved in the AU-UN relationship.

Structure and Agency

Traditionally in International Relations (IR) there is more emphasis on structure than on agency (Beswick & Hammerstad, 2013; Brown, 2012). (Social) structure is often understood as a “stable sets of norms, rules and principles that shape social relations by constituting actors as knowledgeable social agents and by regulating their behavior” (Reus-Smit 2007: 159). A focus on structure rather than agency can also be found in postcolonial theory in IR. Most postcolonial IR scholars focus on how the international order is pre-determined, based on unequal power relations stemming from colonialism which disadvantages the postcolonial subject (Grovogui, 2013; Jabri, 2014). Particularly in studies about Africa, the focus has most often been on structure rather than agency, for the popular discourse about Africa often represents it as structurally marginalized and impacted upon by greater powers (Brown, 2012).

More recently, however, there has been an increase in attention for agency in IR. Agency is often understood in IR as “the faculty or state of acting or exerting power” (Brown, 2012). This means that agency always has to do with power and power relations, something which will be explored further in the next chapter. It is often understood that agency is the space to act for an actor within the structure in which it finds itself (Brown, 2012). Where an emphasis on structure has often been favored by postcolonial scholars, more recent, particularly decolonial work, focuses more on agency (Staeger, 2016). ‘Postcolonial’ can here be seen as “a *description* of incomplete European decolonization and the dominance of European knowledge” and ‘decolonial’ as “the *prescription* by contemporary anti-colonial scholarship to overcome the

postcolonial condition” (Staeger, 2016: 982, emphasis in original). As such, where postcolonial studies usually focus on how structural inequalities disadvantage the postcolonial subject, in this case Africa, decolonial studies aim to show the agency these subjects have within these structures. This can challenge the traditional narrative portraying Africa as “perpetual victim” (Beswick & Hammerstad, 2013: 476) and shed light on the tension between African activism in international affairs and structural constraints (Brown, 2012). For that reason, this thesis will employ a decolonial approach, focusing on the agency of the AU.

In the past few years a number of studies on African agency has emerged. African agency can be described as the participation of African actors in, and influence on, international politics (Brown, 2012). Most of the studies on this topic have focused on African agency in multilateral financial forums such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) (Brown, 2012; Lee, 2013). However, there are also some studies that focus on African agency in the international security arena, and on the role of the AU in this. From these studies it appears that there is a debate on the extent to which the AU exercises agency in the international sphere. On the one hand the AU wants to take up responsibility for its own peace and security, partly out of fear for Western imperialism and skepticism towards involvement by the UN and UNSC (Williams, 2007). On the other hand, the AU also sometimes asks for the assistance of the international community in providing peace and security in Africa, to make up for the colonial past of the West (Murray, 2004). Some authors therefore view the AU as “a partly autonomous African society of states” (Williams, 2007: 259), while others focus on how the establishment of the AU itself was already an act of African agency, as a reaction against Western imperialism (Brown, 2012). The aim of this thesis is to add some nuance to this debate, while focusing on the AU’s role in peace and security.

African solutions for African problems

Most studies about African agency in international security are focused on the mantra ‘African solutions for African problems’, which arose after the Cold War to shift some responsibilities of the UN on to African actors (Murray, 2004). Whether this mantra is an expression of African agency is disputed. Some authors view it as a way of lending legitimacy to African security actors in order to limit the pressure on Western actors to intervene (de Oliveira & Verhoeven, 2018; Duursma, 2019). This points to a policy of burden-shifting rather than burden-sharing by the UN and powerful Western states (Gelot, 2012). Other authors view it as a way to not take African security issues seriously (Abass, 2007). The authors on this side

of the debate therefore relate the treatment of Africa to asymmetrical power relations between the Global North and the Global South, in which the South lacks the resources to exert agency and decide for itself.

Other authors, instead, focus on how the AU has put the mantra to its own advantage, and how it has used it to enlarge its agency in the peace and security of the African continent (Beswick & Hammerstad, 2013; Mickler, 2013). ‘African solutions for African problems’ can therefore also be seen as a way for African actors to take more ownership over security on the continent (Beswick & Hammerstad, 2013). These authors thus move beyond postcolonial power relations and viewing Africa as a victim.

There has also been some discussion about the role of the AU in UNAMID, the case that will be analyzed in this thesis. While Prinsloo & van Niekerk (2015) view the negotiations about the set-up of UNAMID as a case in which the AU had much influence and showed its commitment to decide over its own continent, Duursma (2019), instead, argues that other actors such as the US played a large role in this process. In line with Duursma, Mickler (2013) argues that the AU was prevented from exercising agency in UNAMID because of its lack of material resources. These studies, however, have not studied in depth the agency that the AU exercised during the set-up of UNAMID, how it did so and how it impacted the UN. In this thesis, I argue that this is necessary in order to fully understand the AU.

What can be concluded from the reviewed literature in this subsection, is that there is a debate on whether African actors are able to take agency over their own peace and security matters, or whether they lack resources for this. While there are thus some studies on African agency in international security, there appears to be a gap in studies on African agency as exercised by the AU, particularly in relationship with the UN. In addition, most studies reviewed above employ a rather narrow understanding of agency. In order to fully understand the AU’s agency, a broader conception is needed.

‘Hard’ agency versus ‘soft’ agency

While agency and structure are often understood as strictly distinct entities, currently, a more flexible understanding has been developed of structure and agency as being continuously reproduced and co-constitutive (Beswick & Hammerstad, 2013). This opens up space for other ways of understanding agency. Agency is often associated with hard balancing, and thus with

material power and influence (Chipaike & Knowledge, 2018). Especially in peacekeeping operations, agency is often perceived in terms of material capability. However, it has been argued that African agency can be better studied if other forms of agency are considered (Chipaike & Knowledge, 2018). This is for African actors such as the AU generally cannot afford the military and economic resources that are required for hard balancing and they, therefore, often engage in soft balancing, instead (Chipaike & Knowledge, 2018). They do this, for instance, through collective agency: taking a collective stance in multilateral forums and making their numbers count (Brown, 2012). This strategy of collective power stems from an African model of solidarity, consensus politics and *ubuntu* (Smith, 2012). This becomes visible in African politics, for instance, when an act of the international community against one African state is perceived as against Africa as a whole (Murray, 2004). Because this type of agency does not express itself in hard power usually, other sources such as discourse and norms have to be studied. Yet, there are not many studies that analyze discourse and norms regarding African agency. This is therefore the gap that this thesis will address, as will be explained in the next chapter.

Structure and agency in multilateral organizations

Within multilateral institutions such as the UN and the AU itself, discussions about agency also play a role. A key debate is to what extent these institutions are actors of themselves or whether they are merely a sum of their parts; their member states. Some authors argue that international organizations have a life of their own and are not accountable to their member states, while others opine that they are bound to the will of their member states (Hawkings, Lake, Nielson & Tierney, 2006). In order to understand the behavior of these organizations, it is important to consider the influence that member states and external actors have on the organizations and how they can constrain their agency. Two ways in which this happens will be highlighted here.

First, both the AU and the UN are criticized by scholars for being influenced too much by their most powerful member states. Many scholars hold that the UNSC's decisions are highly influenced by Western powers and that other states lack involvement (Boulden, 2004; Childers, 1993; Chimni, 2004; Weiss & Welz, 2014). One of the reasons for this is supposedly the high degree of dependence of the UN on Western financial resources (Chimni, 2004). As a result, Western powerful states can often use the UN for their own purposes (Chimni, 2004). The UN is often criticized for this, particularly by African actors who lament the fact that Africa is the

largest regional group without permanent seat in the UNSC (Spies, 2008). The African Union itself can also be victim of the interests of its most powerful member states. Although there is not much research on this issue, multiple scholars argue that the AU and African subregional organizations are sometimes used by African leaders for regime-boosting and for advancing their own purposes (Bøås, 2003; Söderbaum, 2009). In this thesis, the influence these powerful states have on the UN and the AU will be taken into account.

Second, the organizations can be constrained by external influence. This is mostly the case for the AU, as the UN does not have many external actors in the form of states that can influence it, due to its almost-universal membership. The AU is often constrained by its dependency on resources from external powers (Mickler, 2013). This lack of resources limits its capacity to take ownership over security issues and makes it vulnerable for external pressure (Mickler, 2013). Other scholars argue, however, that the AU also uses these capacity limits to enhance its agency and attract external support (Beswick & Hammerstad, 2013). This influence of external actors on the AU will be explored further in this thesis, particularly in chapter 4.

While there has thus been some research about these forces that impact the UN and the AU, there is yet a gap in the literature that takes them into account in a study of the relationship of both organizations.

The Liberal Peacekeeping Model

The third debate that can be identified in the peacekeeping literature is about the liberal peace model. The liberal peace model views peace as more than the absence of war and acknowledges the large effect of modern wars on civilians (Paris, 2004; Richmond, 2006). In practice, this results in including more efforts towards state-building such as democratization, the rule of law, human rights and neo-liberal development in peacekeeping operations (de Oliveira & Verhoeven, 2018; Richmond, 2015). By many scholars and policymakers, it is assumed to be rather unproblematic (Richmond, 2006). However, there is also much criticism. Critical theorists, for instance, have described this new peacekeeping model as a way of exporting liberal market democracy and its values to non-Western states (Reeves, 2012; Richmond, 2015). This invokes questions of power and postcolonialism; postcolonial scholars argue that these liberal peacekeeping norms are imposed upon the South by the North (Jabri, 2014).

(Postcolonial-) feminist scholars also criticize the liberal peacekeeping model. Humanitarian efforts in societies in the Global South, for instance, have been criticized for being paternalistic and neocolonial, captured in the famous quote of Spivak (1988: 297) “White men saving brown women from brown men”. Olivius (2016) and Carpenter (2005) use this rationale to criticize policies on the protection of civilians and refugees for portraying all men as perpetrators and all women as victims. These scholars, together with Reeves (2012) and others, view humanitarian interventions and peacekeeping missions as imposing Western gender norms on non-Western societies. Other feminist scholars, instead, focus on African agency and how African actors were successful in getting the Women Peace and Security agenda accepted at the UN level, emphasizing how (gender) norms can be transmitted from the South to the global level (Gelot, 2012; Haastrup, 2018).

As appears from this subsection, the adoption of liberal peacekeeping norms sparks interesting debates about postcolonial power relations. This makes them useful for studying these relations. While there have been some studies that compare the interpretation of some of these norms by the UN and the AU (Haastrup, 2018; Kjeksrud et al., 2011; Zähringer, 2013), there have so far been none that study how the UN and the AU resolve these differences in interpretation in a case in which they work closely together, such as in UNAMID. That is therefore what this thesis undertakes to do.

Conclusion

This chapter identified three main debates in current peacekeeping literature that this thesis will engage with. To start with, there is a debate on the respective roles of global and regional organizations in peace and security issues. This literature demonstrates that the relationship between the UN and regional organizations is usually perceived as hierarchical. This is challenged by some authors by arguing that regional organizations can have influence on the UN, too. To explore the power relations involved in this dynamic further, questions of structure and agency have to be engaged with. Traditionally, IR theory, including postcolonialism, focuses more on structure than on agency. In order to move beyond postcolonial, unequal power relations between the Global South and the Global North, this thesis will instead take a decolonial approach focused on African agency. So far, there are no post- or decolonial studies about the AU’s agency in relation to the UN in peacekeeping, and

studies that take into account the influence of powerful member states and external actors on this relationship. In addition, there is a gap in the literature regarding studies focused on African agency based on soft balancing and discourse. These gaps will be addressed in this thesis. As demonstrated above, norms associated with the liberal peace model are useful to study in this regard, as they exemplify debates on North-South power relations. As such, the thesis will consider the (postcolonial feminist) discussion about liberal peacekeeping norms in postcolonial theory as well.

The following chapter will establish how the above formulated will be studied. It will lay down an analytical framework and demonstrate how agency can be studied through discourse and the interpretation of norms. Furthermore, it will establish the method of analysis and the primary sources it will analyze in order to answer the research question.

Chapter 3 METHOD

In the preceding chapter, it was established that there is an absence of research that studies the agency of the AU in peace and security. This thesis aims to fill that gap, by studying the AU-UN relationship in peacekeeping through discourse. This chapter will specify how this will be approached by first laying out an analytical framework, which will set out the relationship between agency, power and discourse. Consequently, the method of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) that will be employed in this thesis will be explained, as well as the rationale for the selection of the case and the sources. Finally, the scope of this thesis will be justified.

Conceptual Framework: Agency, Discourse and Norms

The previous chapter demonstrated that while agency is often understood in terms of material capability, African agency can better be understood by studying soft balancing and discourse. That is the approach that will be adopted in this thesis, particularly focusing on the strong discursive component that agency has. Doty (1997) portrays this relationship between agency and discourse as follows: “[a]gency is not understood as an inherent quality of individual human beings qua human beings, but rather as a positioning of subjects that occurs through practices, practices that are inherently discursive” (Doty, 1997: 384). This means that agency is ultimately about power; it both influences and is dependent on relative power relations between actors. The discursive practices that enable agency are not only produced by individuals, but also by institutions. International institutions can be seen as sites of discursive power which produce discourses that enable certain types of action and not others (Shepherd, 2008). Discourse can illuminate asymmetric power relations (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002), and institutions can use discourse to challenge or strengthen those relations. As such, regionalist organizations can be seen as sites of discursive contestation in which regionalist discourse is set out against other territorial, including international-level, discourses (Ching, 2000). In this way, regionalist organizations such as the AU can challenge international organizations such as the UN and exercise agency by contesting its discourse.

Regional organizations can use multiple strategies to contest discourse of international organizations. Here, the strategies of discursive contestation, rhetorical entrapment and norm contestation will be highlighted. (Discursive) contestation plays an important role in postcolonial and decolonial work (Aydarova, 2017; Jabri, 2014). Contestation can be seen as

an act of exercising agency which can be expressed through discourse. Discursive contestation often involves presenting alternative discourses to the dominant one (Aydarova, 2017) and can be used by regional organizations to present alternative discourses to the dominant discourse of international organizations, such as the UN.

Rhetorical entrapment is, likewise, a tool for the weakly socialized actor, meaning that it does not entirely belong to a certain community but it is also not entirely outside of it (Schimmelfennig, 2001). On the one hand, these actors are assumed to belong to the community and share its norms, while on the other hand they are not fully committed to these norms and often pursue egoistic interests that contrast with the community's values (Schimmelfennig, 2001). These actors can then use the norms of the community against it to reach their self-interested goals. In this way, the weakly socialized actors can shame the members of the community into compliance, by reminding them of the community norms. As such, they can exercise agency. However, the community members may also use rhetorical action to avoid having to conform to the norm, such as downplaying community norms or interpreting them to their own advantage (Schimmelfennig, 2001).

Another strategy is the adoption or contestation of norms. Norms are often defined as "as a standard of appropriate behavior for actors with a given identity" (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998: 891). Norms are created and spread by actors, including international organizations. Between different actors, processes of norm socialization can take place, which may result in norm convergence or norm contestation (Zähringer, 2013). Norm contestation is a way of challenging the adopted meaning of a norm and can thus be used to challenge dominant discourse and the dominant interpretation of a norm. Norms are often spread by more powerful actors, and this norm interpretation can then be contested by less powerful actors in an act of agency (Contessi, 2010). Therefore, norm contestation can be used to study power relations between actors. This will be done in chapter 5 of this thesis.

Critical Discourse Analysis

The above explained discursive tactics will be studied in this thesis by employing a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), in order to uncover the hidden power relations between the AU and the UN. The aim of CDA is to "reveal the role of discursive practice in the maintenance of the social world, including those social relations that involve unequal relations of power"

(Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002: 63). By uncovering the inequality in social (and political) relations and the means by which that is achieved, it aims to contribute to social change leading towards more equal power relations. CDA focuses in particular on the role of discursive practices in this process. It differs from a more abstract Foucauldian method of discourse analysis as it links discourse more to the social context it is part of (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). The method of CDA was chosen in this thesis because it allows for uncovering (asymmetric) power relations and analyzing discourse as part of a broader social context. In addition, CDA is suitable for analyzing the dialogic engagement between dominant discourses and their alternatives (Aydarova, 2017). In this way, it is a useful method for analyzing the interaction between actors in an asymmetric power relation in which contestations between discourses take place, which is the topic of this thesis.

In this thesis, the method of CDA as developed by Fairclough (1992) will be followed. This method consists of both an interdiscursive analysis, to analyze which discourses, genres and styles are drawn upon in a text and how they relate to each other; and a linguistic analysis of the different semiotic modes and their articulation, which is meant to link the micro-analysis of texts to different forms of social analysis of practices, institutions and organizations. Fairclough's method stipulates that first a conceptual framework of the social context needs to be drawn, which is done in the previous chapter and the beginning of the current one. After this, a textual and, in this case, also an intertextual analysis of the interaction between the UN and the AU need to be performed. This will be done in the following two chapters, analyzing the documents identified below. In the concluding chapter, the conceptual framework will be combined with the discourse analysis to draw conclusions.

The particular method that is used will be largely deductive combined at times with an inductive method. Informed by the literature a number of textual aspects were identified that can be used to study agency in discourse. This selection was then refined after having reviewed the primary sources. The aspects that were chosen in this regard are discursive contestation, rhetorical action, silences, and norm contestation. These aspects were chosen for they allow analyzing agency and power disputes between different institutions. They will be analyzed in the following manner.

Discursive contestation will be studied by comparing AU and UN discourse while looking at instances in which the division of roles and powers is disputed, and cases in which

the discourse is disputed. Instances of rhetorical action will be studied by comparing the discourse in the selected documents with the broader institutional discourse of the AU and the UN. Silences in the discourse will be studied as they are powerful signifiers of unequal power relations and (lack of) agency (Dhawan, 2012). They will be identified by studying cases of omission, for instance when it can be expected that an actor is mentioned but it is not. Norm contestation will be studied by firstly choosing norms that play an important role in the relationship between the AU and the UN in the case of UNAMID, and for which the interpretation of it was expected to differ between the organizations. This decision will be based both on the literature and on the primary sources. More specifically, the choice for the Women Peace and Security norms was deductively made, as it was expected that the interpretation of these norms would differ for the AU and the UN. The norm of the rule of law was chosen inductively, as by observing the texts to be analyzed it appeared that the interpretation of it differed between the AU and the UN. After choosing the norms, the manner in which the interpretation of the norms differs or is contested between the organizations will be analyzed. These aspects together allow for studying agency in the relationship between the AU and the UN.

Rationale for Selection

In this thesis, one specific case will be studied as it is the only case in which the UN and the AU set up a peacekeeping mission with joint ownership, the UN-AU hybrid peacekeeping mission in Darfur (UNAMID). UNAMID was set up in December 2007 in order to take over from AMIS, the AU mission in Darfur. Even though it was first foreseen that the UN by itself would take over this mission, after consultations between the AU and the UN it was decided to set up a hybrid peacekeeping mission in which the two organizations would work together (Gelot, 2012). Because of this, it allows for studying the interaction between the AU and the UN and the negotiations between them about the division of tasks. This will be done by analyzing primary sources of the AU and the UN.

The documents that will be analyzed are resolutions of the UNSC and communiqués and press statements of the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) about the missions of AMIS and UNAMID between 2004 and 2008. These types of documents reflect the decisions that are made by these bodies and therefore, they are highly influential and informative. The time period reflects the period between the establishment of AMIS until a year after the establishment of

UNAMID. This period was chosen because it was during this time that the response to the conflict in Darfur was negotiated within and between the AU and the UN. In addition, reports of this period requested by the UNSC and the AU PSC and written by the UN Secretary-General and the AU Chairperson of the Commission will be analyzed. The rationale for this is that the decisions of the UNSC and the AU PSC were based on these reports, and as such they influenced their discourse to a large extent. This allows for a more encompassing analysis of the institutional discourse about the missions. In addition, a joint report of the UNSC and the AU PSC about their consultations in Addis Ababa in 2007 was included as well as the AU's requested adjustments on it, in order to be able to study the inter-institutional discourse.

Scope of this Thesis

The aim of this thesis is to add a critical voice to existing research on multilateral organizations and peacekeeping. The decolonial perspective was chosen because this is where the gap in the literature is. Therefore, this thesis does not engage with other perspectives, as those are already better represented in the literature. As set out above, the thesis is limited to one case. The reason for this is that it is the only available case to answer the research question as stated in the first chapter, for it is the only joint AU-UN peacekeeping mission so far. By analyzing documents written by the UN and the AU, the outcome of their internal negotiations is studied as well as the documented negotiations between them. This means that the internal negotiations or the experiences of the individuals involved in drafting the documents are not taken into account. As explained above, however, analyzing (written) institutional discourse is useful for detecting agency and power and therefore this was chosen as method.

In sum, this chapter has set out the rationale for using a Critical Discourse Analysis to study the discourse of the UN and the AU. This method allows for studying agency in a way that goes beyond material capability. It also enables studying the power relations between the organizations. In the next chapter, this method will be employed to study the relationship of the AU-UN relationship in the set-up of UNAMID, by focusing on agency and capacity.

Chapter 4 AGENCY AND DISCURSIVE TACTICS

The previous chapter established that a Critical Discourse Analysis will be performed in this thesis, in order to analyze the role of agency and power in the relationship between the African Union (AU) and the United Nations (UN). The current chapter will provide the first part of this analysis, by building on the framework laid out in the previous two chapters. It will analyze the relationship between the AU and the UN in the set-up of UNAMID, by focusing on discursive strategies and the influence of external actors. This chapter is divided into three parts. The first will provide a short overview of the transition from AMIS to UNAMID. The second part discusses how the AU successfully exercised agency in this process. It shows how the AU used discursive strategies to ensure its role in the hybrid mission. Two strategies will be highlighted: discursive contestation and rhetorical entrapment. The third part of the chapter deals with the source of this agency, and external factors that influenced the UN-AU relationship. Two elements are considered in this regard: the role of the Sudanese government and the AU's dependency on external sponsors. This shows how the AU was subjected to pressure from multiple actors, which both constrained and enabled it to exert agency.

The Transition from AMIS to UNAMID

The AU-UN hybrid mission in Darfur (UNAMID) was established in 2007 by taking over AMIS, the African Union mission in Sudan. AMIS was deployed in 2004, in response to large amounts of violence by rebel groups and government-sponsored militias known as the Janjaweed (Udombana, 2005). The AU first mandated AMIS to merely monitor the ceasefire but changed this to a protection mandate when the security situation deteriorated (Kjeksrud et al., 2011). Both the AU and the UN stressed the importance of the mission in Darfur being an African one, as it was perceived as marking a "positive trend towards greater African leadership in resolving Africa's conflict" (United Nations, 2005a). AMIS was praised for its courageous work in a difficult environment. However, mostly due to a lack of resources, it was not able to fully implement its mandate (African Union Commission, 2005). Therefore, both the AU and the UN opined that it was better to transform the mission into a UN one. At the beginning of 2006, the first talks about a possible transition from AMIS to a UN mission began. The UN quickly took the lead in this process. However, the AU was also able to participate actively in the process of transition, which eventually led to the set-up of the first joint AU-UN mission,

UNAMID. In this chapter the extent to which the AU was able to exercise agency in this process will be studied.

Discursive Contestation in the Transition from AMIS to UNAMID

In chapter 2 and 3 of this thesis, we have seen how states that occupy a not-so powerful position, for instance due to a lack of material resources, can use discursive contestation to exercise agency. This subsection will argue that the AU used discursive contestation in the transition to UNAMID in order to exercise agency over the process. It did so in two ways: first, by requesting adaptations in a joint UN-AU report which was drafted by the UN and second, by using rhetorical action against the UN by emphasizing the importance of the ‘African character’ of the mission.

Discursive contestation in the UN-AU joint report

Following the High-Level consultations about the transition from AMIS to UNAMID on 16 November 2006, the UN published a joint AU-UN document on its outcomes (United Nations, 2007b). This document included, among others, the mandate and tasks of the mission. After publication, the AU requested a number of adjustments to the text (United Nations, 2007b). Many of these adjustments involved adding the name of the AU where only the UN was mentioned, such as when in the following sentence “the African Union Peace and Security Council” was added: “The Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council will be kept informed of those actions” (United Nations, 2007b). Through adjustments like these, the AU strove to make sure its voice was being heard and would continue to be heard in the future of the mission. Other documents about UNAMID (for instance African Union Commission, 2008) also reflect this concern of the AU that the UN would take up an extensively large role and diminish the influence of the AU.

Through this striving for acknowledgement of the role of the AU, the authority of the UNSC as being primarily responsible for international peace and security was also challenged. In the joint AU-UN document on the Addis Ababa consultations, the UN assumed ultimate responsibility multiple times, in sentences such as: “The Security Council has ultimate responsibility in this regard” and “given the Security Council’s primary responsibility for authorizing and the United Nations direct responsibility for implementing the mandate of the operation” (United Nations, 2007b). Both these sentences are taken out in the revised report

which includes the adjustments the AU requested. This means that the AU attempted to increase the importance of its own role and decrease that of the UN, questioning the UN's leading role in the peacekeeping mission. This is consistent with the discourse in other AU documents such as the Ezulwini consensus, in which the AU advocated for a larger role for regional organizations in maintaining peace and security in their own regions (African Union Executive Council, 2005). This has likely to do with the history of colonialism on the African continent; out of fear for imperial involvement, the AU wants to maintain agency over the peace and security of its continent. In the negotiations about UNAMID, this comes to expression in the AU adjusting discourse of the UN, in this way ensuring its voice is taken into account. This can be seen as an act of taking agency over the process and challenging the top-down relationship with the UN, in which the UN assumes full control.

Striving for the 'African character' of the mission

Another way in which the AU exercised agency in the transition from AMIS to UNAMID was to strive for maintaining the 'African character' of the mission. It did this by using the technique of rhetorical entrapment. As explained in chapter 3, rhetorical entrapment is when a weakly socialized actor to a community uses the norms of that community in order to achieve the actor's self-interested goals. The AU did this by emphasizing the 'African character' of the mission, as such using the UN's own slogan of 'African solutions for African problems' against itself. The AU used this technique in order to obtain agency over the process. This was done in the following way.

In April 2005 the AU stressed for the first time that the solution for Darfur should be found "within an African framework" (African Union Commission, 2005). The AU later specified this by emphasizing that also after a UN take-over the 'African character' of the mission should be maintained (African Union Commission, 2006b). This rhetoric resembles the slogan of 'African solutions for African problems' which is used by the UN in order to shift some of its responsibilities onto African actors such as the AU (see chapter 2). The UN thus uses this motto to encourage African actors to take responsibility over their security matters (Murray, 2004). In the set-up of UNAMID, the AU used this motto to its own advantage, by calling for maintaining the 'African character' of the mission. In this way, the AU used one of the UN's norms against it and applied it for its own purposes, therefore using rhetorical action. In addition, by using the UN norm and adapting it to its own purposes, the AU took agency over the discourse.

In a typical response to rhetorical entrapment, the UN tried to avoid having to conform to this demand by arguing that: “the African Union mission is already an international one” and that “a United Nations-led operation in Darfur would depend greatly on African contributions” (United Nations, 2006a). This was however not sufficient for the AU, which wanted to see this reflected in the set-up of the mission in concrete terms. It also directly criticized the UN for this. In the preamble of resolution 1706 (2006), the UN expressed its determination that a UN mission in Darfur “shall have, to the extent possible, a strong African participation and character” (United Nations Security Council, 2006). In reaction to this resolution, the AU remarked that the African character of the mission is “referred to only in the preamble of the resolution and not in sufficiently explicit terms” (African Union Commission, 2006c). Consequently, the AU demanded that it should be involved more in the transition and that the Force Commander of the mission and the majority of the troops should come from the African continent.

While the UN recognized the need to accommodate the AU on this point, it had some difficulty realizing it. This had mostly to do with the stance of its most powerful and rich member states and those contributing troops. The UN stated, for instance, that it wanted to have control over the command and control system in order for it to be “acceptable to United Nations Member States contributing troops and police to the operation” (United Nations, 2007a) and it even threatened that “United Nations financing may otherwise not forthcoming” (United Nations, 2007a). Thus, by demonstrating that they were also bound to the position of their member states, the UN aimed to maintain control over the mission and avoided handing over too much responsibility to the AU. However, the UN did eventually agree with maintaining the African character of the mission in the way the AU proposed, and instead of a UN take-over it resulted in the establishment of an AU-UN joint mission. The AU was thus successful in its use of rhetorical action and in exercising agency.

In sum, in the process of the transition from AMIS to UNAMID, the AU was able to exert agency by using discursive contestation and rhetorical entrapment. In this way, the AU could obtain influence in the process and ensure it got an important role in UNAMID. By doing so, it challenged the hierarchical relationship between the UN and the AU, in which the UN decides over the AU and the AU has little agency. The result of the AU’s actions was the establishment of the first mission in which the UN shared ownership with a regional

organization, UNAMID. There are, however, multiple explanations possible for why the UN accommodated the AU on this. In this regard, the influence of other actors also needs to be taken into account.

Constraints on the AU's Agency

Even though it can be argued that the AU exerted agency on the transition process and this was accepted by the UN, it is the question what the source of this agency was. The AU was namely not entirely free to make its own decisions; it was also pressured by other actors, by its (mostly Western) sponsors such as the EU, the US and the UN on the one hand, and the Government of Sudan (GoS) on the other.

Particularly regarding the 'African character' of the mission, the GoS played an important role. The Government was strongly opposed to non-African international involvement and therefore did not agree to a UN mission in Darfur. Because the consent of the GoS was necessary for a UN mission, its concerns needed to be taken seriously. The AU needed to take it even more into account, in light of the principle of solidarity between African states (as discussed in chapter 2). By stating that African problems should be solved by Africans themselves, the GoS appealed to the AU's resistance to Western imperialism, as well as to the UN's 'African solutions for African problems'. However, the AU could not simply reject the United Nations take-over, for it was also pressured by other actors.

For the financial aspects of AMIS, the AU was dependent on external partners such as the EU, the US, Canada and the UN. These partners had, in exchange for their support, much influence on the mission. As the AU acknowledged, this constrained the agency of the AU:

Noting that the financial and logistical support for AMIS had been entirely provided by the partners, from the very beginning, it was difficult for the AU to maintain full control of the Mission (African Union Commission, 2006b).

Even though the partners had an influence on AMIS from the beginning onwards, their power became most visible during the transition to a UN mission. In contrast to the GoS, the AU partners (most notably the EU, the US and Canada) were in favor of a UN take-over. They made this intent clear by not coming forward with more funding to sustain AMIS if it would not hand

over to the UN. As the AU notes in March 2006 this was an important reason for the AU to agree with the transition:

The immediate trigger for the consideration of a transition to the UN was, however, the notice served by the AU partners that they would not sustain AMIS financially beyond 31st March 2006, without a decision on a transition (African Union Commission, 2006b).

This underlines the large influence that the partners had, and the power that comes with financial capabilities. It demonstrates how both the UN and the AU were dependent on the rich and powerful countries that supported AMIS and how this was used by these countries to exert power. By threatening to stop the funding, they left the AU with no choice than to hand over the mission to the UN.

This pressure, together with the pressure from the Government of Sudan, put the AU in a difficult position. To the GoS it wanted to show its commitment towards remaining active in Darfur, however it was also dependent on resources from Western countries and the UN. The latter argument was used against the AU by the Government as well, its Foreign Minister stated for instance that

since the African Union decision to relinquish its Mission in Darfur in favour of the United Nations was dictated more by constraints on the ground than principles, what needs to be done is to provide the required assistance to AMIS to enable it fulfill its mandate (African Union Commission, 2006c).

In this way, the GoS intended to downplay the influence of the UN and the Western powers, by suggesting that the only reason for the take-over was the funding issue. Both the GoS and the League of Arab States indicated their willingness to help funding AMIS if that meant that the transition to the UN would not take place. However, the AU eventually agreed with the transition to a UN mission, thus giving up its own mission and giving in to the UN. This shows that the UN and its powerful member states had a large influence. It suggests that perhaps funding was not the only issue, or at least that the AU felt not secure enough to rely upon other states for funding. As a compromise towards the GoS, the AU aimed to maintain the African character of the mission.

This demonstrates that the AU was influenced a lot by other actors and was not always free to make its own decisions. The stance of the GoS strengthened the position of the AU,

which allowed it to make demands about the character of the mission. Therefore, the compliance of the UN with the AU's demands cannot only be granted to the efforts and agency of the AU, as the AU was also backed up by the sovereignty of the GoS. On the other hand, the AU was influenced a lot by powerful Western states, as it was dependent on their donations. These states pressured the AU to hand over to the UN. This shows the power that material capacity can have, and how it can strengthen or weaken agency. However, it seems that not only was the funding at stake, but also the influence of powerful Western states on the AU and the UN. It can thus be concluded that the AU was constrained to exercise agency and to be the master over its own actions.

Conclusion

Taking all of this into consideration, it appears that the AU was constrained in its ability to exercise agency and decide for itself, mostly due to its lack of material capacity. It was pressured by the Sudanese Government and by actors with more financial capacity than the AU itself (UN, EU, US, Canada). Nevertheless, what this chapter also shows is how, when these factors are taken into account, the AU was still able to exercise agency. Even though part of its bargaining power resulted from the GoS's demands for the African character of the mission, the AU also actively used tactics of discursive contestation and rhetorical entrapment to use agency. In this way, it made sure its position was taken into account and would be taken into account in the future. This is consistent with the (postcolonial) literature on African agency: subjects that are structurally marginalized can exercise agency through discourse, by contesting the discourse of the powerful. In this chapter we have seen this quite literally, by the AU deleting sentences in a joint AU-UN report and taking agency over UN language. In addition, we have seen how successful this can be: for the first time in history, the UN started a peace operation with shared ownership. This demonstrates that while the AU was constrained by structures of unequal distribution of resources and power, it nonetheless managed to exercise agency and have influence, through discourse.

This chapter has provided the first part of the analysis of the relationship between the AU and the UN regarding their hybrid peacekeeping mission in Darfur. It analyzed how and to what extent the AU expressed agency in the transition from AMIS to UNAMID and the influence of other actors on this process. The next chapter will build on these findings by

looking closer at the agency of the AU through instances of contestation with the UN in the interpretation of norms.

Chapter 5 AGENCY AND THE CONTESTATION OF NORMS

In the previous chapter the relationship between the AU and the UN was studied by focusing on the role of agency of the AU in the transition from AMIS to UNAMID. It established that although other actors had much influence on the AU, it nonetheless managed to exert agency on the set-up of UNAMID by using discursive tactics. This chapter will analyze the AU's agency further, by focusing on another method of exercising agency, the contestation of norms. It will specifically focus on norms associated with the liberal peacekeeping model.

Even though Gelot (2017) stated that the AU already used UN concepts and norm interpretations in AMIS in order to ease a potential transition to the UN, this chapter demonstrates that there were some significant differences in the interpretation of norms between the AU and the UN. While the interpretation of many norms, for instance the Protection of Civilians, was very similar between the AU and the UN, this chapter will specifically focus on norms for which the interpretation differed between the organizations or was contested. The reason for this is that in instances of contestation, agency and power differences can be detected. This chapter shows that the UN and the AU differ in their stance toward liberal peacekeeping and interference in a state, and that UNAMID combines approaches of the AU and the UN. The AU was thus able to have much influence on the interpretation of norms in UNAMID, and have agency in this regard. In this chapter the focus will be on the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) norms and the rule of law, as explained in chapter 3. This chapter will demonstrate that regarding the interpretation of the WPS norms there is norm contestation and for the rule of law there is a difference in focus between the UN and the AU. In this chapter, first the WPS norms will be discussed, followed by the norm of the rule of law.

Women Peace and Security: a Case of Norm Contestation

As stated in the literature review, the Women Peace and Security (WPS) agenda was advocated for by African actors at the UN, which ultimately resulted in UNSC Resolution 1325 (2000) (Gelot, 2012; Haastrup, 2018). It was taken up as well by the AU, and both the AU and the UN write about the topic in their documents on AMIS and UNAMID. However, both organizations focus on different aspects of it. The WPS agenda encompasses a number of gender norms, such as the participation of women in peace processes and the protection of women from sexual and gender-based violence. This collection of norms falling under the WPS agenda will from now on be abbreviated as 'WPS norms'. From the following analysis it

appears that whereas the UN focuses more on prosecution of perpetrators of sexual and gender-based violence, the AU focuses more on the participation of women in peace processes. This does not mean that the UN does not mention the participation of women at all, or that the AU does not include the prosecution of perpetrators of sexual and gender-based violence. It can be noticed, however, that they mention those aspects more, and more often as first priorities. In UNAMID documents, the approach of the AU is favored over that of the UN. As will be concluded after the analysis below, this points towards a case of norm contestation in which the AU interpretation of the norm prevails over that of the UN.

In UN documents about AMIS and UNAMID it can be observed that there is an emphasis on sexual and gender-based violence regarding WPS issues. This appears for instance here:

A gender action plan specifically targeted to the Darfur emergency would also be implemented and would focus on prevention and response measures to address the high rate of reported incidents of sexual and gender-based violence (United Nations, 2005a).

This approach [of the gender component of a UN operation in Darfur] would underline the provision of technical support to various mission components to respond to the identified priorities of women and girls in the sectors of security, protection (particularly physical, legal and social), human rights and political participation. (United Nations, 2006b)

Even though the approach of the UN is based on Resolution 1325 (2000), of which an important aspect is the participation of women, this is not mentioned much here. The protection of women from sexual and gender-based violence is named as first priority, instead.

The AU, on the other hand, focuses less on combating sexual and gender-based violence, and more on the participation of women.

[..] I wish to inform the PSC that the Commission has undertaken a number of initiatives aimed at addressing the gender dimensions of the conflict in Darfur and strengthening women's participation in the on-going Inter-Sudanese Peace Talks (African Union Commission, 2006a).

From this quote it appears that the AU associates the gender dimensions of the conflict directly with women's participation in peace talks. Even though it can be argued that the AU in this way

attempts to avoid explicitly mentioning sexual violence, its motivation for this approach is equally or more about advocating a more inclusive perception of women, as this excerpt shows:

The role played by GEST [Gender Experts Support Team] has helped to show another side to the women of Darfur, i.e. not merely as victims of war, but also as active agents with a significant contribution to make to the search for a lasting solution to the conflict (African Union Commission, 2006a).

This reflects an approach that is more focused on actual gender equality than the UN-focus on women as victims of gender-based violence. Where the UN ignores the agency of Darfuri women by portraying them merely as victims, the AU brings back the agency of these women by adopting a broader interpretation of WPS norms and the role of local women. This reflects the postcolonial feminist literature discussed in chapter 2 that criticizes the understanding of all local women in conflicts as victims, and all local men as perpetrators. In this case, the UN thus takes a more neocolonial stance that looks down on African women, and the AU takes the opposite position by emphasizing their agency. Regarding the Women Peace and Security norms, therefore, there is norm contestation between the AU and the UN.

In UNAMID the approach of the AU is more present; the prosecution of perpetrators of sexual and gender-based violence is not mentioned often. Instead, the focus is more on the participation of women. One of UNAMID's tasks is for instance:

To assist in harnessing the capacity of women to participate in the peace process, including through political representation, economic empowerment and protection from gender-based violence (United Nations, 2007b).

This resembles the language as used by the AU in AMIS more than the language used by the UN in AMIS and UNMIS. While the interpretation of WPS norms by all actors may have shifted over time, it is still significant how little attention is spent on the legal protection of women from sexual and gender-based violence compared to the participation of women. Therefore, it can be concluded that regarding the WPS norms the interpretation of the AU prevails over that of the UN. In this case, then, the AU was able to exert much influence on the set-up of UNAMID and thus, exercise agency.

The Rule of Law: Norm Contestation or a Difference in Interpretation?

As stated in the literature review, many modern peacekeeping operations include practices of establishing the rule of law and building legal institutions in host states of conflicts (de Oliveira & Verhoeven, 2018; Richmond, 2015). As this is often critiqued by postcolonial scholars for being a top-down, North-South approach, it can be expected that there are differences in how the norm of the rule of law is used and interpreted by the AU and the UN. From the following analysis it appears that this is indeed the case in the interpretation of the norm by the AU and the UN in AMIS and UNAMID.

What can be observed in AMIS and UNAMID is that the AU focuses much less on the rule of law than the UN does. First of all, this can be noticed in the fact that AMIS does not have a rule of law component. The UN partly makes up for this inaction by providing training programs on human rights and the rule of law for AMIS personnel. In UNAMID, the rule of law component is almost entirely taken up by the UN as well. This appears from the following excerpt, in which it is explained why a rule of law component is needed in UNAMID:

AMIS does not have a rule of law, judicial systems and prisons advisory component. This activity is essential to the multidimensional peacekeeping strategy envisaged for the operation. The rule of law, judicial and prisons advisory component of the operation will assist all stakeholders in promoting the rule of law, including through support to the strengthening of an independent judiciary and professional corrections system and combating impunity, working in close cooperation with the United Nations country team, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), other United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and non-governmental organizations (United Nations, 2007b).

This demonstrates why the UN deems a rule of law component to be essential. Besides, it shows that it is almost entirely taken up by UN organs, the AU is not mentioned. The words that are used, such as ‘combating impunity’, also reflect UN language used in other resolutions and reports (such as United Nations Security Council (2006) and United Nations Security Council (2004)). It thus appears that the AU had little influence on this part.

There may be multiple reasons for the AU’s lack of attention for the rule of law. In AMIS, it may well have had to do with the lack of resources, something which the AU also acknowledges (African Union Commission, 2006b). It may also be that the AU recognizes the rule of law to be outside of its scope, as the UN has more experience with it. However, in other

occasions it also appears that the AU deliberately chose to stay out of this topic, and left it to the discretion of the UN.

This choice for inaction on the rule of law component has likely to do with the AU's distaste for far-reaching foreign interference in the affairs of a state. This includes both suspicion towards Western involvement in African states, as well as a hesitance of the AU to intervene in one of its member states itself. In the cases of AMIS and UNAMID, this expresses itself in the AU's hesitance to include aspects as legal institution-building and criminal prosecution. The contrast between the AU and the UN regarding this can be observed in the following two excerpts:

Urging all the parties to take the necessary steps to prevent and put an end to violations of human rights and international humanitarian law and underlining that there will be no impunity for violators (United Nations Security Council, 2004) and

I remain very concerned by the abuses of the international humanitarian law and the continued human rights violations in Darfur. In this respect, I would like to appeal to the GoS to follow through with its stated commitment to ensure the protection of the civilian population and to disarm the militias, in particular the Janjaweed (African Union Commission, 2004).

What can be observed here, is that while the UN stresses that there will be no impunity for human rights violators, the AU appeals to the government to take up its own responsibility for the protection of civilians, instead. The UN thus takes a more confrontational approach, whereas the AU adopts a softer tone and emphasizes the government's sovereignty. This is later on also reflected in the rejection by the AU of the prosecution of president Al-Bashir of Sudan by the ICC, as demanded by the UNSC.

In the mandate of UNAMID this difference between the organization also became visible. Before the mandate was decided on by both organizations, the AU set out a proposal for it in its communiqué of 22 June 2007. For the rule of law component it proposed the following sentence: "to assist in the promotion of the rule of law in Darfur" (African Union Commission, 2007). After the joint consultations of the AU and the UN in 2006, the mandate stated the following, instead:

to assist in the promotion of the rule of law in Darfur, including through support for strengthening an independent judiciary and the prison system, and assistance in the development and consolidation of the legal framework in consultation with relevant Sudanese authorities (United Nations, 2007b).

Thus, after consultation with the UN, more specific measures regarding the rule of law were added, including more institution-building activities. These were elements the AU had not included itself. After publication of this report by the UN, the AU, however, requested to add “in consultation with relevant Sudanese authorities” (United Nations, 2007b). This demonstrates, again, the importance that the AU attaches to the sovereignty and role of the GoS.

From the analysis in the paragraphs above, it can be concluded that there is a difference in focus regarding the rule of law between the UN and the AU. While the UN often emphasizes the rule of law, the AU chooses to mostly stay out of it. In addition, the UN focuses more on legal institution-building and prosecution of human rights violators, while the AU emphasizes the responsibility of the government of the Sudan in this regard. This fits with the observation on the WPS norms that the AU emphasizes the sovereignty of the Sudan more. In contrast with the WPS norms, however, the UN takes up most tasks regarding the rule of law in UNAMID and the AU is largely left out of this. Rather than an absence of agency, this can also be seen as a deliberate inaction of the AU and therefore as an act of agency. By leaving the responsibility for the rule of law and institution-building to the UN, the AU did not have to engage with its own, and its member states', uneasiness about far-reaching interference in one of its member states. In this way, it could resolve for itself the tension between African solidarity and being involved in a peacekeeping mission with the UN. In addition, leaving this responsibility to the UN shows an understanding on the side of the AU of its own strengths and weaknesses. It is therefore not so much norm contestation that took place, but rather a difference in focus and a deliberate choice for inaction of the AU.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the interpretation of the Women Peace and Security norms and the rule of law were discussed, in order to further analyze the role of agency in the relationship between the UN and the AU regarding the transition from AMIS to UNAMID. It concluded that in the case of the WPS norms norm contestation took place, and in UNAMID the norm interpretation of the AU prevailed. Compared to the UN, the AU focused more on the participation of women

in peace processes, in this way emphasizing the agency of local women. As this was largely reflected in UNAMID documents, it can be concluded that the AU was able to exercise agency in the interpretation of this norm. Regarding the rule of law, there was no norm contestation, but rather a difference in focus between the two organizations. From the analysis it followed that the AU did not focus much on the rule of law and that the UN took up this responsibility in AMIS and UNAMID. The reason for this appears not to be a lack of agency of the AU, but rather a deliberate decision of the AU to stay out of far-reaching interference and legal institution-building in one of its member states.

As a result, the analysis of the interpretation of norms and the role of agency results in a nuanced picture. As the literature often describes the relationship of the AU and the UN as hierarchical with the UN on top, it could have been expected that the norm interpretations of the UN would prevail over those of the AU. Focusing on the agency of the AU in the interpretation of norms results in another outcome. Regarding both norms the AU had agency to some extent as it had influence over the interpretation of the norms in UNAMID. Besides, this chapter shows that the UN adopted a more interventionist stance than the AU, as the AU emphasized the sovereignty of the GoS and the agency of local actors more, in a more decolonial approach. The WPS norms, for instance, demonstrate that the AU can have a positive effect on the UN in this regard, by spreading a more inclusive and less denigrating understanding of African women. This can be seen as a manner of exercising agency by the AU.

This chapter thus established that the AU was able to exercise agency in the set-up of UNAMID, by influencing the interpretation of norms. The next chapter will shortly summarize the preceding chapters and draw more general conclusions, answering the research question established in the first chapter. In addition, the contribution of this work to the academic field and the practice of international relations and peacekeeping will be established.

Chapter 6 CONCLUSION

The previous chapter studied the agency of the AU in the relationship with the UN regarding the interpretation of norms. It concluded that the AU was able to exercise agency to a large extent and showed how the AU can also impact the UN. This chapter will put this finding in greater perspective and link it with the other chapters in this thesis. First, the chapters will shortly be summarized and an answer to the research question will be provided. Next, the scope of this thesis and its findings will be discussed and possible ideas for a future research agenda offered. Finally, an overall conclusion will be provided.

This thesis set out to add a critical voice to existing research on the role of the AU in peacekeeping and its relationship with the UN. Instead of painting a black-and-white picture in which African actors are often portrayed as victims, the aim was to show a more nuanced picture, by explicitly looking at the agency that the AU exercises. In this thesis, this was achieved by answering the following research question: What can the AU do to exercise agency in the relationship with the UN and how did it do so in the transition from AMIS to UNAMID?

This research question was first linked to debates in peacekeeping and regionalism research about the role of regional and global organizations, the liberal peace model and structure and agency. From this it followed that there is a gap in the literature on decolonial research focusing on the agency of the AU in peacekeeping in relation to the UN by looking at ‘soft’ agency and discourse. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was chosen as the method to study this, by linking power, discourse, agency and norms. The body of the thesis analyzed discourse, by studying specific instances of agency or lack thereof. Even though the AU was pressured by other actors, such as the government of Sudan and powerful Western actors like the US and the EU, it was concluded that the AU *was* able to exercise agency to a large extent and in a manner that did not rely on material resources. It did this by using discursive tactics in consultations with the UN and by influencing the interpretation of norms in UNAMID. As such, the AU had influence over the set-up of UNAMID and its tasks and characteristics.

Therefore, as an answer to the research question, it can be concluded that the AU *can* exercise agency in its relationship with the UN and during the transition from AMIS to UNAMID, it did so by using discursive and normative strategies to ensure its voice was taken into account. This does not mean, however, that the AU was not constrained. It is rather the

case that, even though the AU was impacted upon by other actors and was not always free to decide for itself, it could still exercise agency. This demonstrates, therefore, that postcolonial power relations still impact the AU and that the relationship between the AU and the UN remains a hierarchical one. However, it does not mean that the AU is powerless, as it can influence the UN, for instance in the interpretation of norms, and make its own decisions. It can do so by making use of its voice and through African solidarity with and between its member states.

This thesis therefore shows that a more nuanced understanding of the AU-UN relationship is necessary. Instead of what existing literature seems to suggest, the UN and the AU cannot merely be seen as two distinct actors that both struggle for legitimacy in a hierarchical relationship, with one exhibiting power over the other. Rather, this thesis establishes that both the UN and the AU are impacted upon by powerful Western states and that both are therefore often constrained to exercise agency. In addition, it demonstrates how the two work together in an often-synergic relationship in which both occupy the roles that match their strengths. Besides, it found that the UN is more interventionist than the AU, and thus the AU can teach the UN to recognize the agency of the host countries of conflict more, particularly when they are in the Global South. Therefore, it shows that the AU can also impact upon the UN, and it is not just the UN that decides over the AU as in a typical principal-agent relationship. This thesis therefore demonstrates that there are alternatives to the black-and-white picture that is often sketched by Western authors writing about the AU. In the words of Jabri, it therefore confirms that “the postcolonial international is a hybrid space of potentialities that cannot be reduced to either conformity or subversion” (Jabri, 2014: 383).

This thesis focused on the only case in which the AU and the UN had joint ownership of a peacekeeping mission, UNAMID. Because of this, it was able to draw conclusions on their relationship and their agreements and disagreements. It chose a decolonial approach to add a critical voice to existing research and to not merely focus on the AU as a victim of asymmetric power relations in the past and present. Instead, it focused on the agency that the AU had and how it exercised it. The choice to study discourse was based on the rationale that discourse can reflect power struggles and is suitable for studying African agency. The documents that were studied reflect the outcomes of inter- and intra-institutional negotiations, not the motivations of the actors involved in drawing them up. The findings presented above are a result of these decisions.

In order to strengthen the findings of this thesis, follow-up research could consist of interviewing individuals that were involved in drawing up the documents that were analyzed in this thesis. In this way, it can be studied how they experienced the role of agency of the AU in the process. In addition, it would be interesting to study the impact that (the consultations about) this joint AU-UN mission had on the AU-UN relationship later on, for instance in other peacekeeping missions, or in the relationship of the UN with other organizations, such as ECOWAS. The findings of this thesis also suggest that there should be more attention for the role of African actors in providing peace and security on the continent. In particular, more African voices should be included in research on conflicts and peacekeeping operations. This is needed in order to obtain a more inclusive image of peace and security in an African context and to shift the Western-centered nature of IR research to a more balanced one.

All in all, this thesis has added a critical voice to existing research about peacekeeping in an African context and the role of the AU in this. It has shown that a decolonial perspective which focuses on the agency of African actors can challenge the existing image of African actors as lacking agency and power. In addition, it has debunked the idea that the relationship between the UN and the AU is only a hierarchical one, in which the AU has little agency. Instead, it has shown that the AU can also influence the UN. It did this by focusing on agency expressed through discourse. In this way, it demonstrated that agency is more than material capability and why it is useful to adopt a broader conception of agency, particularly in an African context. Future research can build on these findings and add to it, in order to change the narrative about Africa and to make room for African voices and African agency.

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