

Comparative Analysis of European Union Foreign Policy and African Union Foreign Policy: A Study of Objectives, Strategies and Challenges

Nasuru Eton Okello

Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Social Sciences, Horseed International University, Mogadishu, Somalia.

nasuru@hiu.edu.so

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the comparative analysis of EU foreign policy and AU foreign policy. The main objectives of the study encompass: to identify the objectives of EU foreign policy and AU foreign policy, to identify the similarities and differences between the objectives of EU and AU foreign policy, to analyse the factors that shape the objectives of EU and AU foreign policy, to evaluate the effectiveness of EU and AU foreign policy in achieving their respective objectives and to analyse the challenges facing EU and AU in implementing their foreign policy. The study utilized a qualitative research methodology, utilizing secondary sources such as official documents, policy statements, academic literature, and case studies through the use of documentary review tool.

The key findings of the study on the objectives of EU foreign policy and AU foreign policy which they entail: The TEU states that the EU aims to promote its values, democracy, and the rule of law, human rights, and international law in its relations with other countries (Article 21.1 TEU) and the objectives of AU foreign policy as outlined in the Constitutive Act of the African Union include: promotion of peace, security, and stability as central objectives of the AU (Article 3.h); the similarities and differences between EU and AU, the Similarities entail: promotion of peace and security and promotion of democracy and human rights; and the differences include: regional integration versus global governance, economic development and poverty eradication and neighborhood versus continental and global; the factors that shape the objectives of the European Union include: treaty framework, member state interests, external challenges and global issues; and the factors that shape the objectives of and African Union foreign policy

entail: African unity and solidarity, historical context and colonial legacy and peace and security challenges; the effectiveness of European Union (EU) and African Union (AU) foreign policy in achieving their respective objectives include: Institutional Framework, emphasis on diplomacy, multilateralism and international cooperation and peace and security; lastly, the finding on the challenges face by EU and AU in implementing their foreign policies include: EU, consensus-building among member states, coherence and coordination, external perceptions and influence, global power shifts and geopolitical dynamics, AU, include: limited resources and funding, peace and security challenge and Limited enforcement mechanisms.

Keywords: *European Union, African Union, Foreign Policy, Comparative Analysis*

1. INTRODUCTION

The European Union (EU) and the African Union (AU) are regional organizations that have emerged as key actors in the field of foreign policy-making within their respective regions. As the EU continues to deepen its integration and expand its influence globally, and as the AU strives to enhance its role in addressing regional and continental challenges, it becomes increasingly important to understand and compare their foreign policy objectives, strategies, and challenges. The EU, as a supranational organization, has developed a comprehensive foreign policy framework aimed at promoting peace, stability, and prosperity both within Europe and beyond. According to Hill and Smith (2011), the objectives of EU foreign policy are multifaceted, encompassing the promotion of human rights, democracy, and the rule of law, as well as the pursuit of security, economic cooperation, and sustainable development. The EU's external action is guided by the principles of multilateralism, regional integration, and effective multilateral governance (European External Action Service, 2016). On the other hand, the AU, as a continental organization, seeks to foster unity, solidarity, and integration among African states. The AU's foreign policy objectives, as outlined in its Constitutive Act, include the promotion of peace, security, and stability, the promotion of democratic governance and human rights, and the pursuit of sustainable development and economic integration (African Union, 2000). The AU's approach to foreign policy is characterized by a commitment to Pan-Africanism, regional integration, and the African Renaissance (Murithi, 2005).

Despite their different historical contexts and institutional structures, both the European Union (EU) and the African Union (AU) face similar challenges in the pursuit of their foreign policy objectives. These challenges include the need to balance the interests and priorities of member states, coordinate policies among diverse actors, and respond effectively to emerging global issues such as climate change, migration, and terrorism (Bicchi, 2006; Whitman, 2011). However, no any comprehensive academic study has been conducted in relation to the comparative analysis of European Union foreign policy and African Union foreign policy: a study of objectives, strategies, and challenges. Thus, this paper aims to conduct a comparative analysis of EU foreign policy and AU foreign policy, focusing on assessment of the objectives of EU foreign policy and AU foreign policy, the similarities and differences between the objectives of EU and AU foreign policy, the factors that shape the objectives of EU and AU foreign policy and the effectiveness of EU and AU foreign policy in achieving their respective objectives and to the challenges facing EU and AU in implementing their foreign policy. By examining the similarities and differences between these two regional organizations, this research seeks to contribute to a better understanding of the dynamics and complexities of regional foreign policy-making.

2. THE METHODOLOGY

This comparative study analysis employed a qualitative research methodology, utilizing secondary sources such as official documents, policy statements, academic literature, and case studies. The research paper focused on analyzing the objectives, strategies, and challenges of EU and AU foreign policy, drawing on relevant theories and concepts in international relations.

3. THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The findings of the study on the comparative analysis of EU foreign policy and AU foreign policy in the spheres of the objectives of EU foreign policy and AU foreign policy, the similarities and differences between the objectives of EU and AU foreign policy, the factors that shape the objectives of EU and AU foreign policy and the effectiveness of EU and AU foreign policy in achieving their respective objectives entail the following:

3.1. THE OBJECTIVES OF EUROPEAN UNION FOREIGN POLICY AND AFRICAN UNION FOREIGN POLICY

European Union (EU) Foreign Policy:

The objectives of EU foreign policy are outlined in the Treaty on European Union (TEU) and the European External Action Service (EEAS) mandate. The TEU states that the EU aims to promote its values, democracy, and the rule of law, human rights, and international law in its relations with other countries (Article 21.1 TEU). It also aims to uphold peace, prevent conflicts, and strengthen international security (Article 21.2 TEU).

The EEAS, as the EU's diplomatic service, further elaborates on the objectives of EU foreign policy. According to the EEAS, the EU seeks to promote effective multilateralism, global governance, and a rules-based international order. It aims to address global challenges such as climate change, poverty, terrorism, and cyber threats. The EU also aims to foster stability, prosperity, and sustainable development in its neighborhood and beyond. It seeks to enhance economic cooperation, promote trade, and support democratic reforms in partner countries.

African Union (AU) Foreign Policy:

The objectives of AU foreign policy are outlined in the Constitutive Act of the African Union. The Act emphasizes the promotion of peace, security, and stability as central objectives of the AU (Article 3.h). It also strives to promote democratic principles, good governance, human rights, and the rule of law (Article 3.g).

The AU's foreign policy objectives also include the promotion of sustainable development, economic integration, and the eradication of poverty (Article 3.i). The Act emphasizes the importance of Africa's unity and solidarity, as well as the need to defend African interests and sovereignty in international affairs (Article 3.c, 3.d).

Furthermore, the AU aims to strengthen its role in global governance and enhance cooperation with regional and international organizations (Article 3.j). It seeks to address conflicts, prevent genocide, and promote peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts in Africa.

3.2. THE SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE OBJECTIVES OF EU AND AU FOREIGN POLICY

The similarities and differences between the objectives of the European Union and African Union Foreign Policy include the following:

Similarities between EU and AU Foreign Policy Objectives:

1. **Promotion of Peace and Security:** Both the EU and AU prioritize the promotion of peace, security, and stability in their foreign policy objectives. They aim to prevent conflicts, resolve disputes, and contribute to global peacekeeping efforts (Treaty on European Union (TEU), Constitutive Act of the African Union)
2. **Promotion of Democracy and Human Rights:** Both the EU and AU emphasize the importance of democratic principles, good governance, human rights, and the rule of law in their foreign policy objectives. They seek to support democratic reforms, protect human rights, and promote the rule of law in their respective regions (Treaty on European Union (TEU), Constitutive Act of the African Union)

Differences between EU and AU Foreign Policy Objectives:

1. **Regional Integration vs. Global Governance:** While the EU focuses on promoting regional integration and economic cooperation within Europe, the AU has a broader objective of enhancing Africa's role in global governance. The AU seeks to strengthen cooperation with regional and international organizations to address African issues and defend African interests in global affairs (Treaty on European Union (TEU), Constitutive Act of the African Union).
2. **Economic Development and Poverty Eradication:** The AU explicitly includes the objective of sustainable development, economic integration, and the eradication of poverty in its foreign policy objectives. The EU also emphasizes economic cooperation and prosperity, but the AU's

focus on poverty eradication reflects its specific context and challenges in Africa (Treaty on European Union (TEU), Constitutive Act of the African Union).

3. Neighborhood vs. Continental and Global Scope: The EU's foreign policy objectives extend to its neighborhood and beyond, as it seeks to promote stability and prosperity in neighboring regions. In contrast, the AU's foreign policy objectives have a continental focus, aiming to address African issues and promote African unity and solidarity (Treaty on European Union (TEU), Constitutive Act of the African Union).

3.3. THE FACTORS THAT SHAPE THE OBJECTIVES OF EU AND AU FOREIGN POLICY

The findings of the study on the factors that shape the objectives of the European Union and African Union foreign policy entail the following:

3.3.1. Factors that Shape the Objectives of EU Foreign Policy:

1. Treaty Framework: The objectives of EU foreign policy are shaped by the provisions outlined in the Treaty on European Union (TEU). The TEU sets the legal and institutional framework for EU foreign policy, defining the values, principles, and goals that guide EU external action (Treaty on European Union).

2. Member State Interests: The objectives of EU foreign policy are influenced by the interests and priorities of its member states. Member states play a significant role in shaping EU foreign policy through their participation in decision-making processes and the negotiation of common positions (Treaty on European Union).

3. External Challenges and Global Issues: The objectives of EU foreign policy are also shaped by external challenges and global issues. The EU responds to emerging threats, conflicts, and crises in its neighborhood and beyond, and seeks to address global challenges such as climate change, terrorism, and migration (Treaty on European Union).

3.3.2. Factors that Shape the Objectives of AU Foreign Policy:

1. African Unity and Solidarity: The objectives of AU foreign policy are shaped by the principles of African unity and solidarity. The AU aims to promote African interests, defend African sovereignty, and enhance cooperation among African countries to address common challenges (Constitutive Act of the African Union).
2. Historical Context and Colonial Legacy: The objectives of AU foreign policy are influenced by the historical context and colonial legacy in Africa. The AU seeks to overcome the legacy of colonialism, promote decolonization, and address the historical injustices and imbalances in international relations (Constitutive Act of the African Union).
3. Peace and Security Challenges: The objectives of AU foreign policy are shaped by the peace and security challenges in Africa. The AU seeks to address conflicts, prevent genocide, and promote peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts in the continent (Constitutive Act of the African Union).

3.4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF EU AND AU FOREIGN POLICY IN ACHIEVING THEIR RESPECTIVE OBJECTIVES

The European Union (EU) and African Union (AU) employ different strategies in foreign policy-making due to their distinct institutional frameworks and regional dynamics. The comparison and contrast of their strategies include the following:

1. Institutional Framework:

- a) European Union (EU): The EU has a supranational institutional framework, where decisions are made collectively by member states and EU institutions. The European Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) play a significant role in formulating and implementing EU foreign policy (European External Action Service).
- b) African Union (AU): The AU has an intergovernmental institutional framework, where decisions are made by member states through consensus-based decision-making processes. The African Union Commission and its various departments, such as the Peace

and Security Department, play a role in coordinating and supporting AU foreign policy (African Union Peace and Security Department).

2. Emphasis on Diplomacy:

- a) European Union (EU): The EU places a strong emphasis on diplomacy as a primary strategy in foreign policy-making. It engages in diplomatic negotiations, dialogues, and consultations with various actors to foster cooperation and resolve conflicts (European External Action Service, 2020).
- b) African Union (AU): The AU also prioritizes diplomacy in its foreign policy-making, particularly through mediation and conflict resolution efforts. It actively engages in diplomatic initiatives to prevent and resolve conflicts in Africa (African Union Peace and Security Department).

3. Multilateralism and International Cooperation:

- a) European Union (EU): The EU strongly emphasizes multilateralism and international cooperation as a strategy in foreign policy-making. It actively engages in international organizations and seeks to uphold international law and promote effective multilateralism (European External Action Service).
- b) African Union (AU): The AU also values multilateralism and international cooperation as a strategy in foreign policy-making. It actively participates in international forums and seeks to promote African interests and influence global decision-making processes (African Union Peace and Security Department).

4. Peace and Security:

- a) European Union (EU): The EU prioritizes peace and security as a key aspect of its foreign policy. It engages in peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts, supports conflict prevention, and contributes to global security initiatives (European External Action Service).

- b) African Union (AU): Peace and security are central to the AU's foreign policy. It deploys peacekeeping missions, mediates conflicts, and supports post-conflict reconstruction efforts in Africa (African Union Peace and Security Department).

3.5. THE CHALLENGES HINDERING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EU AND AUU FOREIGN POLICIES

3.5.1. The challenges faced by the EU in implementing its foreign policy

The EU faces various challenges in implementing its foreign policy due to its complex institutional structure, diverse member states, and the changing global landscape. Here are some key challenges:

1. Consensus-building among member states: The EU's foreign policy decisions require consensus among its member states. This can be challenging due to differing national interests, priorities, and approaches to foreign policy. Negotiating and reaching consensus on complex issues can be time-consuming and may lead to compromises that weaken the effectiveness of EU foreign policy. According to a report by the European Parliament, the need for unanimity in decision-making can slow down EU foreign policy responses and limit its ability to act swiftly and decisively (European Parliament, 2020).
2. Coherence and coordination: The EU consists of multiple institutions and bodies involved in foreign policy-making, including the European Commission, Council of the EU, and the European External Action Service (EEAS). Ensuring coherence and coordination among these institutions and member states can be challenging, particularly when different actors have different priorities and approaches. The European Court of Auditors, in its report on the EU's external action, highlighted the need for improved coordination and coherence to enhance the effectiveness of EU foreign policy (European Court of Auditors, 2018).

3. External perceptions and influence: The EU faces challenges in projecting a unified and influential foreign policy image externally. External actors may perceive the EU as fragmented or lacking a clear strategic direction, which can undermine its ability to effectively pursue its foreign policy objectives. According to a report by the European Parliamentary Research Service, the EU faces challenges in effectively communicating its foreign policy positions and projecting its influence in a crowded and competitive global arena (European Parliamentary Research Service, 2021).

4. Global power shifts and geopolitical dynamics: The EU faces challenges in adapting its foreign policy to the changing global landscape, including power shifts and geopolitical dynamics. Emerging powers, such as China and Russia, challenge the EU's influence and interests, requiring the EU to navigate complex relationships and balance competing interests (European Parliament, 2020, European Parliamentary Research Service, 2021)

The European Council on Foreign Relations, in its report on the EU's foreign policy challenges, highlights the need for the EU to adapt to emerging global trends and address geopolitical challenges (European Council on Foreign Relations, 2021).

3.5.2. The challenges faced by the AU in implementing its foreign policy

The AU faces several challenges in implementing its foreign policy due to factors such as limited resources, internal divisions, and the complex nature of regional dynamics. Here are some key challenges:

1. Limited resources and funding: The AU faces challenges in securing adequate financial resources to implement its foreign policy initiatives. The organization heavily relies on external funding, which can constrain its ability to independently pursue its foreign policy objectives. According to a report by the Institute for Security Studies, the AU's dependence on external funding limits its autonomy and hampers its effectiveness in implementing its foreign policy agenda (Institute for Security Studies, 2018)

2. Coordination and consensus-building among member states: The AU consists of diverse member states with varied interests and priorities. Achieving consensus and coordination among member states in implementing foreign policy decisions can be challenging, particularly when there are divergent views or conflicts of interest. The South African Institute of International Affairs, in its report on the AU's foreign policy challenges, highlights the need for improved coordination and consensus-building mechanisms within the organization (South African Institute of International Affairs, 2019).

3. Peace and security challenges: The AU faces significant challenges in addressing peace and security issues on the continent. Conflicts, terrorism, and political instability in various regions pose obstacles to the effective implementation of the AU's foreign policy objectives. The United Nations Development Programme, in its report on the AU's peace and security architecture, emphasizes the need for enhanced capacity and resources to tackle peace and security challenges (United Nations Development Programme, 2020).

4. Limited enforcement mechanisms: The AU's ability to enforce its decisions and implement its foreign policy initiatives can be limited. The organization relies on member states' voluntary compliance, which can undermine the effectiveness of its decisions and hinder the implementation of its foreign policy objectives. The International Crisis Group, in its report on the AU's peace and security architecture, highlights the need for strengthening enforcement mechanisms to enhance the AU's ability to implement its foreign policy decisions (International Crisis Group, 2019).

3.5.3. The impact of the challenges being faced by EU and AU on the effectiveness of their respective foreign policies

The challenges faced by the EU and AU in foreign policy-making can have varying impacts on the effectiveness of their respective foreign policies. The evaluation of the impact of these challenges encompasses the following:

Impact on the effectiveness of EU foreign policy:

1. Consensus-building: The requirement for unanimity among member states can slow down decision-making and limit the ability to respond swiftly to global events. This can undermine the effectiveness of EU foreign policy in addressing emerging challenges. According to a study by the European Parliament, the need for consensus can lead to delays and compromises, potentially weakening the impact of EU foreign policy (European Parliament, 2020).

2. Coherence and coordination: The presence of multiple institutions and bodies involved in EU foreign policy-making can lead to challenges in achieving coherence and coordination. Inconsistent approaches and lack of clear coordination mechanisms can diminish the effectiveness of EU foreign policy. The European Court of Auditors highlights the need for improved coordination to enhance the effectiveness of EU external action (European Court of Auditors, 2018).

Impact on the effectiveness of AU foreign policy:

1. Limited resources and funding: The AU's dependence on external funding can limit its autonomy and hinder its ability to independently pursue its foreign policy objectives. Insufficient resources can impede the implementation of AU foreign policy initiatives, particularly in areas such as peace and security. The Institute for Security Studies emphasizes that the AU's dependence on external funding can constrain its effectiveness in implementing its foreign policy agenda (Institute for Security Studies, 2018).

2. Coordination and consensus-building: The diverse interests and priorities among AU member states can pose challenges in achieving consensus and coordination. Lack of unity and coordination can weaken the effectiveness of AU foreign policy, particularly in addressing regional conflicts and promoting peace and security. The South African Institute of International Affairs highlights the need for improved coordination and consensus-building mechanisms within the AU to enhance the effectiveness of its foreign policy (South African Institute of International Affairs, 2019).

It is important to note that the impacts of these challenges may vary in different contexts and over time. Additionally, the effectiveness of foreign policy cannot be solely attributed to these

challenges, as other factors such as external events and global power dynamics also play a significant role.

CONCLUSION

This study conducted on the comparative analysis of European Union (EU) and African Union (AU) foreign policy sheds valuable lights on the objectives of EU foreign policy and AU foreign policy which they entail: The TEU states that the EU aims to promote its values, democracy, and the rule of law, human rights, and international law in its relations with other countries (Article 21.1 TEU) and the objectives of AU foreign policy are outlined in the Constitutive Act of the African Union. The Act emphasizes the promotion of peace, security, and stability as central objectives of the AU (Article 3.h). The study also provides valuable insights on the similarities and differences between these two regional organizations. In which the Similarities entail: promotion of peace and security and promotion of democracy and human rights; and the differences include: regional integration versus global governance, economic development and poverty eradication and neighborhood versus continental and global scope. The study also provides valuable insights on the factors that shape the objectives of the European Union include: treaty framework, member state interests, external challenges and global issues, and the factors that shape the objectives of and African Union foreign policy entail: African unity and solidarity, historical context and colonial legacy and peace and security challenges. Lastly, the study also provides valuable insights on the effectiveness of European Union (EU) and African Union (AU) foreign policy in achieving their respective objectives include: Institutional Framework, emphasis on diplomacy, multilateralism and international cooperation and peace and security. Lastly the study sheds light on the challenges hindering the implementation of EU and AU foreign policies as they include: EU; consensus-building among member states, coherence and coordination, external perceptions and influence, global power shifts and geopolitical dynamics, AU; include: limited resources and funding, peace and security challenge and Limited enforcement mechanisms. The findings of this study will contribute to a better understanding of regional foreign policy-making and may have implications for future cooperation and

collaboration between the European Union (EU) and African Union (AU) in addressing global challenges.

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