

Security and Strategic Studies: The Neglected Aspect of Securing Africa's Future

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Abstract

This study investigated the development of Security and Strategic Studies (SSS) in African institutions, motivated by the observed disconnect between the growing number of SSS courses in African universities and military institutions, and the utilization of SSS insights by African governments. The study aimed to understand the potential of SSS to contribute to Africa's security and development, and the consequences of neglecting these studies. It also examined the barriers to integrating SSS into African security frameworks, which hinder informed policy decisions and development trajectories. Using a qualitative approach, 15 respondents from diverse African countries, representing universities, government, intergovernmental, and non-governmental organizations in Uganda, were interviewed, and their insights were corroborated through document analysis. The study revealed that SSS in Africa originated in military academies and later expanded to civilian universities, gaining momentum in the 2000s due to the need for trained specialists to inform security and strategic discourse. However, the contribution of SSS is hindered by state-centric biases and a lack of collaboration between academics, security practitioners, and policymakers, leaving African states vulnerable in the international system. The study recommended establishing a clear institutional framework, including think tanks and a dedicated entity for developing and applying SSS insights, to secure Africa's future through sustainable peace, security, and development.

Keywords

Security, Strategy, Security Studies, Strategic Studies, Neglect of Security and Strategic Studies, Security Governance

1. Introduction

The field of Security and Strategic Studies is increasingly popular at the graduate

and postgraduate levels globally. This trend, previously dominated by Western institutions, now warrants a thorough examination of the growth and development of SSS in Africa with a view to examining their potential to contribute to securing Africa's future. The study explored the study of SSS in order to gain a clear understanding of the consequences of their neglect by African governments, well aware that continents that have taken advantage of SSS products have managed to secure their future through sustainable peace, security, and development. The study also investigated the obstacles hindering the integration of SSS into African security frameworks, with the aim of informing policy decisions and development trajectories. The key question was: what strategies can be employed to overcome these barriers and enable SSS to effectively contribute to informed policy choices and development paths in Africa? The study treats SSS as a single consolidated field because both security studies and strategic studies share a common concern with understanding and mitigating threats to national, international, or human security, often employing similar analytical frameworks and methodologies to examine the complex interactions between state and non-state actors and global governance structures.

1.1. Contextual Background

Security studies (SS) has traditionally been a Western-dominated field, primarily in North America, Europe, and Australia, focusing on war studies, military strategy, and geopolitics (Buzan & Hansen, 2009; Rowley & Weldes, 2018). The field became institutionalized between the 1940s and 1990s through the establishment of courses, institutes, specialist sections, journals, think tanks, and funding programs by governments and foundations (Lynn-Jones, 1991; Buzan & Hansen, 2009). However, precursors to modern security studies existed before the 1940s, such as the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI, founded in 1831) and the US Army War College (over a century old). Some Western institutions, like the Brookings Institution think tank (established in 1927), have a long history that predates the formalization of SS as a distinct field (Buzan & Hansen, 2009).

Historically, strategic study was confined to military institutions and academies, but the advent of nuclear weapons necessitated broader expertise, shifting scholarship to think tanks and universities (Buzan & Hansen, 2009; Duyvesteyn & Worrall, 2017). Civilian experts from diverse fields, including physics, economics, sociology, and psychology, contributed to theoretical discussions. The Cold War and perceived threats from Soviet and international communism led to the emergence of strategic studies, focusing on external threats, state security, bipolar power dynamics, and distinctions between domestic and international security concerns, particularly regarding nuclear threats (Rowley & Weldes, 2018). Today, institutions like the US Army War College's Strategic Institute continue this work, hosting conferences and publishing research on strategic studies. These publications provide frameworks for analyzing strategy at multiple levels, including grand strategy, national security, national military strategy, and regional or thea-

ter strategy (Yarger, 2006).

Security and strategic studies in Africa have a limited history (Amaike & Ben, 2017) and are not widely pursued, partly due to past experiences in which forecasts proved inaccurate, rendering them seemingly useless. The rapid evolution of strategic environmental factors further complicates matters, overwhelming actors. Historically, Africa has also been deficient in think tanks that specialize in complex issues and emerging policy challenges (Devex, 2019a). Existing think tanks tend to focus on national issues. Notably, the African Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS), based in Washington DC, supports US foreign policy by enhancing African countries' strategic capacity to address security challenges while promoting democratic values and human rights (DCAF, 2019). International partners shaped the SSS agenda in Africa by inhibiting the growth of independent, indigenous institutions because (Badhul, Asimwe, & Kasujja, 2025) during the colonial era, policies were externally designed without African participation, and during the post-colonial era, foreign aid was tied to African governments employing foreign experts in African policy-making institutions. This situation was further complicated by post-colonial education curricula that suppressed strategic thinking.

African interest in security studies is growing, as evident from the emergence of several institutes. The Institute for Security Studies (ISS), based in South Africa, is a pioneering African strategic studies organization that aims to enhance human security through research and policy advice (Devex, 2019b). Other notable institutions include the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Center (KAIPTC) in Ghana, which offers master's and PhD programs in peace and security (KAIPTC, 2020). The Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS) at Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia, established in 2007, focuses on education, research, and professional development to address African peace and security challenges (African Union Peace and Security Program [APSP], 2012).

African universities' involvement in security and strategic studies varies, with approximately 30% - 50% offering related courses. The distribution is not uniform, with regions facing notable security issues and those with established military and defense programs having a higher concentration of such courses. Unlike Western countries, where think tanks significantly influence national security decisions (Rowley & Weldes, 2018; Yarger, 2006), Africa lacks robust institutions dedicated to security and strategic research. Although institutions like the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) in South Africa and the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Center (KAIPTC) in Ghana exist, they are rare examples of Africa-led institutions driving security discussions. Most African security policies are formulated by governments without input from academic experts, leading to reactive rather than strategic approaches to security.

Africa's lack of strategic foresight and security planning has contributed to recurring coups, as seen in Mali and Burkina Faso, highlighting the absence of a well-developed SSS framework (Basedau, 2023). Similarly, the failure to effectively

counter Boko Haram and Al-Shabab in regions like East Africa, Nigeria, Mali, and Somalia can be attributed to inadequate strategic planning and weak research institutions (Vines & Wallace, 2022). Regional organizations such as ECOWAS, SADC, and IGAD, meant to coordinate security efforts, struggle due to a lack of research-based planning (Ateku & Mensah, 2023). The African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), established to promote African-led security initiatives, remains underfunded and reliant on external donors, underscoring Africa's challenges in institutionalizing SSS (African Union, 2012). Consequently, many African countries depend heavily on foreign military aid rather than developing indigenous security expertise (Matisek, 2020).

Countries in the Sahel region, for instance, have relied heavily on France's military assistance through Operation Barkhane (Mahmoud & Taifouri, 2023), while others have sought support from Russia's Wagner Group. This dependence on external forces underscores the lack of indigenous security expertise, stemming from inadequate investment in SSS. With robust security research institutions, Africa would be better positioned to develop its own counter-terrorism strategies, defense policies, and peacekeeping initiatives. Africa's vulnerability is closely linked to its failure to prioritize SSS as a field of study and a policy-making tool, hindering its ability to address security challenges effectively (Matisek, 2020).

1.2. Conceptual Background

The concepts addressed in this background are: security studies, security, strategic studies, strategy, neglect of security and strategic studies, and security governance.

Security studies.

Security studies encompass the analysis of various security issues, including pandemics, environmental degradation, transnational crime, and traditional concerns like weapons of mass destruction and interstate conflicts (Asiimwe, 2017). The study of security is crucial due to its prominent position in the hierarchy of human problems, representing a vital common good for humanity (Buzan, 2009; Jackson-Preece, 2011). Security studies can be categorized into three levels of analysis: state-to-state, trans-state, and international (Kolodziej, 2004). Beyond traditional security studies rooted in realism and liberalism, Critical Security Studies (CSS) emerged in the late 1970s, focusing on the social construction of security and prioritizing emancipation (Mutimer, 2007). CSS also highlights the distinction between state security and the security of citizens and the environment (Abaho, 2023). Since the 1980s, security studies have expanded to include a growing emphasis on human security, while still addressing traditional concerns (Grey, 2009).

Despite the shift in security challenges since the Cold War (Carnegie Council, 2014), security threats in Africa are still framed within traditional security thinking. To be relevant, security studies in Africa should incorporate multiple levels of analysis: individual (human security), state (national security), and regional (regional/international security) (Hentz, 2014). This multi-level approach pro-

vides analytical tools to understand Africa's security predicament and emerging issues such as immigration, small arms proliferation, crime, HIV/AIDS, transnational crime, poverty, and environmental degradation.

1.2.1. Security

Scholars conceptualize security in various ways, with some prioritizing state protection from threats and aggression, while others emphasize individual security, focusing on personal freedoms and subjective experiences (Lin, 2011). Security is often linked to safeguarding core values from threats that could jeopardize the survival of a specific entity in the short term (Buzan, 2009; Krause & Williams, 1997; Asiimwe, 2017).

Historically, the state has been the primary entity to be protected, known as the referent object, and it has pursued security through military strength since threats to the state were expected to come only from outside its territorial frontiers. Security emphasized the preservation of the state and, by extension, the ruling regime as the primary goal (Buzan, 2009; Krause & Williams, 1997; Nebo, 2021). However, (Asiimwe, 2017) the elements of "hard security" (military tools) that were traditionally relied upon may now be ill-suited to cope with the changing threat environment where threats are sudden, unpredictable, protracted, and unyielding; with a broad range of conditions threatening people's survival, livelihood, and dignity (Buzan, 2009; Krause & Williams, 1997), what is known as human security. Human security is concerned with both people's freedom from fear and freedom from want (Abaho et al., 2019a; Asiimwe, 2017; UNDP, 1994). Often (Baldwin, 1997; Buzan, 2009; Krause & Williams, 1997), redefining security involves prioritizing issues like human rights, economics, environmental concerns, drug trafficking, epidemics, crime, and social injustice. In a broader context, security encompasses safeguarding individuals and groups from unjust and oppressive forms of governance (Metz, 2000).

Seventy percent (Ero, 2023) of Africa's population resides in nations experiencing deteriorated security conditions over the past decade since 2012, and (Asiimwe, 2017) in most countries, security is seen as the provision of military security and as a tool for ensuring regime survival or keeping the woman or man in charge of the regime in power.

1.2.2. Strategic Studies

Strategic studies involve analyzing future trends and issues to align organizational priorities, enabling effective goal achievement through strategy (United Nations, 2019). This field focuses on outperforming competitors by leveraging strategy to accomplish missions. At the state level, strategic studies apply to various domains, including grand strategy, national security strategy, national military strategy, and regional or theater strategy (Yarger, 2006).

Strategic studies in Africa, as promoted by the African Center for Strategic Studies (2023), focus on exchanging ideas and information relevant to African issues. These studies address various topics, including regional security coopera-

tion, conflict management, health and security, energy and security, and counter-terrorism. Nonetheless, there is a pressing need for more African strategic thinking, given its current limited presence in academic discourse (Theron, 2024).

1.2.3. Strategy

There is no single definition of strategy (Mindtools, 2019); some believe it involves careful analysis of the present and anticipation of changes to plan for future success. Others prefer to develop strategies organically, finding it challenging to predict the future. Strategy (Business Dictionary, 2019) refers to a deliberate plan or method chosen to achieve a desired outcome, such as goal attainment or problem-solving. It is also defined as the art and science of planning and allocating resources for effective use. According to Mindtools (2019), strategy outlines how resources should be allocated to meet market and stakeholder needs, defines an organization's unique position, and determines how to leverage resources, skills, and competitiveness to gain a competitive advantage.

Strategy (Amaike & Ben, 2017) involves identifying resources to capitalize on opportunities, mitigating threats, and achieving desired outcomes. It encompasses schemes, methods, and tactics that management employs to propel the organization from its current state to a target goal within a specified timeframe, acknowledging environmental changes. According to Yarger (2006), strategy at all levels involves calculating objectives, concepts, and resources within acceptable risk parameters to create favorable outcomes. In the context of a state, strategy is the art and science of synchronizing national power instruments to achieve theater, national, or multinational objectives.

Strategic research (Eticha, Brunninge, & Tessema, 2024) on the African continent is growing but from a low level, and research on the strategy-performance relationship remains a dominant theme in the field. However, the cultural context and its potential impact on strategy and strategy development are areas that require further exploration and development. African countries (Arino, 2017) fail to develop long-term security strategies due to a lack of skilled human capital, along with failure to balance between strategy and performance due to weak SSS investment.

1.2.4. Neglect of Security and Strategic Studies

According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, neglect refers to giving little attention to something or an act or instance of neglecting something. In the Cambridge Dictionary, neglect is to not give enough care or attention to people or things that are one's responsibility or to fail to give needed care and attention to someone or something. Therefore, (Appeltshauser, 2016) neglect of SSS in Africa refers to the lack of sufficient focus and dedicated research on security and strategic issues, often resulting in inadequate understanding and responses to complex threats, poor policy development, and lack of capacity to effectively address emerging security challenges, primarily due to factors like limited/weak academic institutions specializing in the field, insufficient funding, and a tendency to prior-

itize immediate crises over long-term strategic planning.

1.2.5. Security Governance

Security governance (Fray & Patterson, 2018) is the established framework that guides the improvement of security. This framework outlines key responsibilities and practices aimed at guiding strategic direction, achieving objectives, managing risks effectively, and ensuring responsible resource utilization. Security governance (Koh, Ruighauer, Maynard, & Ahmad, 2005) influences security culture, particularly the sense of responsibility and ownership of security. The state (Kuwali, 2023) of security governance in Africa is generally considered weak, with many countries lacking effective legislative oversight and accountability, leading to issues of impunity, unprofessionalism, and abuses against civilians, thus contributing to instability and the threatening of citizen security across the continent.

2. Knowledge Gap

SSS informs policy formulation for sustainable economic growth and development by guiding decision-making and identifying emerging trends, opportunities, and threats (Amaike & Ben, 2017). Historically, Security Studies has been dominated by Western scholars, primarily in North America, Europe, and Australia, reflecting a Western-centric perspective (Buzan & Hansen, 2009).

A 1970 survey by the International Institute of Strategic Studies (IISS) identified 128 research centers in 29 countries focused on strategic studies and peace research. The majority were located in the West and Japan, with the US leading at 20 and the UK at 13, although Eastern Europe and some developing countries were also represented (Buzan & Hansen, 2009). Strategic studies have predominantly thrived in democratic nations, whereas in non-Western countries, strategic thinking has often been controlled by the military (Duyvesteyn & Worrall, 2017; Asiimwe, 2017), primarily serving regime survival interests.

On the African continent (Amaike & Ben, 2017), SSS lack a long-standing tradition, largely due to past experiences where they were deemed ineffective because of inaccurate predictions. Furthermore, the rapidly shifting strategic environment has made it challenging for actors to adapt. Consequently, SSS in Africa have experienced stunted growth and neglect. To capitalize on the benefits of SSS, such as informed policy decisions and development trajectories, Africa requires corrective measures. The areas of SSS that need serious attention are (Mvita, 2022) cybersecurity, (Mulugeta, 2020a) climate change and environmental security, (Bueger, 2020) maritime security, (Ebo, 2022) security sector reform and governance, (Francis, 2020) non-state actors and security, (Mavhura, 2020) disaster risk reduction and management, and so on.

The factors that account for the neglect of SSS in Africa are: (Williams, 2020) limited funding by governments and lack of institutional capacity to support SSS; (Bischoff, 2020) lack of policy relevance; (Isike, 2020) limited engagement with African scholars and resistance from policymakers who prefer state-centric security approaches, and so on. While recent trends in Africa reveal a growth of

courses in the area of SSS and institutions offering these courses, there was a need for a systematic study to establish how these studies have evolved, how they are connected to securing the continent's future, and the consequences of neglecting them via a definite methodology guided by the objective below. The study therefore offers new data through interviews corroborated by document analysis and, at the end, proposes a framework for strengthening SSS in Africa.

Objective

The objective of the study was to explore the study of SSS in Africa in order to understand their potential to contribute to securing Africa's future and the consequences of neglecting them. This called for examining the role of SSS in security governance and the barriers to the adoption of SSS in Africa's security frameworks. This also involved assessing the capacity of SSS to contribute to informed policy and development paths.

3. Theoretical Review

The theories reviewed include realism, liberalism, social constructivism, and human security.

3.1. Realism

Realism posits that nation-states are the primary referent objects of security, prioritizing military and economic power over ideals and ethics (Asiimwe, 2017). Key tenets of realism include: states as principal actors in the international system, pursuit of national interests through military power, and self-preservation (Ondrejesak, 2014). Realists view the world as anarchic, lacking a central authority to regulate state behavior (Lin, 2011). In the African context, realism is applied by analyzing state interactions through the lens of national interest, power dynamics, and the pursuit of security in an anarchic system, often emphasizing military strength and self-preservation over cooperation (YLönen, 2022).

Realism's limitations as a theory stem from its narrow focus on the state as the primary security referent, overlooking other actors like institutions. Due to these limitations, exploring alternative theories was essential to identify a more suitable framework for the study. The theory of liberalism was a potential candidate for examination.

3.2. Liberalism

Liberalists contend that various actors beyond states shape global dynamics, and that force is not inevitable (Wendt, 2005). They advocate for moral and legal constraints to regulate war and promote diplomacy, international law, and disarmament to prevent conflict. Core tenets of liberalism include the goodness of humanity, democracy, free trade, and human rights (Asiimwe, 2017). This theory assumes countries operate in a peaceful environment, seeking cooperation and peaceful dispute resolution to prevent conflicts (Ondrejesak, 2014). Liberalism

acknowledges states as key actors, but not the only ones, and recognizes institutions and regimes as crucial mediators and facilitators of cooperation among international actors (Lin, 2011).

In Africa, liberalism is applied through regional and international institutions that foster cooperation, democracy, and human rights (African Union, 2015). The African Union prioritizes these values alongside regional integration. Similarly, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has developed a regional security framework promoting peace, cooperation, and collective defense among member states (ECOWAS, 2016). Moreover, the African Peace and Security Architecture promotes peace, security, and stability through mediation, negotiation, and diplomacy (Okeke, 2020). The application of liberal theory in African SSS highlights the significance of cooperation, institutions, and human rights in advancing peace and security across the continent.

Liberalism alone was insufficient for this study, as it assumes cooperation between states based on mutual interests, which may not always be the case. Given its limitations, exploring the theory of social constructivism was necessary to better meet the study's requirements.

3.3. Social Constructivism

Social constructivism highlights the social construction of reality, international regimes, and norms, positing that the international system's structure is both anarchic and ideational (Cahan, 2018). Adopted ideas and norms can be transformative, shaping actor behavior and identities. Anarchy is shaped by state perceptions and actions (Wendt, 2005). Socialization can lead to collective identities, overcoming security dilemmas, and institutions have a constitutive impact on state behavior (Acharya, 2008). In security studies, constructivism advocates for a practical, cultural understanding (Wendt, 2005). Social constructivism asserts that social structures comprise shared knowledge, resources, and practices, and that our understanding of international relations can foster greater security (Lin, 2011). Constructivists acknowledge states as key referents, recognize the importance of non-state actors, and accept the anarchic international system, the need for state survival, and rational state behavior.

The application of social constructivism in Africa involves examining how security threats are constructed through language, norms, and identity (Omeni, 2020). Research has shown that the African Union's security policies are shaped by Pan-Africanism and regional solidarity norms, framing Africa's security challenges as a collective issue requiring a unified response (Acharya, 2017). Furthermore, studies have analyzed how regional organizations like ECOWAS construct security threats and responses through their language and practices (Francis, 2017). Overall, social constructivism offers a critical perspective on the social construction of security threats and responses in Africa.

Social constructivism alone was insufficient for this study due to its emphasis on norms, which powerful states often disregard when it suits their interests. Con-

structivists also assume that state interactions are sincere and that states accurately understand each other's intentions. However, the combination of anarchy, offensive capabilities, and uncertain intentions often forces states to compete aggressively. Given these limitations, it was necessary to examine the human security theory.

3.4. Human Security Theory

The human security approach prioritizes individuals over states as the primary security referents, marking a significant shift from traditional security studies that focus on state-related problems (Hough, 2004; Lodgaard, 2004). This deepening of security emphasizes human safety and survival, synonymous with people's security (Buzan, 2009). According to the United Nations (2009), human security involves protecting human lives, enhancing freedoms, and fulfillment. Human security entails safeguarding fundamental freedoms, protecting people from severe and widespread threats, and creating systems that support survival, livelihood, and dignity (Abaho, Mawa, & Asimwe, 2019b). This approach focuses on building people's strengths and aspirations through political, social, environmental, economic, and cultural systems.

In African SSS, human security theory is applied by prioritizing individual and community protection from diverse threats such as poverty, hunger, disease, and environmental degradation (Olonisakin, 2017). Research highlights the African Union's integration of human security into its peace and security framework, focusing on human development, rights, and dignity (African Union, 2015). Human security has also been used to examine climate change's impact on human well-being in Africa, particularly regarding food security and livelihoods (Mulugeta, 2020b). Overall, human security offers a people-centered approach to SSS in Africa, emphasizing individual and community protection and empowerment.

Human security, like sustainable development, is widely endorsed but often vaguely defined, posing challenges for policymakers tasked with allocating resources to pressing issues. When all issues are deemed equally urgent, prioritization becomes difficult. While some developing states can guarantee human security, international governance of human treatment remains elusive, and non-state actors have limited success. Consequently, human security is more of an ideal than a strategically implementable concept (Paris, 2001). Given these limitations, combining the four theories was necessary to guide this study.

The need to combine the four theories stems from their individual limitations: realism explains state security prioritization but overlooks academic institutions' role; liberalism acknowledges institutions' role but assumes democratic states in a peaceful environment, which does not apply to Africa; social constructivism highlights institutions' transformative potential but may be hindered by powerful states' interests; and human security theory advocates for a deeper security approach, but African governments have not fully integrated it into policy planning. This study argues that neglecting SSS results from failing to reconcile these competing theoretical perspectives within Africa's security architecture.

4. Literature Review

A literature review was conducted, examining existing research that included the following key sources:

The work by Zulkifli (2019) “*Difference between Strategic Studies and Security Studies*”, where it is posited that strategic studies involve employing the military as a tool of state policy, utilizing engagement for wartime purposes, and serving as a link between military might and political objectives. More specifically, it encompasses the theory and practice of leveraging organized force, or the threat thereof, for political ends. Through developing theories, policies, and operations, strategic studies aimed to mitigate the likelihood of conflict.

The work by Koliopoulos (2017) “*Historical Approaches to Security/Strategic Studies*” views strategic and security studies as interchangeable, focusing on the interplay between policy objectives and military or other means in situations of actual or potential conflict. It also suggests that strategic/security studies are likely the most historically oriented branch of international relations.

The work by Abass (2022) “*The African Union’s Peace and Security Council: A Critical Analysis of Its Role in Promoting Peace and Security in Africa*”, which critically evaluates the African Union’s Peace and Security Council’s (PSC) role in advancing peace and security in Africa. Abass contends that despite the PSC’s substantial contributions, it encounters notable challenges, such as insufficient funding, restricted capacity, and poor coordination with other regional bodies, which hinder its effectiveness.

The work by Chityo (2022) “*Security Sector Reform in Africa: A Review of the Literature*” examines existing research on Security Sector Reform (SSR) in Africa. Chityo asserts that SSR is vital for enhancing peace and security on the continent, yet it is hindered by challenges such as insufficient funding, limited capacity, and ineffective coordination with regional organizations.

The work by Dersso (2022) “*The Role of Regional Organizations in Promoting Peace and Security in Africa*” explores the role of regional organizations in advancing peace and security in Africa. Dersso contends that regional bodies, including the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), have substantially contributed to peace and security efforts, but are hindered by challenges such as insufficient funding and restricted capacity.

The work by Okeke (2022) “*Africa’s Emerging Security Challenges. A Critical Analysis*”, critically assesses Africa’s evolving security threats, such as terrorism and cybercrime. These challenges necessitate a holistic and integrated security approach. However, existing security frameworks often lack the comprehensive structure needed to effectively tackle these emerging threats.

The four last articles offer insightful perspectives on SSS in Africa, yet they also underscore significant challenges and limitations. A primary obstacle is the ineffective integration of SSS into African security policies, as many countries lack a cohesive security approach, hindering their capacity to tackle emerging threats.

Additionally, limited capacity and insufficient funding constrain SSS in Africa, with many countries struggling to conduct thorough security analyses and develop impactful strategies due to resource and expertise gaps. Moreover, the articles emphasize the necessity for enhanced cooperation and coordination among regional organizations, international partners, and local communities, necessitating a more integrated and comprehensive security approach that acknowledges the complex and interconnected nature of African security challenges.

5. Research Methodology

This exploratory study employed a qualitative and descriptive approach to investigate perceptions, attitudes, and experiences regarding SSS in Africa. Data collection involved interviews and document reviews, utilizing an interview guide and document checklist. Fifteen respondents from universities, government, inter-governmental, and civil society organizations in Uganda but from diverse African countries participated. The respondents comprised expatriates, government officials, and local and visiting scholars. Non-probability sampling techniques, including purposive, convenience, and snowballing, were used to select participants, guided by the saturation point principle. Primary data from interviews were triangulated with document analysis, using a structured checklist. Data were categorized, coded, edited, and analyzed, yielding study findings. By applying realism, liberalism, social constructivism, and human security theories, the researcher gained a deeper understanding of SSS, developing nuanced insights into security relationships and outcomes.

5.1. Discussion of Study Findings

The study found that the undertaking of SSS in Africa does not have a long history, with the first institution—the Institute of Security Studies (ISS) based in South Africa—having begun in 1991 and others much later in the 2000s. This is in contrast with the early start of SSS in the developed world (Freedman, 2019), which began in the 1950s, the importance they attach to them, and the benefits they have enjoyed from SSS, such as well-informed policy choices and development paths among others. This means that SSS in the developed world has existed for over 50 years, following a tradition of studying war; for example, the study of Naval and Military science began as far back as 1831 (Buzan & Hansen, 2009), an over 190-year history. Given that Africa began undertaking SSS many years later, after they were taken up by other countries, it means that we have a long way to go in their development, and it would be asking too much to expect Africa to interact on equal terms/footing in the international system with states that know us better than we know ourselves, courtesy of their early start in SSS, while we know very little about them because of underdeveloped SSS.

It was noticed that the undertaking of SSS in Africa arose from the fact that, initially, security had traditionally been understood and practiced from the perspective of the state as the referent object of security and the use of the military to

protect state institutions, with the hope that security would trickle down to the people. Academicians then became aware of this fact and saw the need to shift the thinking about security from a state-centric approach to one that is people-centric/centered; security not being viewed solely through the military, but in light of the involvement of people in discussing such issues as poverty, climate change, and so on. Initially (Asiimwe, 2017), Africa was state-centric and security training was the preserve of security (military) institutions, with civilian academic institutions sidelined. The inclusion of academicians marked the advent of the civilian strategist in African SSS. Despite the security forces being meant to serve society, with funding from the government (taxpayers), until the arrival of the civilian security expert, there was little knowledge about security issues, including oversight. Academicians saw the need to fill this gap and decided to provide security training not only to security officials in need of academic knowledge in security and its new dynamics, but also to others outside the traditional security sector.

The reason advanced by African academicians for starting SSS in Africa was in agreement with how SSS evolved in the developed world (Buzan & Hansen, 2009), having started in military institutions and then transitioned to civilian universities and institutions. It is unfortunate that (Asiimwe, 2017) state-centrism—seeing security in terms of the need to protect the state and its institutions and ensuring the survival of the regime in power—was a dominant factor in the African security discourse. This disregarded the security of the people whose taxes fund the activities of the security sector and government in general. Yet, according to Chutter (2011), the military and security in general should be responsible to the society that employs them and that pays not only their wages but also the many other costs associated with maintaining and developing a defense capability.

It was seen that attempts at Security Sector Reform (SSR) in Africa offered new avenues for the development of SSS. It brought to the table such issues as security oversight, redefinition of security, and introduction of the concept of human security, which was very important, particularly for the security sector in Africa, by enlightening civilians on issues of security. However, success in SSR on the African continent is limited. Yet (Hendrickson, 2004) SSR is meant to help states enhance the security of their citizens and shift from state and military-centric notions of security to greater emphasis on human security, which underscores the importance of governance issues and civilian input in policymaking. The decision by African academicians to shift from state-centered security to human security was a well-informed one because, as noted by the United Nations (2009), state security primarily focuses on threats to the state, such as military attacks. In contrast, human security encompasses a broader range of threats affecting individuals and communities, addressing the root causes of insecurity and promoting locally driven, comprehensive, and sustainable solutions. Human security recognizes that events like conflicts, economic crises, poor health, and natural disasters can lead to sudden vulnerabilities and deprivations, undermining development progress and fueling grievances that destabilize societies. By prioritizing human well-being

and guided by principles of security, stability, and sustainable development, African governments can benefit from adopting a human security approach.

It was realized that the study of SSS in Africa began late and should have started a long time ago, since in other parts of the world like the West it began decades ago. But it was also agreed that, in a way, it was timely because it began when states in Africa were democratizing and people were beginning to realize that security is more than physical security, as it incorporates other aspects such as social security, psychological security, and so on. People, due to increased security consciousness, were able to write and talk about security issues in the media and get involved in the security discourse. People are also able to tell that the state is insecure even if leaders tell them lies that it is secure based on physical security alone; they are able to detect or identify other insecurities because (United Nations, 2009) they affect their livelihood and dignity. Africa & Kwadjo (2009) agree that seeing security in aspects other than physical security is important if security in the widened and deepened sense is to be appreciated.

It was appreciated that if SSS had begun earlier, African states would have significantly avoided the political and security challenges they have gone through as a result of people in the security sector lacking enlightenment, lacking professionalism, and not knowing who they were supposed to work for—the people. African states, other factors such as political and economic ones if then equally addressed, would have, for example, avoided the various military coups they went through and their attendant negative consequences for survival and development. The researcher agrees with the findings that SSS in Africa began a little late because, looking at the tradition from which they emanate (Buzan & Hansen, 2009), other countries laid the foundation for these studies dating as far back as the 19th century, and (Devex, 2019a) in Africa, we are beginning the study of SSS in the 21st century without a strong foundation. The researcher agrees with the findings that if SSS in Africa had begun earlier, and other variables such as political and economic ones addressed, we would have avoided the political and security challenges such as the various coups many countries have gone through and their attendant negative consequences for survival and development. The situation Africa went through is captured by scholars like Woods (2007); since independence, many African countries plunged into decades of divisive politics, with coups and counter-coups marking prolonged periods of instability.

According to the study, while several institutions have emerged to undertake SSS, there is hardly any inter-institutional collaboration or partnership between universities; this should come in the form of conferences, journals, contributions thereto, and so on. The papers presented at conferences would then be turned into publications. It is because of the lack of the above approach that the growth of SSS is retarded and, therefore, Africa has to resort to concepts of SSS imported from experts from outside Africa, such as Barry Buzan and others. There is no known formal (official) inter-institutional collaboration (between universities and between universities and policy-making institutions). The main impediment was

said to be lack of funding because it requires a lot of money, which is not available. The lack of inter-institutional collaboration in SSS is an unfortunate development. While SSS should not be the preserve of governments and their institutions, as is the case, it would serve us better if they were deliberately coordinated by governments and involved civilian institutions for the benefit of the continent and its populace. It would suffice to realize that SSS are about how states can operate from an advantageous position relative to their competitors, both state and non-state (Yarger, 2006); neglecting SSS means that the state/s has/have no choice but to operate from a position of disadvantage to its/their competitors, which is detrimental to the very basis of Africa's survival and advancement.

The researcher found that outputs of SSS in Africa include dissertations by students at the Bachelor's, Master's, and PhD levels. Some scholars produce policy briefs, which they send to government ministries, departments, and agencies, albeit informally, and others produce articles that are published in journals. These outputs generate literature on strategic and security issues, thus imparting skills and improving the knowledge of those who access them. The unfortunate part is that journals in Africa are limited, and scholars end up sending their publications to journals outside the continent. SSS should serve the purpose of knowledge development, and according to Jonasec (2019), such knowledge development can be for science or education purposes, to verify or stimulate new methods, to bring up or recruit new scientists, future strategic study producers, students, and lifelong education attendants, and to develop the presentation of attained knowledge. We can borrow a leaf from European and American government institutes and journals and how they operate, such as the US Army War College and its publications (Yarger, 2006). Unfortunately, our governments have neglected SSS, and our research outputs are not shared with national policymakers, mainly because there are hardly any journals of SSS in Africa and no formal arrangement for generating and sharing policy briefs.

It was found that the consumers of research outputs of SSS are students, the general public, and researchers, but unfortunately, there is no framework for sharing the research outputs with policy-making institutions. Policy-makers have not involved themselves in the consumption of the research outputs of SSS; many may not even be aware of the existence of such valuable research output, and some may not even be comfortable that people are studying SSS because of their eye-opening nature, and yet they themselves are not knowledgeable in this area. It is only a few policy-makers who are undertaking SSS (even then on their own initiative) that are benefiting from SSS, but even when they go back to their offices, it is not easy to tell whether they are allowed or take the initiative to practice what they have learned. The study also found that such a pivotal and beneficial course like SSS is mostly being accessed by chance and through personal effort, which is disturbing for a course that should be given priority by academic institutions and governments, given the benefits that can accrue to the continent if SSS are highly developed. It is necessary that the course is highly advertised and marketed so as to

attract the best brains.

If SSS are to be beneficial to the national and continental development vision/agenda, specialization in SSS should be based on the needs of a country and continent at large and the gaps identified thereto—a duty that should fall on the shoulders of governments. According to [Jonasec \(2019\)](#), there should actually be a physical or legal entity responsible for the development and application of information from SSS, following certain policy. Some of the decisions to be taken would include: which people should be acquainted with the studies; recommendations for incorporation of the knowledge in education; enhancement of requirements for planning procedures; theoretical fundamentals; and scientific work. After having applied strategic studies, the users/recipients/consumers are obliged to write recommendations for their producers to get feedback on each phase of the strategic studies development process. As [Freedman \(2019\)](#) indicates, governments can rely on academic institutions for conceptual innovation, hard research, practical proposals, and willing recruits for the bureaucracy. Strategic studies should play a major role in the relationship between civilians and members of the armed forces—mutual understanding of the problems faced can play a positive role in respect of armed forces control—what [Duyvesteyn & Worrall \(2017\)](#) referred to as the perspective of cross-fertilization of ideas and different intellectual and policy foci present in those locations, from which new ideas can be born through the exchange of perspectives between the military and civilians.

5.2. A Proposed Framework for SSS in Africa

As previously discussed, individual security theories are insufficient to fully capture African security complexities. However, combining realism, liberalism, social constructivism, and human security theories can significantly enhance understanding of African security realities and inform security studies. Nevertheless, their explanatory power regarding strategy in Africa is limited, and they can only marginally guide strategic studies.

For instance, realism posits that states must prioritize self-interest and be prepared for war to protect their interests in an anarchic international system. In contrast, liberalism suggests that states can ensure security through cooperation, trade, adherence to international law, and participation in institutions addressing mutual interests. Social constructivism emphasizes that states can achieve security by upholding agreed-upon norms, recognizing that powerful states may disregard these norms when convenient, and by acquiring knowledge and resources. Meanwhile, human security theory advocates enhancing human freedoms and fulfillment through comprehensive systems that ensure survival, livelihood, and dignity; thus guiding security studies accordingly.

While these aspects provide some insight into African strategy and strategic studies, they fall short in capturing key elements as highlighted hereafter. An effective strategy and meaningful strategic studies should prioritize supporting foreign policies by enhancing African countries' strategic capacity to address security

challenges while promoting civil-military cooperation, democratic values, and human rights. Strategic studies can foster peace and security in Africa through education, research, and professional development, tackling the intellectual challenge of developing African-led solutions to violence and insecurity.

Strategic studies should address grand strategy, geopolitics, and nuclear issues globally. To advance the field, deliberate efforts are needed to establish SSS courses and institutes in universities, specialist sections in academic associations, SSS journals, think tanks, and funding programs by governments and foundations. Governments should incorporate civilian strategists from diverse fields, fostering cross-fertilization of ideas and policy perspectives. Regular conferences would facilitate consideration of strategy at various levels, enabling researchers to publish their findings. Strategic studies should inform policy for sustainable economic growth, guide decision-making, and help identify emerging opportunities and threats. Think tanks dedicated to strategic studies should focus on understanding complex issues and developing responses to policy challenges.

An effective strategy relies on accurate forecasts and adaptability to rapidly changing environmental factors. Strategists must anticipate future trends and issues to align priorities, ensuring goals are achieved efficiently. A good strategy should drive focus, accountability, and results, outperforming competitors. To develop such a strategy, one must understand challenges, trends, and issues, identify key beneficiaries and their needs, and determine the most effective approach to achieve the mandate.

Crafting a good strategy requires a clear mission, a sense of urgency, and a vision statement. It involves outlining how to achieve goals through stakeholders, services, processes, people, and finances, guided by core values. A strategy must analyze the present, anticipate changes, and plan for future success. It is a deliberate plan to achieve a desired outcome, leveraging resources efficiently and effectively. Strategy should determine resource allocation to meet market and stakeholder needs, define an organization's unique position, and combine resources, skills, and competitiveness to create advantage. It should set long-term direction and scope, outlining methods to transition from the current state to a target state within a specific timeframe, while adapting to environmental changes. A strategy should specify resource utilization to capitalize on opportunities, mitigate threats, and achieve desired results.

A strategy should involve calculating objectives, concepts, and resources within acceptable risk parameters to achieve favorable outcomes. It requires synchronized integration of national power instruments to attain theater, national, or multinational objectives. Strategy entails leveraging political, economic, social-psychological, and military powers in line with policy guidance to protect or advance national interests relative to other states, actors, or circumstances.

5.3. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study draws the following conclusions and recommendations.

Conclusion

The undertaking of SSS Africa has a short history and is behind the Western world by over 50 years. As in the Western world, these studies started in military institutions for their operational needs and then moved to civilian institutions such as universities. This development stemmed from African scholars' desire to transition from a conventional state-centered security paradigm to one that prioritizes human security.

However, SSS have been neglected by governments on the African continent, as evidenced by: late undertaking of SSS when other areas started it decades before us—whose implication is that African states cannot interact on equal terms/footing in the international system with states that had an early start in SSS; inability of African states to successfully carry out security sector reform that would improve human security, resulting in many African states failing to avoid the political and security challenges they have gone through—whose implication is a plunge into decades of divisive politics, with coups and counter-coups marking prolonged periods of instability; insufficient collaboration and partnerships existing between universities and between universities and policy-making institutions in respect of SSS matters—whose implication is retarded growth of SSS, leaving African states to operate from a position of disadvantage relative to their competitors, both state and non-state; failure to utilize outputs of research such as dissertations, journals, and policy briefs and therefore failure to utilize developed knowledge, coupled with lack of a framework for sharing research outputs with policy-making institutions—whose implications are ill-informed policy choices and ill-informed development paths (all detrimental to the basis of survival and advancement); people accessing SSS by chance or through personal effort and not by deliberate government arrangements—whose implication is that African states are not able to benefit from the SSS informed development processes.

Recommendations

1) SSS curricula should be reviewed to enable specialization in specific knowledge areas, including geopolitical studies, within the study of SSS; such as American studies, European studies, Asian studies, or even deeper ones targeting powerful states, such as Russian studies, Chinese studies, and so on. This will enable Africa to interact with other states and even non-state actors in the international system from an informed position, with full comprehension of who or what they are dealing with.

2) There should be established inter-university policy research platforms for strategic research that should translate into resourceful think-tanks, so that they can generate new and up-to-date knowledge in diverse areas ranging from economics and psychology to physics, nuclear power to environmental degradation, and in the end inform policy in all aspects of life, in both the private and public sectors.

3) There should be deliberate and regular interaction between SSS scholars and policy-makers through research and policy analysis seminars and conferences. All

the above arrangements should encourage publications, the establishment of as many journals of SSS as possible, and the sharing of policy briefs. This arrangement should make the interaction between academicians and policy-makers formal, and to concretize it, it should be supported by legislation.

4) A well-defined institutional framework should connect security practitioners, policy-makers, and academics in the SSS sector. This can be achieved by establishing physical or legal entities, such as centers or institutes of SSS, run by national governments or regional organizations, to oversee the development and application of SSS knowledge and to inform policy decisions.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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