Militarism, Authority and Resistance: Exploring the Patterns in Power Relations between Africa and World Politics through peace and security interventions

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Abstract

The last couple of decades have seen an upsurge of military interventions in Africa addressing issues threatening the global security agenda. They aim at strengthening states' government and security apparatus in order to make African states more self-reliable at securing and asserting authority themselves. Though these goals may sound novel, they signal historical patterns in the architecture of order and power in world politics. These longer patterns are seen in three aspects these interventions have: their militarised or violent approach; their aim at transforming, reforming or bypassing the political authority in place; and the engendering of resistance. They show that practices of power and order-maintenance continue to rely on violence and on the fostering of particular institutions of authority, where the state is paramount. This has generated resistance from the top and from the bottom, even if some African governments have used these interventions to consolidate power and access funds and military training. Yet, in so far these practices are resisted, they also have the potential to foster violence and disorder. The paper explores this argument by following Mahmood Mamdani, by exploring contemporary forms of military intervention in Africa, and by analysing the cases of Somalia and the DRC, with a focus on the different forms of resistance.

1. Introduction

Peace and security interventions through military means have been on the rise in the African continent. They have been premised on the failed state paradigm, whereby the ultimate antidote for the problems the continent suffers and the security threats it gives rise to have been statebuilding and a liberal agenda for reconstruction. Though the failed state paradigm has proliferated all over the world, Africa has hosted most of the laboratory-missions on which statebuilding and liberal interventions have taken place (E.g. Somalia, Mozambique Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)). Security, political and economic goals have turned Africa into one of the most militarily targeted regions. Currently, 9 out of 16 United Nations (UN) operations are

taking place in Africa, 8 of which are military operations with a Chapter VII mandate.[1] Since the creation of the UN, 32 out of a total of 70 operations have been carried out in Africa, most of them authorising the use of force. Other multilateral organisations have also significantly targeted Africa in contrast to other regions. The European Union (EU) has deployed 8 out of 10 military operations in Africa and has taken a military approach against refugees, people smugglers, terrorism and the safeguarding of European states fishing rights in the coast of Somalia.[2] NATO too has military targeted Libya and the Horn of Africa against so-called Somali pirates. Additionally, two of the most important aid and military donors to Africa, France and the US, have carried out several military operations and increased their military presence in the continent over the last decade.[3]

These interventions have taken place under a unique international context, especially coming from the end of the Cold War, the launching of the War on Terror, a heightened agenda for security, and a tendency to privatise aspects of state authority in the context of neoliberal interventions. However, they also reflect the long history of Western-led interventions in Africa in three aspects: their militarised or violent approach; their aim at transforming, reforming or bypassing the political authority in place; and the engendering of resistance. These continuities do not suggest that nothing has changed since colonisation or that these interventions can be seen as purely Western impositions. Rather, the reflection of these patterns is seen in that the way of exercising power internationally continues to be through violence and through the fostering of particular institutions of authority, where the state is paramount. They also illustrate that resistance is not a marginal effect but constitutive of political order. Patterns of power relations in global politics are based on the triad state-military-authority, implying a violent hierarchical order that is resisted.

These issues have not gone unnoticed by the literature but they have largely missed the importance of linking the process of militarisation with peacebuilding interventions in Africa. Anna Stavrianakis and Jan Selby already note how the concepts of failed states, new wars and human security in Sub-Saharan Africa have obscured how military power

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[1] DPKO 2012.
[2] EEAS 2017
[3] Charbonneau 2006: 218; Turse 2015: 56.

has been extended to new areas.[4] In Stavrianakis and Selby's volume, Nicola Short argues that militarism in the South has dimensions of continuity and change.[5] She explores the relationship between conflict, identity and the global political economy to argue that, on the one hand, contemporary conflict resolution approaches have prioritised elite actors while simultaneously racialising groups along a traditional/modern divide that have ended up reifying coercive and exploitative practices. On the other, they have securitised social relations through the use of public and private coercion, facilitating the expansion of new corporate actors in this arena. For Short therefore identity is a considerable factor in understanding contemporary conflict and militarism, but it does not override the patterns of power relations, nor the underpinning logics of capitalist accumulation of earlier times. This is a notable contribution that emphasises both the continuities and changes. The new aspects of security and privatisation have also been widely explored by Rita Abrahamsen, focusing on how private security contractors are taking over spaces and tasks belonging to the nation state in ways that are transforming the nature of state-society relations in Africa.[6] However, what is missing in these contributions is the particular relationship force, race and resistance have in the shaping of authority Africa. This is important because of the means and targets these interventions have as well as because the racialised divides they create towards target societies.

Meera Sabaratnam has been at the forefront of a decolonial critique to interventions, arguing that interventions are underpinned by 'hierarchical historic structures of coloniality.'[7] She unearths how structural relations of colonial difference set the basis to study, frame and operationalise interventions, but the role of force is implied rather than explained. This is symptomatic of the literature on the coloniality of power. Decolonial authors highlight the deep seeded legacy of colonialism to understand order and power in world politics and the persistent racialised structure of world politics.[8] Though these literatures very explicitly highlight the violence embedded in the discursive and

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[4] Stavrianakis and Selby 2013.

[5] Short 2013.

[6] Abrahamsen 2016; Abrahamsen and Michael 2010.

[7] Sabaratnam 2017: 6.

[8] Quijano 2000

epistemological constructions that maintain such racialised hierarchical order, this paper would like to contribute by making an even more explicit connection between the physical and military use of or threat to use force, the aims to transform political authority and the nature of such order.

Thus if contemporary forms of militarism in Africa have to do with conflict and security issues, if these have mainly been addressed through intervening the basis of state-society relations and the state's security apparatus, and if these issues and interventions raise both continuities and changes, the question that follows is how do contemporary forms of militarism affect the relationship between force, race and resistance in constituting political authority through peace and security interventions in Africa?

Drawing on Mahmood Mamdani, the paper argues that militarism has been and continues to be constitutive of authority in Africa because it maintains a racialised approach towards rule. What has changed are the forms in which the state has been deployed and redeployed throughout the years and the relationship it has had with the military and the use of force both externally and of its own. The paper first outlines the theoretical framework; secondly, it explores the continuities and changes in the relationship between militarism and authority through the history of intervention in the continent; thirdly, it briefly analyses how different forms of resistance have both shaped authority and the interventions with the examples of the DRC and Somalia. The paper finally concludes that actual military violence and force play a significant role in producing contemporary power dynamics and modes of social ordering in the postcolony.

2. Force, race and resistance in constituting authority in Africa

Most Africanist scholarship sees that political authority in Africa was constituted by force and conquest as well as through an exercise of self-legitimisation via the denial of Africa's idiosyncrasy, its politics and the deployment of a civilising discourse. This was done through a previous process of racialization that framed African societies as different, under the umbrella of race. One of the most relevant theorisations of the nature of colonial power is that of Mahmood Mamdani. Not only is he able to offer a framework that captures how rule was exercised during colonial times, in addition, he is

able to show, firstly, why those practices and the structures they generated were inherited to the postcolony, and secondly, how resistance shaped the nature of authority. Other authors such as Achille Mbembe or Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni have also offered very powerful accounts of the role of force for the constitution of politics in colonial and postcolonial Africa but they have not systematically looked at the role of resistance.

For Mahmood Mamdani, the colonial state was defined by a bifurcated formula that merged 'two forms of power under a single hegemonic authority.'[9] It implied the creation of Native authorities, which were instrumental for extraction, administration and order-maintenance.[10] Ruling was done over a 'racially defined citizenry' with 'extra-economic coercion and administratively driven justice' and against subjects that resisted both customary authorities and the racism in civil society.[11] Mamdani does not discount elements of direct rule, but takes as a fact that '[e]verywhere, the local apparatus of the colonial state was organized either on an ethnic or on a religious basis.'[12] Governing through customary and religious institutions, whether precolonial or not, transformed the nature of those intermediaries, especially customary authority. 'Native Authority' created a regime of 'decentralized despotism' that not only was unaccountable and authoritarian, it also made force, authority, production and race an indivisible system of rule. The use of force was paramount in making chiefs transform their way of ruling into this 'decentralised despotism.'[13] Political institutions organised the distribution of power through differentiation mechanisms, first based in race (in the colonial era), then on the distinction between ethnicities or the urban/rural dyad (within the national state). This regime gave social and political systems in Africa the basis to function through inclusion/exclusion mechanisms, accounting for how power sustains governing structures and how resistance is undertaken against them. The despotic nature of African regimes is the result of institutions that aimed to maintain territorial and political divisions and to materialize dominant ideologies. However, this traditional swing between force and right ends up merging them as one and the same thing.[14]

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[9] Mamdani 1996: 18.
[10] Ibid.: 23.
[11] Ibid.:19.
[12] Ibid: 24.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid.

Mamdani exemplifies this process particularly well and it is worth quoting at length. He notes:

> the use of force was outlawed in every British colony in the aftermath of the First World War (and in French colonies after the Second), this applied to the central state and usually to European officials supervising Native Authorities in the local state, but not to the Native Authorities themselves. For this, there was one reason. So long as the use of force could be passed off as customary it was considered legitimate, and — to complete the tautology — force decreed by a customary authority was naturally regarded as customary. No wonder that when force was needed to implement development measures on reluctant peasants, its use was restricted to Native Authorities as much as possible. In the language of power, custom came to be the name of force. It was the halo around the regime of decentralized despotism.[15]

That is, it was not only that the ways in which conquest and the search for resources was done by force, but that force was central to the constitution of political authority both in its direct and indirect forms.

This force is also constitutive of how Africa was incorporated into the Euro-North-American-centric world system.[16] As Ndlovu-Gatsheni states, 'The key problem facing Africa which make it fail to flex its muscles as a major constitutive site for the production of world politics and global power is that of 'dismemberment' (cf. Ngugi wa Thiong'o 2009a; 2009b). The dismemberment and fragmentation invoked here is traceable to the very forcible dragging of Africa into the bowels of the Euro-North America-centric beast of coloniality.'[17] The use of force in Africa on the part of external powers has always had to do with the transformation of the political authority of its polities and this is tied in with the project of subjectification. The limits this enterprise has encountered have not relied on any notion of accountability or right but rather on the different forms of resistance emerging from the continent.

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[15] Ibid.: 286–87.
[16] Mazrui 1986: 13.
[17] Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2017.

Achille Mbembe argues that the nature of sovereignty power both in colonial and postcolonial times is characterised by: 1. Weakness of right: it is not a liberal project because subjects do not acquire rights; 2. Inflation of right: meaning arbitrariness and conquest; 3. Legitimation: converting violence into authority; 4. Maintenance, spread and permanence of authority and war even in ordinary and banal situations; 5. Use of violence as both authority and morality.[18] He summarises these features as coming from two sources of right. Firstly, a Hegelian arbitrary and violent right, which took the form of both direct and delegated rule through companies and individuals, creating a system of taxes, privileges and immunities attached to categories of people based on race. Secondly, a Bergsonian right, whereby such systems of rule and violence were for the purpose of civilising and protecting natives under a self-proclaimed duty to protect. This is replicated in current military interventions in that they rely on force. The violence exercised is for the purpose of asserting a new form of authority, even if the actors remain the same. To that extent, this assertion does not follow the normal political channels of accountability and negotiation and does not necessarily give rise to rights on the subjects. Rather it lays claims on legitimacy, and it is exercised with a higher moral aim in mind.

For Achille Mbembe too, the nature of rule and so of order in the postcolony reflects the relationship between violence and racialization. For him, the 'postcolony identifies specifically a given historical trajectory—that of societies recently emerging from the experience of colonization and the violence which the colonial relationship involves.'[19] Racialisation and violence were intrinsicably linked during colonisation, setting the basis for the constitution of colonial authority. It enacted a system of taxes, privileges and immunities attached to categories of people based on race. These systems of rule and violence were subsequently justified for the purpose of civilising and protecting natives under a self-proclaimed duty to protect.

What Mamdani most forcefully highlights is that these were not without resistance. In fact, he argues that the colonial institutional legacy of Africa reflects and 'continues to

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[18] Mbembe 2001.
[19] Ibid.: 102.

be reproduced through the dialectic of state reform and popular resistance.'[20] Not only power was organised towards fragmenting resistance, but also resistance in turn gave the state a particular shape. The Native Authority that was created and that was at the core of the exercise of colonial authority, was in charge of administering the state and the taming of resistance. In turn, resistance used and attempted to manipulate Native authority for the purpose of taming colonialism. And though much of this resistance has been dismissed as tribal or regressive, it has always displayed 'democratic content.'[21]

The significance of resistance for thinking about the relationship between militarism, peace and security interventions and authority is three-fold. Firstly, it gives us a complete account of political power in the colony and the legacy of struggles and institutions into the postcolony up until today. None of these legacies can really be thought of as having no resistance or as having imposed an unbridled power. Secondly, it sets the basis to think about what forms of struggles have continued, some of which have to do with how conflict has developed throughout post-Cold War years. The African conflicts on which the policies of the peacebuilding agenda started to be implemented in the 1990s, and of which, as previously noted, African countries were some of the first 'laboratories', are rooted in the longer history of struggle for democracy in Africa.[22] This history, as Olateju notes, 'did not commence with the post-cold-war multi-party agitations or end with attainment of independence.'[23] They have continued in different forms as struggles against the reforms enacted by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, as ethnic militia violence, and through the work of social, labour and political organisations.[24]

In fact, it has been precisely the lack of this historical and political reading of conflict that is most distinct to understand why peace and security interventions have framed these conflicts in 'pre-modern' ways, linking them to ethnic conflicts, new wars and corrupt absent states, to which the solution has been to build 'modern' states based on the rule of law. The recent narrowing down to focus on the military-security apparatus

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[20] Mamdani 1996: 3.

[21] Ibid. p. 189.

[22] Curtis 2012; Zeebroek 2008.

[23] Olateju 2013: 50.

[24] Ibid.; Renton, Seddon, and Zeilig 2007.

of the state has been just another step in the process that has securitised not just African states, but also African societies, granting military capacity to African states in order to put down different forms of resistance and secure states.

This framework allows us to explore how militarised peacebuilding reproduces the structure of coloniality through peace and security interventions in that the use of force has been made central for the constitution of authority and the taming of different forms of resistance to such authority. What is new is that the normative architecture on which force is deployed has shifted from placing the responsibility of order on the international actors to the African countries themselves. Governments of African states on their part have welcome the move, granting them increasing autonomy to discipline society. Contemporary militarism has therefore not evacuated race, nor has it made the relationship between the use of force and resistance more accountable, in fact, arguably, the normative architecture that was underpinning interventions has just given way to less restrained forms of the use of force.

3. New militarism, new forms of authority?

As stated in the introduction, Africa has been particularly targeted through militarised forms of peacebuilding. It is not a coincidence that one of the first forceful UN interventions going beyond the neutral approach under which peacekeeping operations were conceived in the UN was in the DRC in 1960. Neither is it a coincidence that some of the biggest military deployments by the UN have been in African countries (Somalia, Sierra Leone, Darfur and DRC), or that the turn to 'robust' peacekeeping had African countries again as its first laboratories. In 1999 in Sierra Leone, UN peacekeeping troops fought alongside government troops to defeat a new offensive from the RUF in 2000 under a new 'robust' mandate. In the early 2000s, peace-enforcement operations, though generally through regional organisations or third states, becomes a norm. This was the case of French Operation Licorne and ECOFOR in the Ivory Coast in 2003. In 2013 in the DRC, the authorisation of the Intervention Brigade (IB) signalled a consolidated trend in terms of the renewed commitment to militarised peace-enforcement. The IB was formed from Tanzanian, Malian and South African troops. The use of third parties and regional organisations, especially the African Union (AU), illustrates that the securitised 'object' has ceased to be 'bad governed' states to be

'rebel' societies, which are now the target of anti-terrorist operations, enhanced military capacities of their states or the target of militarised capabilities so that they can absorb war themselves.

This is the case of for instance the latest mission authorised under Chapter VII, UNOWAS in the Sahel. It aims to '[p]rovid[e] advice to and assist regional institutions and States to enhance their respective capacity to address cross-border and cross-cutting threats to peace and security, in particular election-related instability and challenges relating to security sector reform, transnational organized crime, illicit trafficking and terrorism.'[25] This is done by granting direct support to governments of the Sahel region so that they can undertake security and conflict prevention tasks themselves. While this enters a logic of 'ownership', it represents a shift in the way security and peacebuilding policy operates, though it reifies patterns in the links between force and authority. It is the state's capacity to discipline that is at the centre of this *new* paradigm. The EU's African Peace Facility (APF) is also a case in point. It was created in 2003 in the spirit of multilateralism as an EU-AU agreement for the purpose of boosting the military capacity of the AU in terms of conflict prevention and has become the main tool for implementing the Africa-EU Peace and Security Cooperation. While this clearly represents EU's ambition to have a secure neighbourhood in the hands of 'reliable' African troops, the whole of the AFP budget is €1.9b and 80% goes to Somalia.[26] The EU has displayed diminishing goals in terms of its peace and security agenda. The recent EU Global Strategy displays a much less ambitious agenda to for instance the claims under which EU CSDP strategy was born, proclaiming that 'the first line of defence will often be abroad', that the EU 'should be able to act before countries around [it] deteriorate' and that 'no single country is able to tackle today's complex problems on its own.'[27] It now states that the EU must contribute to: 'Responding to external conflicts/crises; Building the capacity of partners; Protecting EU citizens.' [28] Peacebuilding as a response to crises and prevention work as building the capacity of partners highlights the shift from the aim to promote good governed states to military-capable ones.

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[25] UNOWA, 'mandate' in https://unowa.unmissions.org/mandate 27/10/2017
[26] EU officer, interview, Brussels, 3/3/2017.
[27] EU Global Strategy 2016b.
[28] Ibid, p. 9.

As was also noted in the introduction, militarism has also been brought by individual countries that either bilaterally or part of multilateral coalitions have used military means with different political and economic interests in the continent. Bruno Charbonnau notes that '[b]etween 1997 and 2001 France intervened militarily forty-two times in Africa of which only 8 were UN operations.'[29] Since then, France's military presence and interventions have continued to grow based on its humanitarian-defence policy and its fight against terrorism. The counter-terrorist operations have also shifted from Mali to the wider Sahel region. Since 2014 Operation Burkhane has deployed 3000 troops against Islamic terrorists in the Sahara-Sahel area, in Chad, Mauritania, Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso.[30] France has been the Western nation most invested in fighting against Boko Haram – deal with Nigerian government to contribute with €47m.

After the Cold War, the Clinton administration redefined its foreign policy agenda around several goals that required foreign intervention in several ways. These included the promotion of US trade and investment, building democracy overseas, providing humanitarian assistance and engaging in peacebuilding. In Africa, specifically, the administration had specific goals about the promotion of human rights and the assisting with military downsizing.[31] The Bush and Obama administration have followed suit and in fact the Obama administration has expanded its military activities in the continent. Though officially the US only counts with a military base in Djibouti, the US counts with a series of spy stations, refuelling, and training sites that has only grown since the set up of Ascension Auxiliary Airfield in 1957. Nick Turse counts up to 60 outposts including camps, compounds, port facilities, fuel bunkers, and other sites.[32] It is not a coincidence that contemporary military and peacebuilding interventions in the continent are attached to an overhauling structuring of the structures of the state. Yet, closely examined, these interventions have reproduced more than they have changed.[33] Priority has been given to the reconstruction of the military-coercive apparatus of the state.

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[29] Charbonneau 2006: 218.
[30] French Defence Ministry 2017.
[31] Bernstein 1994: 92-3.
[32] Turse 2015.
[33] Sabaratnam 2013.

Power-sharing, security sector reform and public administration reform have been at the forefront have been widely used mechanisms to stop conflict and articulate a government. This is coherent with the fact that the standard peacebuilding policies have statebuilding at the centre of the equation – that is, they are premised on the existence of a government that can carry out the necessary reforms and hold some monopoly of the means of violence. The increase in the use of this formula in Africa, in particular, coincides with the fact that the conflicts have been seen as depoliticised, based on ethnicity or on greed for resources. The historical contexts that gave rise to those conflicts and the democratic struggles that took place at different points in time since independence have tended to go under the radar in favour of political options that have not been conducive to greater democratic or even peaceful regimes.

Other programmes enacted within the same framework offer military support to combat, to training in multiple skills such as public order policing, mortar firing, infantry, force organisation, sniper skills, logistics, tactical air control, and intelligence gathering.[34] They also include the rationales and know-hows through which these practices and skills are actually carried out.

To be sure, the end of conflict, with all its human, social, political and economic consequences; the reform of state security forces in ways that are both more efficient in protecting the population, while abiding by an ethical code of conduct, based on human rights law; and the reform of public administration following aims of effectiveness and transparency, are laudable aims. Additionally, they should be seen as a 'Western imposition', these interventions and the build up of military capacity are goals that are generally shared by African governments. However, they represent the intertwinement between intervention, authority and militarism in that they do not tend to uphold those aims, but rather the putting in place relatively reliable authorities that can maintain security and order. Moreover, they reproduce entrenched North-South power relations. Firstly, the epistemological bases of these policies heed everything that resembles Western standards and despise African ones. Secondly, the newly created governments, based on power-sharing agreements, largely represent military elites, leaving aside a

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[34] EEAS 2016: 4-5.

large spectrum of social, political and other armed actors. These agreements thus entail the reduction of politics to the sphere of power and the reproduction of politics to power politics around armed men. Thirdly, in so far they build up the coercive apparatus of state authority, they expand the capacity of these states to act violently and arbitrarily against their citizens. This has been the case in multiple 'post-conflict' settings where not only governments have increasingly displayed an authoritarian character, conflict has returned or continued (E.g. Burundi, CAR, DRC, Mozambique).

This is in line with the militaristic approach that is felt in peacebuilding operations, which as noted above, has made Africa a primary target. In line with the perception of conflicts as 'ethnic', as 'resource wars', or other such tags that deny the politics of those conflicts, the solutions become imposed through military might. These forms of militarised intervention also highlight the weight given to stabilisation and order, on the one hand, and the intertwinement of the use of force and the privileging of militarized states on the other. Missions in the DRC, the Central African Republic, Mali and Haiti have adopted a 'stabilisation' focus, being renamed as Mission of Stabilisation in Congo (MONUSCO), Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and United Nations Stabilisation Mission in Haiti (UNSTAMIH). Scholars have seen in these changes a conservative status-quo turn from the liberal peace agenda.[35] In fact, as Hameiri points out, the decline of the liberal peace does not extend to statebuilding.[36] The new explicit focus on security and stability in UN missions gives evidence to the fact that if they were ever separate, peacebuilding primarily entails building the state apparatus, reforming the security sector and monopolising the means of violence, embedding power relations in how institutions of order are established in the African continent.

These interventions therefore do not just illustrate forms of hegemonic order exercise by Western states, but rather what constitutes the nature of international authority in Africa. Put differently, this hegemony is constitutive of the institutions of authority in the continent, and shows that contemporary interventions are part of a longer pattern where military force is paramount.

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[35] Natorski 2011.
[36] Hameiri 2014.

However, the result is not a new type of authority. In fact, what the critical peacebuilding has noted for a long time is that peacebuilding interventions have in fact reified social hierarchies and power structures that were at the heart of the conflicts.[37] These reifications have in turn provoked more discontent and are likely to continue to produce more conflict. As Ndlovu-Gatsheni argues, 'the continuation of violence' in places like Africa 'is one indicator of the continuation of coloniality after the end of colonialism.'[38] It is the coloniality embedded in the way force and authority relate in contemporary peace and security interventions that is likely to spur more violence than what they can contain.

In 1978, Welch suggested that in the year 2000 '[p]olitics in a majority of African states will continue to be shaped by military leaders.'[39] While he was not entirely right in this view, he was right in suggesting that military capacity and strength will be fundamental to balance internal and external pressures on power and to maintain coercive strength. It is this strength, that Welch also says is not just quantifiable coercive power but also the quality of the army, that new forms of militarism are now targeting through the building of military capacity throughout the continent.

If anything, what these new forms of militarism are doing is to undo, at least, discursively the work they had done on democratisation, rule of law and good governance. Contemporary military interventions are still framed within a good governance discourse, but normative goals have diminished in importance. In fact, evidence questions the extent to which this type of military support promotes more accountable states. For instance, the EU's new peacebuilding instrument has granted Niger's police forces basic equipment, training and mentoring to develop their police and military capabilities.[40] Niger is a central hub for migration and terrorism, so the priorities with this support are to curb migration and strengthen Niger's to deal with transiting migrants and its role in the War against Terror. However, NGOs have accused

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[37] Sabaratnam 2017; Iñiguez de Heredia 2017; Richmond 2011; Mac Ginty 2011.
[38] Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013:144.
[39] Welch 1978, 40.
[40] IcSP 2017

Nigerien police of cracking down on dissent in the name of anti-terrorist policy.[41] In general '[Niger's] government has repeatedly declared a state of emergency, and concerns have grown about security forces' treatment of civilians, especially displaced persons.'[42] The IcSP has also granted Cameroonian police equipment with the aim of supporting their fight against Boko Haram. Yet, President Biya is one of the longest serving presidents in Africa, with a very poor human rights-track record, particularly of his police and army. For many scholars this is the natural consequence of what the good governance agenda is about – a discursive device to further Western interests in the form of control, discipline and even imperialism.[43] However, normative goals seem to have diminished in importance in light of the greater aim of consolidating states with the sufficient military strength to face crises.

4. From resistance to uprisings and back.

Resistance constitutes a counter-force that has shaped the nature of political authority by taming, limiting though at times expanding its effects. The history of military interventions in Africa shows that they have also been addressed to different forms of resistance. In fact, as just seen, contemporary interventions have shifted the focus from states to societies by granting military support to governments to deal with issues themselves. As Mamdani argued above, governing structures in Africa facilitate mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion that create a hierarchy and a particular order that controls resistance. One of the continuities between militarism and authority in Africa from the point of view of resistance is the way different forms of military interventions have prioritised 'modern' institutions and actors that prefigured a form of the state that was familiar to European models. In many respects, this is exactly what, as noted above, Short finds in the ways identity and conflict have played out in contemporary times. Not only the colonial authority was forged out of violence and conquest, colonialism, as Mbembe describes it, was itself a 'regime of violence.'[44] Decolonisation too implied not only the taming of resistance and the use of force to dislodge the most radical aspects of it to give way to regimes that could continue the basis of political and economic

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[41] International Peace Institute 2016
[42] Ibid.
[43] Chandler 2010; Duffield 2001; Richmond 2011.
[44] Mbembe 2001: 103.

relations. As Fanon says, decolonisation did not bring independence.[45] In embracing nation-statism, newly formed colonial elites, embraced the colonial legacies embedded in the institutions of authority, including its violence.[46] In contemporary interventions, the aim of transforming political authority, entails the foreclosing of possible alternative forms of political authority, and politics altogether. The military operations attached to these interventions have in fact been laid out as a form of counterinsurgency. This section focuses on the role of different forms of resistance, through the cases of the DRC and Somalia, as they are particularly prominent.

As noted above, the conflicts of the 1990s cannot be seen outside the wave of protests that swept through the African continent during the 1980s and 1990s. These waves were unprecedented since decolonisation struggles and forced changes in political arrangements, transforming military and single-party regimes to multi-party democracies.[47] These struggles were primarily articulated through civil society groups and labour and student associations. They had three major issues: the quest for multi-party democracy against one-party arrangements, decentralisation from the centre to lower tiers of government and respect for rule of law and human rights. From Benin to Burundi, South Africa to Angola or Cameroon, the fact that in just one decade since 1990, Africa went from having dictatorial regimes in fifty of its fifty five countries, to having most countries introduced different reforms, held elections and changed to multi-party systems, is evidence that these struggles had a major effect.[48] However, firstly, as Olajetu points out, these were not entirely successful in their aims as they left the infrastructure of the old regime intact.[49] Secondly, some of these developed into full-blown conflicts and with it, the paradigm of the failed state, of ethnic conflict and neoliberalism became the mantra for political and economic transformation.

In the DRC, since the early 1990s, the country had seen the throes of the Rwandan genocide and a rebellion of different opposition and army leaders linked to a foreign invasion from Rwanda, Uganda, and later Burundi. This rebellion developed into a full-

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[45] Fanon 1966.

[46] Davidson 1992.

[47] Anynag' Nyong'o 1987; Branch and Mampilly 2015; Olateju 2013: 57.

[48] Anynag' Nyong'o 1987.

[49] Olateju 2013: 54.

blown war of up to 9 African countries, supported by foreign powers such as the UK, the US and France. Thousands of youth and peasants also joined the rebellion at the possibility of overthrowing Mobutu's 32-year dictatorship, as well as for defending the country from foreign invasion. This was especially the case since the second period of war in 1998, once old-revolutionary leader Laurent Kabila was in government. The war has continued until today through different cycles of violence. This violence has been fostered by the relation of mutual instrumentalisation and confrontation between the DRC and Rwanda. They have been fighting proxy wars, carrying the mark of both countries' security and political projects.

The international response to this context has been to encourage political compromises between the two countries, and to support a military strategy against the remaining armed groups in the country.[50] The authorisation of the Intervention Brigade, the enforcement mission in the DRC in 2013, illustrates the commitment of the UN to grant the state the monopoly of the state of violence and the triumph of military means over negotiation. The EU has been a prominent actor in this process in the DRC from the start. Firstly, it was a primary actor in coming to the power-sharing agreement of 2002 in Sun City. Secondly, the EU was central for the articulation of the International Transitional of Accompaniment for the Transition, which managed the setting up of a stable government at the time when conflict was not completely over. Thirdly, the EU sent its first military operation outside its borders to stop a conflict in the Eastern region of Ituri that was turning very violent and threatened the peace process. Fourthly, it almost covered the whole expenses of DRC's democratic elections after the conflict and after 35 years of Mobutu´s dictatorship. Finally, it developed an ambitious programme of security sector reform. Though this programme has managed to change the payroll system to one that avoids ghost soldiers, corrupt generals taking a part of soldiers' wages and trains soldiers in gender and human rights, it has not helped the fact that the army keeps being a collage of armed groups, instrumentalised by both Kabila and Kagame.[51]

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[50] The Forces Democratiques pour la Liberation de Rwanda (FDLR) – formed from ex-government and army members of Rwanda that escaped to the DRC at the time of the Rwandan Genocide; and the Mai Mai groups – formed mainly from youth from similar villages and generally from the same language and ethnic backgrounds.
[51] Boshoff, More, and Vircoulon 2010.

As in other places in Africa, the state remains both the flagship of economic and social reforms that enable forms of monopolisation of power and wealth from the top. Kabila's latest grip on power, and his purposeful delay of elections in the midst of a political crisis tackled by repression, has primarily been contested on the streets. These protests, and not the record of authoritarianism and lack of commitment to a peaceful environment by Kabila is what has pushed DRC's major allies, including the EU, to enact sanctions and threaten with penalisations on aid. What this shows again is that whereas authority in a place like the DRC is shaped by the external intervening policies that strengthened the binomial state-military apparatus, such authority is subsequently shaped and tamed by the resistance such oppressive politics generate.

In the DRC there have been three forms of resistance. Firstly, one coming from the armed groups that took the form of an uprising, first against Mobutu and then against the Rwandan-led coalition occupation. Secondly, from the civil society in the form of everyday forms of resistance. Thirdly, a rise of social movements that ever since 2012 have led a movement for democratisation and that has asked the UN to leave. These have not only shaped the nature of authority at different times, they have shaped the war and the peace intervention itself. In fact, in the DRC, a loophole has been created whereas the militarisation of life due to the one of the deadliest wars in post-colonial Africa, generated violent resistance, both of which have pushed interventions to a more militarised forms. Everyday forms of resistance have underpinned everyday life as a form of survival, escapism and a last-resort ways of dealing with an increasingly militarised environment. In addition, but partly because of, these military solutions, the DRC government's increasing authoritarianism has made youth groups organise to claim for democracy. The newly created pro-democracy social movements LUCHA (Lutte pour le CHangement) and FILIMBI are evidence of that. LUCHA in particular LUCHA is an organisation created in Goma, capital of North Kivu in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in June 2012. Both its location and the time correspond with the height of the M-23 rebellion, led by renegade Congolese soldiers and backed by Rwanda. This is in the context of a country that has lasted now almost 20 years, have claimed millions of lives and has in most parts of the DRC lowered the already low living conditions of populations. LUCHA's members affirm the need to take action, not by taking up arms, but by the critical popular mobilisation through an open and horizontal organisational structure. Out of the three cases explored, LUCHA is the

newest and the one that is still in the making. The context of war in which this group has been born presents a different context, while highlighting similar features in its youth membership, structureless organising and modest demands. The response from the government to these groups have been to treat them as terrorist groups and to unleash almost unprecedented repressive methods to try to control the spread and impact of these groups.

Similar issues have been seen in Somalia. Piracy in the area around the Horn of Africa was the result of the measures Somali fishermen took in order to confront the pillaging of their stocks, the illegal fishing, their displacement and the usage of their waters as a dumping ground for waste.[52] The conflict in Somalia and the subsequent lost of control by the central government administration entailed that the Somali Exclusive Economic Zone did not have any guardianship. The initial attacks revealed the profit potential of piracy, providing income for displaced fishermen and opportunistic Somali militants. Violence then became the norm in Somali waters, undermining the economic and security interests of the US and European fishing countries in the area as well as countries in the region. Piracy is claimed to pose 'a very serious menace to navigation coming from the Suez Canal and going through the Gulf of Aden to the narrow area between the Horn of Africa and the Arabian peninsula'.[53] This implies a substantial part of the cargo traffick going to and from Europe and the US.

The response to the threat of piracy around the Horn of Africa has been aimed at deterrence through increased military patrol and naval intervention with the authorisation to use force. The Security Council has named the activities of pirates off the coast of Somalia a threat to international peace and security and since Resolution 733/1992, the Security Council has routinely invoked Chapter VII.[54] The declaration made in approving Resolution 1851 by the Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs at the Security Council meeting held at the level of Foreign Ministers on 16 December 2008 clearly shows this approach: '[t]he long-term delay in the settlement of the Somali issue is posing a serious threat to international peace and security, while the rampant piracy

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[52] Treves 2009.

[53] Ibid., p. 402

[54] UN 1992.

off the Somali coast has worsened the security situation in Somalia.'[55] These resolutions have encouraged other actors to carry out interventions in a similar manner. The US, NATO and the EU have established operations to patrol the Somali EEZ and the Horn of Africa. These operations are not only concerned with the actual issue of piracy, to which the use of military intervention is at least controversial, but also with the fact that they are portrayed as complementary to state authority in the absence of a recognised authority with the capacity to guard the coast in manners consistent to the commercial interests of the countries in these coalitions. And yet despite these interventions, piracy continues to rise.[56]

However, seeing the actions of Somali pirates or the activities of certain Congolese armed groups as resistance requires granting these actors political subjectivity, something which is taken away in the course of denying the politics behind the failed state paradigm. Yet many of these actions on the part of pirates and armed groups have been linked to the protection of livelihoods, aspirations for social change and struggles for democracy. At the bare minimum these actions respond to particular ideologies that are part of the politics of those actors and not the result of depoliticised actions of particularly greedy or evil individuals. Resistance has taken many forms, and it has not always represented an ethical laudable ideal. But a common threat in African resistance since the time of colonisation has been the contestation of political authority as formed precisely through conquest, violence and armed interventions.

The new wave of democratic movements developing all throughout the continent since the mid-2000s is yet another expression of long-term patterns of resistance. This wave has sprang from the realisation that the promises of democracy and development of the 1980s and 1990s have not only not been realised, in many parts of Africa living conditions have worsened while states' rule has become even more violent and unaccountable.[57] Though in this context there have been what Branch and Mampilly called *localised* protest, which try to 'force the state to address a specific constituency's problems without necessarily addressing the conditions of the rest of society'; most

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[55] UN 2008: para. 5.
[56] Gibbons-Neff 2017.
[57] Branch and Mampilly 2015: Ch. 4.

prominently, they have taken the form of *uprisings*, which bring together a number of constituencies, 'creating the conditions for anything up to a revolution.'[58] What this means is that yet again a new wave of struggles and resistance movements are questioning the very essence on which political authority has been established and are attempting to transform it.

5. Conclusion: global order and resistance in Africa.

Force is the primary element constituting political authority in Africa and its entanglement with the hierarchy and authority of world politics. Yet it is not untamed. Though its violent nature makes it authoritarian, it has been shaped by different forms of resistance, even if this resistance has been unsuccessful in establishing stable forms of democratic authority in contemporary times. The critiques of liberal interventions as well as postcolonial theorists have pointed out the violence of these interventions and how they reproduce power structures that represent the legacies of colonialism. This paper has focused on the actual use of force in the construction of political authority and in the attempt to contain resistance. These three elements, violence, transformation of political authority and resistance mark definite characteristics of political authority in Africa and its relationship to world politics. In this sense, it is not just hegemony that is maintained but an authority that distributes and claims rights and privileges.

Seeing the use of force in Western-African relations as a pattern does not mean that nothing has changed. The argument that has been put forward is that contemporary militarised interventions come with the aim to transform and shape state institutions and state-society relations in Africa. Looking at these from the perspective of the use of force in colonial conquests does not mean that these interventions are 'simply' neo-colonial enterprises. Empire is not a requirement for these interventions anymore. Nor is the aim to place these polities under the direct or indirect rule of a colonial metropoly. Yet it is remarkable that force, attached to the transformation of African political authority, has remained a feature of military interventions in Africa. Though ideas, norms, values and epistemological devices have underpinned a vast array of interventions and has shaped the unequal relations of Africa with the rest of the world,

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[58] Branch and Mampilly 2015: 81.

force is still a relevant feature and grants perspective to the nature of such relationships overall.

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