

TOWARDS AN AFRICAN SOLUTION-ORIENTED APPROACH TO CONFLICT ANALYSIS IN AFRICAN PEACE AND SECURITY (2002-2022)

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Abstract

This paper proposes an AfSol-oriented (African Solutions) approach to conflict analysis in Africa's peace and security sphere, focusing on the period between 2002 and 2022. As Africa grapples with numerous internal and external challenges to peace and stability, it becomes imperative to examine the roles, perspectives, and interactions of all stakeholders involved in resolving conflicts across the continent. An AfSol-oriented approach calls for a shift from externally driven solutions to locally led, context-specific initiatives that promote sustainable peace and security. The study identifies the key stakeholders involved in Africa's peace and security processes, including regional organizations, national governments, non-state actors, civil society, and international partners. By examining their respective roles, motivations, and capabilities, the research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the intricate web of interactions among these actors. Furthermore, the paper highlights the importance of promoting inclusivity and local ownership in conflict resolution strategies. It argues that genuine and lasting peace can only be achieved when the affected communities actively participate in shaping the solutions to their problems. The AfSol-oriented approach emphasizes the need to prioritize local knowledge, cultural practices, and traditional conflict resolution mechanisms, while also complementing them with modern strategies and international support.

Keywords: *African Union, Pan-Africanism, peace, security, African Solutions-Oriented, conflict resolution, transparency, decision-making processes.*

Introduction

The emergence of AfSol as a significant concept in African peace and security can be traced back to the continent's post-colonial history and the experiences of African nations in dealing with various forms of conflict. Many African countries gained independence from colonial rule in the mid-20th century, ushering in a new era of

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nation-building and statehood (Mdhluli 2025). This process was often marked by challenges such as ethnic tensions, territorial disputes, and power struggles that laid the groundwork for future conflicts.

Throughout the latter half of the 20th century, Africa witnessed numerous armed conflicts, both internal and external. The international community, often through the UN and other global actors, frequently played a central role in attempting to mediate and resolve these conflicts. However, the effectiveness and sustainability of these interventions varied widely, with some leading to successful peace agreements and others resulting in protracted crises (Jackson 2001). It became increasingly evident that external actors, despite their good intentions, could not fully grasp the intricate social, political, and cultural dynamics of African conflicts. Moreover, the one-size-fits-all approach often applied by the international community did not consider the diversity of conflicts across the continent, further hindering successful resolution.

Against this backdrop, African leaders and scholars began advocating for a more indigenous and context-specific approach to conflict resolution. They argued that African nations and regional organizations possessed a deep understanding of their conflicts and were better positioned to develop solutions tailored to their unique circumstances. This sentiment gave rise to the AfSol concept (Abrahamsen 2013).

The adoption of AfSol reflects a desire among African nations to assert their sovereignty and agency in addressing the challenges of conflict and peacebuilding (Chekol and Beshi 2026). It represents a departure from the traditional top-down, externally imposed approaches and seeks to empower African actors to take the lead in shaping their own peace and security agendas (Vhumbunu 2024).

Furthermore, the context of AfSol cannot be separated from the changing dynamics of international relations. As African countries gained greater political and economic influence on the global stage, there was a growing recognition of their role as key stakeholders in matters of peace and security. This recognition has culminated in initiatives such as the African Union's (AU) efforts to promote African solutions to African problems (Sauti and Makaripe 2024; Abegunrin 2009).

The background and context surrounding the emergence of AfSol are deeply rooted in Africa's historical experiences with conflict, the limitations of external interventions, and the continent's evolving role in the international arena. Understanding this context is essential for comprehending why AfSol has gained prominence and why it is considered a crucial paradigm shift in African conflict resolution efforts (Brewer 2011). This paper aims to delve deeper into these dynamics and their implications for the peace and security landscape in Africa from 2002 to 2022.

Research Objectives

The research objectives serve as the guiding principles that shape the direction, scope, and purpose of this working paper. They define the specific goals and outcomes that the research aims to achieve. In the context of "Toward an AfSol-Oriented Approach to Conflict Analysis in Africa's Peace and Security Sphere (2002-2022)," the research objectives are multifaceted and encompass various dimensions of the AfSol concept and its implications.

Understanding the Evolution of AfSol

One of the primary research objectives is to trace the evolution of the term 'African-led Solutions' (AfSol). This involves examining how AfSol has developed over time, from its early conceptualization to its integration into the discourse on peace and security in Africa. This objective requires a historical analysis of the origins and development of AfSol, including its emergence as a response to the limitations of traditional conflict resolution approaches. It also entails exploring the various contexts in which AfSol has been applied and adapted across different African regions and conflicts (Núñez 2024; Onyango Ouma 2026).

Exploring Theoretical and Philosophical Underpinnings

Another critical research objective is to delve into the theoretical and philosophical underpinnings of AfSol. This involves a thorough examination of the intellectual foundations that inform the concept. Researchers need to explore how AfSol aligns with or deviates from existing theories of conflict resolution, peacebuilding, and international relations. Additionally, it is crucial to investigate the philosophical frameworks that have influenced the adoption of AfSol, such as Pan-Africanism and the belief in the efficacy of indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms (Adem 2004). This objective aims to provide a solid theoretical grounding for the subsequent analysis.

Assessing Convergence and Divergence with Existing Frameworks

Understanding how AfSol aligns or diverges from existing conflict resolution frameworks is a pivotal research objective. It involves a comparative analysis of AfSol with traditional, Western-centric approaches to conflict analysis and resolution. Researchers must identify the points of convergence, where AfSol complements existing frameworks, and the points of divergence, where it challenges or contradicts established practices. This objective facilitates a nuanced evaluation of AfSol's strengths and limitations in addressing the unique challenges of African conflicts.

Defining Key Variables in AfSol-Oriented Analysis

This research objective focuses on establishing the key variables and factors that should be considered in an AfSol-oriented approach to conflict analysis. It requires a comprehensive review of the literature and empirical evidence to identify the critical elements that shape the dynamics of conflicts in Africa. These variables may include local agency and ownership, contextual factors, regional and international involvement, historical grievances, and socio-economic drivers of conflict. Defining these key variables is essential for developing a robust analytical framework for AfSol-oriented conflict analysis.

Analyzing Analytical Processes and Methodologies

The research also aims to explore the analytical processes and methodologies that are most conducive to AfSol-oriented conflict analysis. This objective involves a critical

examination of qualitative and quantitative research methods, case study approaches, and comparative analysis techniques. Researchers must assess the suitability of these methods for capturing the intricacies of African conflicts and for generating insights that align with AfSol principles. By doing so, this objective contributes to the development of effective tools and methodologies for AfSol-oriented conflict analysis.

Informing Policy and Practice

Ultimately, the overarching research objective is to bridge the gap between academic discourse and practical policymaking. This objective emphasizes the relevance of the research findings and their applicability to policymakers and practitioners involved in peace and security efforts in Africa. It involves translating the insights gained from the research into actionable recommendations and policy guidance. These recommendations should address the ‘what, why, and how’ of implementing AfSol-oriented strategies, with a focus on enhancing local ownership, sustainability, and the overall effectiveness of conflict resolution initiatives.

The research objectives for this working paper are multifaceted and interconnected. They encompass historical, theoretical, and practical dimensions of AfSol-oriented conflict analysis, with the ultimate goal of contributing to a more nuanced and effective approach to addressing conflict and promoting peace in Africa. Through these objectives, this paper seeks to provide a comprehensive and valuable resource for scholars, policymakers, and practitioners engaged in the complex arena of African peace and security.

Methodology and Scope

Methodology and scope are pivotal aspects of any research endeavor, determining the approach taken, data sources, and the boundaries within which the study operates. In this context, analyzing the methodology and scope is crucial for ensuring the research's credibility and relevance.

The choice of methodology is pivotal in ensuring the rigor and credibility of the research. The methodology adopted for this study should align with the research objectives and the nature of the research questions posed.

Qualitative Research: Qualitative research methods, such as content analysis of relevant documents and reports, and thematic analysis, will help capture the nuanced perspectives and experiences related to AfSol in African conflict resolution. This approach allows for the exploration of the historical, theoretical, and policy dimensions of AfSol.

Case Studies: Employing case studies of specific conflicts and peacebuilding efforts in different African regions will offer rich, context-specific insights into the application and outcomes of AfSol. It will also provide comparative perspectives and help identify patterns and lessons.

Within the research topic of *Toward an AfSol-Oriented Approach to Conflict Analysis in Africa's Peace and Security Sphere*, qualitative approaches are instrumental for aligning with AfSol principles of local ownership, cultural sensitivity, and a deep contextual understanding of African conflicts (Dube and Chisale 2023).

Qualitative methods empowered us to navigate the complexity of these conflicts, engage with local actors, and provide nuanced policy recommendations.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data collection process will be systematic and rigorous, involving both primary and secondary sources. Primary data collection, such as surveys will provide fresh perspectives, while secondary data sources, including academic literature, policy documents, and conflict databases, offer a historical and contextual backdrop. Data analysis will be methodical, transparent, and aligned with the chosen methodology. Qualitative data will be analyzed thematically, looking for recurring patterns, emerging themes, and contradictions.

Scope and Limitations

Defining the scope of the research is crucial to maintaining focus and relevance. The study's temporal scope covers the period from 2002 to 2022, a period marked by significant changes in Africa's peace and security landscape. This time frame allows for the analysis of a wide range of conflicts and peacebuilding initiatives within a contemporary context. However, there are inherent limitations in terms of geographic scope and the number of conflicts that can be analyzed comprehensively. We will be transparent about these limitations and acknowledge that the study may not encompass all African conflicts during the specified period. Furthermore, the research scope will extend to multiple African regions, as different regions may present unique challenges and opportunities for AfSol-oriented approaches. A balanced representation of conflicts and initiatives from across the continent ensures a holistic understanding of the topic.

Conceptualization AfSol: evolution of the term 'AfSol'

The alignment and deviation of the AfSol-oriented approach focus on existing theories of conflict resolution, peacebuilding, and international relations (Akiba 2020; Sello 2026). The examination of alignment and deviation of the AfSol-oriented approach from existing theories is a critical aspect of this research. It seeks to clarify how AfSol fits within the broader theoretical landscape of conflict resolution, peacebuilding, and international relations. This analysis provides valuable insights into the uniqueness and potential contributions of AfSol.

Alignment with Existing Theories

Constructivism: AfSol aligns with constructivist theories, which emphasize the role of identity, norms, and ideas in shaping international relations. AfSol's emphasis on local ownership and agency resonates with constructivist notions of the importance of actors' beliefs and identities in influencing outcomes. The focus on building peace through local perspectives aligns with constructivist principles of social constructivism.

Agency-Centric Theories: The AfSol-oriented approach aligns closely with agency-centric theories that emphasize the active role of local actors in conflict resolution processes. It acknowledges the importance of empowering local communities and

governments to take the lead in addressing conflicts, which is in line with the agency-centric perspective.

Complex Systems Theories: AfSol recognizes the complexity of conflicts and the need for context-specific solutions. This alignment with complex systems theories acknowledges that conflicts are multifaceted and dynamic and that solutions must be adaptable and contextually relevant.

Deviation from Existing Theories

Realism: AfSol deviates from realist theories, which prioritize state-centric interests and power politics. In contrast, AfSol focuses on local and regional actors and emphasizes the importance of non-state actors, indigenous mechanisms, and community-level solutions. This deviation challenges the realist perspective that power and state interests are the primary drivers of international relations.

Liberalism: While liberalism emphasizes international institutions and cooperation among states, AfSol deviates by highlighting the significance of local and regional initiatives. AfSol suggests that solutions to African conflicts should emerge from within the continent rather than relying solely on external institutions and frameworks.

Universalism: AfSol's emphasis on context-specific solutions and the importance of indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms challenge the universalist approach to conflict resolution. Universalist theories often seek standardized, one-size-fits-all solutions, whereas AfSol recognizes the need for tailored approaches that respect local cultures and traditions.

Power Imbalances: AfSol's deviation from existing theories also manifests in its focus on addressing power imbalances in international relations. It calls for more equitable partnerships and a reduction in external interference, challenging traditional power structures that have dominated conflict resolution efforts in Africa.

The evolution of the term 'AfSol' highlights the dynamic relationship between the AfSol-oriented approach and established theories of conflict resolution, peacebuilding, and international relations. While AfSol aligns with certain theoretical perspectives, such as constructivism and agency-centric theories, it also deviates from others, including realism, liberalism, and universalism (Hofisi, Moroe and Erameh 2025). These alignments and deviations form the basis for a nuanced understanding of how AfSol contributes to the evolving discourse on conflict resolution in Africa's peace and security sphere.

Historical Origins

The historical origins of AfSol are deeply intertwined with the broader historical context of Africa's struggle for independence and self-determination during the mid-20th century. This pivotal period in African history saw the dismantling of colonial rule and the emergence of newly independent nations across the continent. It was during this era that the seeds of AfSol were first sown (Baker 2009).

Colonial Legacy and the Quest for Autonomy

Africa's experience of colonialism, characterized by the exploitation of its resources, suppression of indigenous cultures, and arbitrary borders imposed by colonial powers, left a lasting legacy of social, political and economic challenges. The struggle for

independence from colonial rule was marked by a collective yearning for autonomy and self-governance. African leaders and intellectuals of the time, such as Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, and Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, played pivotal roles in articulating the vision of an Africa in control of its destiny.

Emergence of Pan-Africanism

The rise of Pan-Africanism, a movement that advocated for the unity and solidarity of African nations and peoples, was instrumental in shaping the historical origins of AfSol. Leaders like Kwame Nkrumah and W.E.B. Du Bois, among others, championed Pan-African ideals. They argued that the struggles and aspirations of African nations were interconnected and that Africans should collaborate to achieve common goals. This ideology laid the groundwork for AfSol by emphasizing collective action and African agency.

The historical context also highlighted the limitations of external intervention in addressing African conflicts and challenges. African nations had experienced external interventions during colonial rule, and the post-independence era saw continued interference from superpowers during the Cold War. These interventions often exacerbated conflicts rather than resolving them (Nimbalkar 2026). It became increasingly evident that external actors, while well-intentioned, lacked the deep understanding of African societies and cultures required for effective conflict resolution.

The emergence of the AfSol concept

Amid these historical dynamics, the concept of AfSol began to take shape. African leaders and intellectuals advocated for the idea that Africans should have the primary role in shaping their destinies, including resolving conflicts. AfSol emerged as a response to the need for context-specific, locally-driven solutions to the unique challenges faced by African nations. This concept emphasizes the importance of local ownership, cultural context, and indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms (Frimpong 2025).

The historical origins of AfSol are rooted in Africa's struggle for independence, the emergence of Pan-Africanism, and the challenges posed by external interventions. AfSol represents a historical shift in Africa's approach to conflicts, from being subjects of external intervention to becoming architects of their solutions. Understanding these historical origins is crucial for appreciating the evolution and significance of AfSol in the context of African peace and security efforts.

The conceptual development of AfSol represents a journey from a nascent idea rooted in the struggles for independence to a sophisticated framework for conflict resolution and peacebuilding in Africa (Sello 2026). This evolution reflects the collective wisdom of African leaders, scholars, and practitioners who sought more effective and context-specific approaches to address the continent's challenges. The early conceptualization of AfSol was rooted in the notion of local ownership. African leaders recognized that sustainable solutions to conflicts required the active participation of local communities and governments. They advocated for the principle

that Africans should take the lead in shaping their destinies, including resolving conflicts. This foundational idea emphasizes the importance of empowering African nations and communities to be active agents in peace and security efforts (Ujunwa, Okoyeuzu and Kalu 2019).

As AfSol continued to develop conceptually, it increasingly emphasized the significance of cultural context and indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms. African societies have rich traditions of conflict resolution that predate colonialism, and AfSol recognized the potential of these traditions in mediating and resolving conflicts (Kostelyanets 2023; Ebegebulem 2011). This conceptual shift acknowledged that African conflicts are deeply embedded in local cultural dynamics and that solutions should be tailored to these contexts. One of the core tenets of AfSol's conceptual development is the emphasis on context-specificity. This principle recognizes that conflicts in Africa are diverse, ranging from ethnic disputes to political rivalries, and that each conflict requires a unique approach (Chekol and Beshi 2026; Engel 2023). AfSol rejects the one-size-fits-all model that characterized many external interventions and instead advocates for solutions that are sensitive to the specific factors driving each conflict. Conceptually, AfSol evolved to embrace collaborative and inclusive approaches. It recognized that resolving conflicts often necessitates the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders, including CSOs, women's groups, youth, and marginalized communities. This conceptual shift emphasized the importance of bringing all relevant actors to the table, as their perspectives and contributions are critical to sustainable peace. The development of AfSol also drew inspiration from Pan-African ideals. The Pan-African movement had long emphasized the unity and solidarity of African nations. AfSol aligned with these principles by advocating for collaborative efforts among African nations in conflict resolution. It echoed the sentiment that African challenges require collective action and cooperation (Hofisi, Moroe and Erameh 2025).

The conceptual development of AfSol reflects a profound shift in how Africa approaches conflict resolution and peacebuilding. It has evolved from a rudimentary idea rooted in the struggle for independence to a sophisticated framework that prioritizes local ownership, cultural context, inclusivity, and context-specificity (Akinola et al. 2017). This evolution represents Africa's determination to develop its solutions to the complex challenges it faces and its recognition of the importance of drawing upon its rich cultural heritage and traditions in the pursuit of peace and security. Understanding this conceptual development is essential for appreciating the depth and significance of AfSol in contemporary African peace and security efforts.

Theoretical and Philosophical Underpinnings

Pan-Africanism and AfSol

The connection between Pan-Africanism and AfSol is profound, as both share a common thread of African unity, self-determination, and self-reliance. Pan-Africanism, a movement that emerged during the colonial era, aimed to foster solidarity among African nations and peoples and to promote their collective interests. AfSol, on the other hand, represents the contemporary manifestation of this Pan-African spirit,

particularly in the context of conflict resolution and peacebuilding (Dube and Chisale 2023). At its core, Pan-Africanism champions the ideals of unity and self-determination. It asserts that African nations and peoples share a common history, cultural heritage, and destiny. AfSol aligns seamlessly with these ideals by advocating for African nations to take the lead in resolving their conflicts and challenges. This shared emphasis on unity and self-determination underscores the symbiotic relationship between Pan-Africanism and AfSol.

Pan-Africanism emerged during a period when African nations were still under colonial rule, and it played a pivotal role in the struggle for independence. Leaders like Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere, and Patrice Lumumba promoted Pan-African ideals as they sought to liberate their nations from colonial oppression (Amaglo-Mensah and Nesterova 2025). The principles of Pan-Africanism resonated with the desire for autonomy and self-governance, laying the groundwork for AfSol's historical roots. AfSol can be seen as a contemporary manifestation of Pan-Africanism's principles in the realm of conflict resolution and peacebuilding. While Pan-Africanism addressed the broader struggle for independence and sovereignty, AfSol focuses on the specific challenges of peace and security on the continent. It emphasizes the need for African-led initiatives, local ownership, and culturally grounded solutions to conflicts. Both Pan-Africanism and AfSol emphasize collaborative efforts among African nations (Amoah 2025). Pan-Africanism encouraged African nations to work together to achieve common goals and overcome shared challenges. AfSol extends this collaborative spirit to the realm of conflict resolution, advocating for regional and continental organizations like the AU and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to take active roles in mediating and resolving conflicts. The historical struggles faced by African nations, including colonialism and external interference, have forged a spirit of resilience and determination. Pan-Africanism and AfSol both reflect this resilience by emphasizing Africa's capacity to address its challenges and find solutions, even in the face of complex conflicts (Abrahamsen 2013).

The relationship between Pan-Africanism and AfSol is deeply rooted in the shared ideals of unity, self-determination, and the belief in Africa's ability to shape its destiny. While Pan-Africanism addressed the broader context of colonialism and independence, AfSol represents the contemporary application of these principles to the specific challenges of conflict resolution and peacebuilding on the continent. This symbiotic relationship underscores the enduring influence of Pan-Africanism in shaping Africa's approach to addressing its peace and security challenges through AfSol-oriented initiatives (Mdhluli 2025).

Indigenous Conflict Resolution Mechanisms

The integration of indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms into AfSol represents a synergistic approach that recognizes the wisdom embedded in African traditions and the need for context-specific solutions to conflicts on the continent. Indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms have deep historical roots in Africa, and their incorporation into the AfSol framework underscores the importance of drawing upon local knowledge and practices to address contemporary challenges. Indigenous conflict resolution

mechanisms are deeply intertwined with African cultures and traditions. These mechanisms have been passed down through generations, reflecting the values, customs, and worldviews of African communities. By incorporating these mechanisms into AfSol, there is a commitment to preserving and honoring Africa's rich cultural heritage. This recognition of cultural diversity and the importance of cultural preservation align closely with AfSol's emphasis on respecting the cultural context of conflict resolution. One of the fundamental principles of AfSol is the recognition that conflicts in Africa are diverse and context-specific.

Indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms exemplify this principle by offering tailored solutions that are uniquely suited to the specific dynamics of each conflict (Khadiagala 2021). These mechanisms take into account factors such as local norms, values, and social structures, ensuring that conflict resolution efforts resonate with the communities affected by the conflicts. Indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms often involve the active participation of community leaders, elders, and other stakeholders (Fabo 2026). This inclusive approach aligns with AfSol's emphasis on involving all relevant actors in conflict resolution processes. By valuing the input and involvement of local communities, AfSol recognizes the importance of ensuring that those most affected by conflicts have a say in the solutions devised. While indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms are deeply rooted in tradition, they can also complement modern conflict resolution approaches. AfSol advocates for a holistic approach that integrates both traditional and contemporary methods. Indigenous mechanisms can offer valuable insights and alternative approaches to conflict resolution, enhancing the effectiveness of modern interventions (Mlambo, Aniche and Masuku 2024). It is important to acknowledge that the integration of indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms into AfSol is not without challenges. Modern conflicts often present complexities that traditional mechanisms alone may not fully address. Therefore, there is a need for adaptation and innovation to ensure that indigenous approaches remain relevant in the face of evolving conflict dynamics (Cho 2025). The integration of indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms into the AfSol framework represents recognition of the cultural richness, diversity, and resilience of African societies. This approach acknowledges that Africa's traditions hold valuable insights into the resolution of conflicts on the continent. By combining the wisdom of indigenous mechanisms with contemporary conflict resolution strategies, AfSol fosters a holistic, context-specific, and culturally grounded approach to peace and security in Africa.

International Perspectives on AfSol

The concept of AfSol has gained recognition and attention on the international stage, reflecting a changing paradigm in how the global community perceives Africa's role in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. International perspectives on AfSol encompass a spectrum of views, ranging from support and partnership to cautious engagement and skepticism. Many international actors, including regional organizations, NGOs, and foreign governments, have expressed support for AfSol. They recognize the value of African-led initiatives in addressing conflicts on the continent. The AU, for instance, has made AfSol a central pillar of its peace and security architecture. Supportive international perspectives view AfSol as a means to enhance local ownership, cultural

relevance, and sustainability in conflict resolution efforts. Some international actors approach AfSol with cautious engagement. While they acknowledge the importance of African agencies in conflict resolution, they may have concerns about capacity gaps, resource constraints, or the potential for political manipulation at the local level (Abegunrin 2009). These perspectives often call for responsible and informed international involvement that complements AfSol efforts without overshadowing them.

A minority of international perspectives express skepticism about AfSol. These views may stem from concerns about the effectiveness of African-led approaches, doubts about the capacity of regional organizations, or suspicions of potential power struggles among African nations. Skeptical perspectives underscore the importance of careful monitoring, evaluation, and accountability in AfSol initiatives to ensure their success. The evolving international perspectives on AfSol highlight the need for a balanced approach to partnerships (Apuuli 2020). AfSol does not advocate for isolationism or exclusion of international actors; rather, it encourages collaborative efforts that prioritize African leadership and local context. The challenge lies in striking the right balance between international support and African ownership, ensuring that external actors complement, rather than dominate, AfSol-oriented processes. International perspectives on AfSol have also opened up opportunities for constructive dialogue and partnerships. The concept has provided a platform for international organizations and African stakeholders to engage in discussions about the role of external actors in African conflicts. This dialogue can lead to innovative solutions that bridge the gap between global and local perspectives on peace and security (Chekol and Beshi 2026).

International perspectives that express concerns or skepticism can serve as valuable critiques that inform the refinement of AfSol approaches. These critiques may prompt discussions on issues such as governance, accountability, and resource allocation in conflict resolution efforts (Akiba 2020; Sello 2026). By addressing these challenges transparently, AfSol-oriented initiatives can build credibility and resilience.

International perspectives on AfSol reflect a shifting paradigm in the global approach to conflict resolution and peacebuilding in Africa. While there is a spectrum of views, ranging from support to skepticism, AfSol has catalyzed important conversations about African agency, local context, and international partnerships. Balancing these perspectives and harnessing them constructively is crucial for the continued development and effectiveness of AfSol-oriented approaches in Africa's peace and security sphere (Amaglo-Mensah and Nesterova 2025).

Convergence and Divergence with Existing Frameworks

AfSol exhibits notable points of convergence with several existing frameworks for conflict resolution and peacebuilding:

- **UN Framework:** AfSol aligns with the core principles of the UN framework, which include conflict prevention, peacekeeping, and post-conflict reconstruction. However, AfSol emphasizes local ownership and context-specificity, which dovetail with the UN's commitment to supporting nationally driven peace processes and respecting the sovereignty of states.

- **Human Security Paradigm:** AfSol's emphasis on addressing the root causes of conflicts, including human rights abuses, economic disparities, and social inequalities, aligns closely with the human security paradigm. Both stress the need to prioritize the well-being and protection of individuals and communities affected by conflicts.
- **Conflict Sensitivity Approach:** AfSol integrates elements of the conflict sensitivity approach, which seeks to understand how interventions impact conflict dynamics. AfSol's emphasis on context-specificity and the importance of avoiding harm to local communities aligns with the conflict sensitivity framework's goals of minimizing unintended negative consequences.
- **Local Ownership Principles:** AfSol strongly converges with the principles of local ownership, as endorsed by many international organizations. It recognizes the central role of local actors, including governments, civil society, and communities, in shaping conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts.

Divergence from Existing Frameworks

Despite its convergences, AfSol also exhibits clear points of divergence from existing frameworks:

- **Traditional Peacekeeping Models:** AfSol diverges significantly from traditional peacekeeping models, which often involve the deployment of external military forces. AfSol prioritizes non-military, context-specific approaches and advocates for the reduction of external military interventions in favor of indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms.
- **Universalist Approaches:** AfSol challenges universalist approaches to conflict resolution that aim to apply standardized solutions to diverse conflicts. It emphasizes the importance of recognizing the unique characteristics and context-specific drivers of African conflicts, thus diverging from one-size-fits-all models.
- **State-Centric Approaches:** Many existing frameworks prioritize state-centric approaches to conflict resolution. AfSol, while acknowledging the role of states, places greater emphasis on the agency of non-state actors, local communities, and traditional authorities, thereby diverging from the state-centric perspective.
- **External Interventionism:** AfSol challenges the historical and contemporary tendency of external actors to intervene heavily in African conflicts. While existing frameworks often involve significant external military and financial contributions, AfSol advocates for a more balanced approach that respects African ownership and reduces external interference.
- **Emphasis on Indigenous Mechanisms:** Perhaps the most significant divergence is AfSol's emphasis on indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms. While existing frameworks recognize the importance of mediation and dialogue, AfSol uniquely prioritizes the incorporation of traditional and community-based methods as central components of conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

AfSol demonstrates both convergence and divergence with existing frameworks for conflict resolution and peacebuilding. While it shares core principles with many established approaches, such as the UN framework and the human security paradigm,

its emphasis on local ownership, context-specificity, and indigenous mechanisms sets it apart as a distinct and evolving concept (Jeong 2008). These points of convergence and divergence reflect AfSol's ambition to provide a tailored, African-centric approach to addressing the complexities of conflicts in Africa's peace and security sphere.

Comparison with Western Approaches

AfSol represents a significant departure from traditional Western approaches to conflict resolution and peacebuilding. This shift is rooted in recognition of the unique historical, cultural, and contextual factors that shape conflicts in Africa and a growing awareness of the limitations of Western-centric models (Dube and Chisale 2023).

Emphasis on Local Ownership and Agency

One of the key distinctions between AfSol and Western approaches lies in the emphasis on local ownership and agency. AfSol places the agency for conflict resolution squarely in the hands of African nations, communities, and individuals. This contrasts with many Western approaches, which have historically featured significant external intervention and decision-making. AfSol challenges the perception that outsiders are better equipped to resolve African conflicts, asserting that local actors are best positioned to understand and address the root causes of these conflicts (Oshota and Wahab 2022; Rasool, Chen and Kashif 2026).

Cultural Sensitivity and Context-Specificity

AfSol's commitment to cultural sensitivity and context-specificity sets it apart from Western models. African conflicts are deeply embedded in local cultures and histories, making them inherently unique. AfSol recognizes the importance of respecting and drawing upon these cultural nuances in conflict resolution. In contrast, Western approaches have sometimes been criticized for imposing universal solutions that do not adequately consider local contexts, leading to unintended consequences (Núñez 2024; Onyango Ouma 2026).

Inclusivity and Indigenous Mechanisms

AfSol places a strong emphasis on inclusivity, involving a wide range of stakeholders, including traditional leaders, women, youth, and marginalized groups, in conflict resolution efforts (Dygas 2025). This mirrors the belief that diverse perspectives and voices must be heard and integrated into the process. Furthermore, AfSol advocates for the incorporation of indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms, recognizing the value of traditional methods in resolving conflicts. Western approaches have historically been more state-centric and have not consistently prioritized these inclusive and indigenous elements.

Reduced External Intervention and Neocolonialism

A significant divergence between AfSol and Western approaches is the call for reduced external intervention in African conflicts. AfSol questions the neocolonial undertones that have sometimes characterized Western interventions, where external actors are

seen as imposing their will on African nations. AfSol advocates for more balanced power dynamics in which African nations assert their sovereignty and autonomy.

Complexity vs. Simplification

Western approaches have sometimes been criticized for oversimplifying complex conflicts, reducing them to binary narratives of good vs. evil or democracy vs. authoritarianism. AfSol recognizes the multifaceted nature of African conflicts, emphasizing their complexity and the need for multifaceted solutions (Cho 2025). This acknowledgment of complexity is crucial for understanding the intricate dynamics of African conflicts and tailoring responses accordingly.

The comparison between AfSol and Western approaches to conflict resolution and peacebuilding reflects a paradigmatic shift in how Africa is engaging with its peace and security challenges. AfSol's emphasis on local ownership, cultural sensitivity, inclusivity, and a reduced external interventionist stance represents a distinctive approach that aligns with Africa's evolving agency and aspirations. While Western models have made valuable contributions, AfSol represents a growing recognition that African solutions must be rooted in African contexts and perspectives (Amoah 2025).

Synergies with Regional Initiatives

AfSol is inherently cooperative and synergistic with regional initiatives for conflict resolution and peacebuilding in Africa (Amaglo-Mensah and Nesterova 2025). These regional efforts, often led by regional organizations, governments, and other stakeholders, share common goals with AfSol, and together they form a multifaceted approach to addressing the complex peace and security challenges on the continent.

Strengthening Regional Organizations

AfSol synergizes with the efforts of regional organizations such as the AU and the ECOWAS. These organizations have increasingly embraced AfSol principles, recognizing the importance of local ownership, context-specificity, and African agency in conflict resolution. AfSol strengthens these regional organizations by reinforcing their legitimacy and their role as key mediators and peacekeepers in African conflicts (Abrahamsen 2013).

Complementary Roles

AfSol and regional initiatives often play complementary roles in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Regional initiatives provide the institutional and logistical framework for addressing conflicts within specific geographic areas (Dube and Chisale 2023). AfSol complements these efforts by emphasizing the importance of cultural understanding, local buy-in, and indigenous mechanisms. The combination of regional structures and AfSol-oriented approaches offers a comprehensive strategy that draws on the strengths of both.

Conflict prevention, mediation and capacity building

Regional initiatives frequently focus on conflict prevention and early warning systems to avert crises before they escalate. AfSol aligns with these objectives by emphasizing the importance of addressing root causes and preventing conflicts from arising in the first place. Additionally, AfSol complements regional mediation efforts by incorporating traditional conflict resolution mechanisms and fostering inclusive dialogues. Both AfSol and regional initiatives recognize the importance of building the capacity of African nations and organizations to address conflicts independently (Brewer 2011). AfSol emphasizes the need to empower local actors, while regional initiatives often invest in strengthening the capabilities of regional organizations and governments. This dual approach enhances Africa's self-reliance in managing peace and security challenges.

Transnational Conflicts and Comprehensive Solutions

In cases of transnational conflicts that span multiple countries, regional initiatives are particularly valuable (Fabo 2026). AfSol can support these efforts by facilitating cross-border dialogues and promoting collaboration among affected communities. Together, they address the intricate dynamics of conflicts that transcend national boundaries.

The synergies between AfSol and regional initiatives underscore the quest for comprehensive solutions to Africa's peace and security challenges. They recognize that conflicts are multidimensional and require multifaceted responses. Regional initiatives provide the structured framework, while AfSol contributes the depth of local understanding, cultural sensitivity, and community engagement necessary for sustainable peace (Adams et al. 2015).

AfSol's synergies with regional initiatives for conflict resolution and peacebuilding reflect a cooperative and integrated approach to addressing Africa's peace and security challenges. These initiatives reinforce one another, combining regional structures and local ownership to enhance the effectiveness and resilience of efforts to promote peace on the continent. The collaboration between AfSol and regional initiatives represents a powerful strategy for fostering peace and stability in Africa (Ojajorotu and Adeleke 2018).

Critiques and Challenges

While AfSol represents a significant shift in how Africa approaches conflict resolution and peacebuilding, it is not without its critiques and challenges. These critiques often revolve around practical implementation, resource constraints, and the need for balance between African ownership and international cooperation (Dygas 2025).

Resource Constraints and Capacity Building

One of the primary challenges facing AfSol initiatives is the issue of resource constraints. Many African nations and regional organizations lack the financial, logistical, and human resources needed to effectively implement AfSol-oriented approaches (Frimpong 2025). This challenge underscores the need for capacity-

building efforts that strengthen African institutions and empower local actors to take on larger roles in conflict resolution.

Balancing External Support

Critiques of AfSol sometimes revolve around the delicate balance between African ownership and external support. While AfSol emphasizes African agency, it also recognizes the importance of international partnerships and cooperation (Amoah 2025). Critics argue that finding the right equilibrium is challenging, as excessive external involvement can undermine the principles of AfSol, while too little support can hinder conflict resolution efforts.

Conflict Complexity and Multifaceted Approaches

African conflicts are often characterized by their complexity, involving a myriad of socio-political, economic, and cultural factors. Critics suggest that AfSol's focus on local ownership and cultural sensitivity may not always provide the depth of analysis and resources required to address such multifaceted challenges comprehensively (Addison, 2001). This critique underscores the need for a nuanced understanding of when and how to apply AfSol principles.

Inclusivity and Gender Equality

While AfSol emphasizes inclusivity, some critics argue that it may not go far enough in promoting gender equality and the active participation of women in conflict resolution efforts. Gender disparities persist in many African societies, and addressing them effectively requires deliberate actions and policies to ensure women's voices are heard and their needs are addressed (Hofisi, Moroe and Erameh 2025).

Interactions with Existing Conflict Resolution Mechanisms

AfSol's integration of indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms raises questions about how these methods interact with formal, Western-oriented conflict resolution processes. Critics argue that the coexistence of these two approaches can be challenging, as they may have differing timelines, values, and power dynamics (Vhumbunu 2024). Harmonizing these approaches without compromising AfSol's core principles presents a significant challenge.

External Skepticism and Support

AfSol's emphasis on African ownership and self-reliance has faced skepticism from some external actors who are accustomed to taking a more prominent role in African conflicts. These skeptics question Africa's capacity to lead and may be hesitant to fully embrace AfSol-oriented initiatives (Abegunrin 2009). Building trust and credibility in AfSol approaches within the international community is an ongoing challenge. AfSol represents a transformative approach to conflict resolution and peacebuilding in Africa, but it is not immune to critiques and challenges. These critiques often revolve around the practical aspects of implementation, the need for resource mobilization and

capacity building, and the balance between African ownership and international cooperation. Addressing these challenges requires a nuanced understanding of the complex realities of African conflicts and a commitment to adapt AfSol principles to effectively navigate the path toward sustainable peace and security on the continent (Sauti and Makaripe 2024).

Theoretical foundations of AfSol-oriented conflict analysis

Defining Key Variables in AfSol-Oriented Analysis

An AfSol-oriented analysis in the context of conflict resolution and peacebuilding in Africa requires a meticulous examination of key variables that shape the efficacy and applicability of AfSol principles (Abrahamsen 2013). These variables serve as the analytical foundation for understanding the complexities of African conflicts and the practical implications of AfSol-oriented approaches.

Local Agency and Ownership

Local agency and ownership stand as foundational pillars within the AfSol-oriented analysis of conflict resolution and peacebuilding in Africa (Nimbalkar 2026). These variables underscore the active participation, decision-making authority, and sense of responsibility that African nations, communities, and individuals hold in shaping the trajectory of peace and security efforts on the continent.

Empowerment through Local Agency

Local agency represents the capacity of African nations and communities to act as agents of change in their conflict-resolution processes. It recognizes that the people who are directly affected by conflicts possess invaluable knowledge, experiences, and insights into their root causes and potential solutions (Fabo 2026). AfSol-oriented analysis places a strong emphasis on empowering local actors, whether they are governments, CSOs, traditional leaders, or grassroots activists, to take ownership of peacebuilding efforts.

Defining Ownership in Conflict Resolution

Ownership, within an AfSol-oriented context, extends beyond mere involvement to encompass the authority to make decisions, allocate resources, and set agendas. It implies that African nations and communities are not passive recipients of external solutions but active architects of their peace (Kuperman 2015). Analyzing ownership involves assessing the degree to which local actors have a genuine voice in shaping conflict resolution strategies and policies.

Challenges to Local Ownership

While local ownership is a fundamental principle, it is not without challenges. Many African conflicts involve complex power dynamics, political elites, and external actors who may resist devolving authority to local actors. In some cases, local communities

may lack the capacity or resources to fully engage in conflict resolution. Analyzing these challenges is essential to understanding the practical limitations of local ownership and identifying areas where support and capacity-building are required (Munyao, Manthi and Ndirangu 2025).

Balancing Local and External Interests

Balancing the interests of local actors with external actors is a critical aspect of AfSol-oriented analysis. International organizations and external governments often play substantial roles in African conflicts, providing resources, expertise, and mediation efforts. Analyzing the dynamics of these partnerships and their impact on local ownership helps ensure that external support enhances rather than undermines AfSol principles (Fisher et al. 2013).

Cultural Sensitivity and Local Context

Local agency and ownership are closely intertwined with cultural sensitivity and the recognition of local context. AfSol-oriented analysis acknowledges that African conflicts are deeply embedded in cultural norms, traditions, and histories (Kabia 2009). This variable emphasizes the need for conflict resolution efforts to respect and draw upon these cultural nuances, ensuring that solutions resonate with the communities affected by conflicts.

Indigenous Mechanisms and Inclusive Dialogues

Empowering local actors involves incorporating indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms and fostering inclusive dialogues. These mechanisms, often rooted in tradition, hold cultural legitimacy and are highly relevant to the context of African conflicts (Chekol and Beshi 2026; Engel 2023). Analyzing their integration into AfSol-oriented initiatives assesses the extent to which local agency and ownership are being prioritized.

Local agency and ownership are core variables in an AfSol-oriented analysis, reflecting the fundamental principle that African nations and communities have the primary responsibility and capacity to resolve their conflicts. Empowering local actors, respecting cultural context, and navigating the complexities of external involvement are essential elements of this analysis (Ujunwa, Okoyeuzu and Kalu 2019). It underscores the importance of African ownership as a driving force for sustainable peace and security in Africa.

Contextual Dynamics

Contextual dynamics constitute a critical variable in an AfSol-oriented analysis of conflict resolution and peacebuilding in Africa (Rushton 2024). These dynamics encompass the unique and multifaceted factors that shape the nature of conflicts on the continent and influence the application of AfSol principles in different settings. African conflicts are characterized by multifaceted causes and drivers, often rooted in historical legacies, political grievances, economic disparities, identity issues, and resource

competition. AfSol-oriented analysis recognizes that each conflict is shaped by a unique set of contextual dynamics. Understanding these dynamics requires a thorough examination of the root causes and drivers specific to a particular conflict, as well as their evolving nature over time. Africa's vast geographic diversity results in significant regional variations in conflict dynamics (Addison 2001). Contextual factors such as geography, climate, and access to resources can influence the nature of conflicts. Regional dynamics also play a role, with conflicts often spilling across borders. AfSol-oriented analysis involves considering how regional factors and neighboring states impact the resolution of conflicts (Cho 2025). The array of actors and stakeholders involved in African conflicts adds complexity to the contextual dynamics. These actors range from national governments, rebel groups, and militias to civil society organizations, traditional leaders, and international mediators. Understanding their interests, motivations, and roles within the conflict landscape is crucial for effective AfSol-oriented analysis.

The impact of conflicts on humanitarian and development dimensions is a significant contextual dynamic. Displacement, food insecurity, health crises, and infrastructure damage are common consequences of conflicts in Africa (Amoah 2025). AfSol-oriented analysis includes an assessment of the humanitarian and development challenges specific to each conflict, as addressing these issues is essential for sustainable peace. Contextual dynamics also encompass historical legacies and cultural factors that influence conflict resolution processes. Historical grievances, colonial histories, and cultural norms can either hinder or facilitate reconciliation efforts. AfSol-oriented analysis delves into how historical and cultural context shapes the attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors of conflict parties and affected communities (Hammed 2015).

The political and governance context plays a central role in African conflicts. Issues related to governance, state legitimacy, corruption, and power struggles often contribute to conflicts. AfSol-oriented analysis involves an examination of the political and governance structures within which conflicts emerge and evolve. Resource scarcity, including competition over land, water, minerals, and other natural resources, is a frequent driver of conflicts in Africa (May et al. 2021). Contextual dynamics related to resource availability and accesses are integral to understanding the root causes of conflicts. AfSol-oriented analysis explores the role of resource dynamics in shaping conflict and peace processes.

Contextual dynamics represent a central variable in AfSol-oriented analysis, reflecting the recognition that African conflicts are inherently complex and context-specific. Analyzing these dynamics allows for a deeper understanding of the unique challenges and opportunities presented by each conflict, guiding the application of AfSol principles in ways that are tailored to the specific context (Oshota and Wahab 2022; Rasool, Chen and Kashif 2026). Navigating the multifaceted contextual dynamics is essential for advancing sustainable peace and security in Africa.

Regional and International Involvement

Regional and international involvement is a pivotal variable in an AfSol-oriented analysis of conflict resolution and peacebuilding in Africa (Kabia 2009). This variable

encompasses the roles, strategies, and impact of both regional African organizations and the international community in addressing conflicts on the continent.

Regional Organizations and Initiatives

Regional organizations such as the AU, the ECOWAS, and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) play significant roles in conflict resolution efforts. AfSol-oriented analysis acknowledges the importance of regional organizations as key actors in African peace and security. It assesses their capacity, effectiveness, and alignment with AfSol principles. Additionally, the analysis examines regional initiatives, such as peacekeeping missions and mediation efforts, to understand their impact on conflict resolution processes (Anyang' Nyong'o 1998; Ceesay and Asmorowati 2026).

Balancing Regional Interests

One of the challenges within the variable of regional involvement is the need to balance regional interests with the principles of AfSol. Regional organizations often have agendas and interests that may not always align perfectly with AfSol's emphasis on local ownership and agency. AfSol-oriented analysis delves into the complexities of harmonizing regional objectives with AfSol principles and identifies areas where collaboration can be strengthened.

International Actors and Partnerships

International actors, including foreign governments, international organizations, and NGOs, are integral to African conflicts due to their resource contributions, diplomatic interventions, and mediation efforts. The AfSol-oriented analysis examines the extent to which these external actors align with AfSol principles. It assesses their impact on local agency, inclusivity, and the balance between external support and African ownership (Jackson 2001).

Sovereignty and Neocolonialism

An important consideration within this variable is the sovereignty of African nations and the risk of neocolonialism. AfSol principles emphasize African agency and ownership, but external involvement can sometimes raise questions about the extent to which African nations have control over their affairs (Sauti and Makaripe 2024). AfSol-oriented analysis critically examines the dynamics of sovereignty and neocolonialism within the context of regional and international involvement.

Balancing Local and External Expertise

Effective conflict resolution often requires a balance between local and external expertise. AfSol-oriented analysis explores how international actors contribute their expertise while respecting local knowledge and traditions (Addison 2001). This involves assessing the extent to which external actors collaborate with local

communities, incorporate indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms, and empower local actors in decision-making processes.

Funding and Resources

Financial and logistical resources provided by international actors are crucial for supporting conflict resolution and peacebuilding initiatives in Africa. AfSol-oriented analysis evaluates the allocation of resources and their alignment with AfSol principles. It assesses whether funds are directed toward local capacity-building, community engagement, and sustainable solutions rather than reinforcing dependency on external assistance (Vhumbunu 2024).

Regional and international involvement constitutes a complex variable in AfSol-oriented analysis, reflecting the interconnectedness of African conflicts with the global stage. Analyzing this variable allows for a comprehensive understanding of the roles and impacts of regional and international actors in conflict resolution processes (Uzoigwe and Nwokolo 2025; Dosch and Becker 2025). Navigating the challenges and opportunities presented by external involvement is essential for advancing the principles of AfSol and achieving sustainable peace and security in Africa.

Analytical Processes and Methodologies

Qualitative vs. Quantitative Approaches

In the context of analyzing conflicts within Africa's peace and security sphere, the choice between qualitative and quantitative approaches carries significant implications for the alignment with AfSol principles. AfSol emphasizes local ownership, cultural sensitivity, and a nuanced understanding of conflict dynamics. Qualitative approaches align closely with these principles by offering in-depth insights into local contexts, perspectives, and the complexity of African conflicts (Dygas 2025). By employing qualitative methods such as content analysis, we have delved into the intricacies of each conflict, considering historical legacies, cultural factors, and local voices. This aligns with AfSol's emphasis on recognizing the agency of African nations and communities in shaping conflict resolution efforts.

Qualitative approaches are well-suited for capturing the local context, which is often crucial in AfSol-oriented analysis. This inclusivity aligns with AfSol's commitment to involving all segments of society in conflict resolution processes. Qualitative methods have enabled us to understand the historical, cultural, and social dynamics that underpin conflicts, providing a nuanced and context-specific understanding.

African conflicts are renowned for their complexity, involving a multitude of interconnected factors and dimensions (Vhumbunu 2024). Qualitative approaches excel at unpacking this complexity by offering a platform for exploring the multifaceted causes, drivers, and consequences of conflicts. We navigated the intricate web of political, economic, social, and cultural dynamics that shape conflicts, which is essential for an AfSol-oriented analysis. This aligns with AfSol's emphasis on recognizing and addressing the root causes of conflicts rather than applying one-size-fits-all solutions.

Case Studies and Comparative Analysis

Case Study: South Sudan's Independence and Ongoing Conflict (2011-2022)

Context: South Sudan's journey to independence in 2011 was celebrated globally, but the country has since experienced protracted conflict. A case study could investigate the role of external actors, regional dynamics, and local agencies in the conflict and explore how an AfSol-oriented approach could contribute to peace.

Case Study: The Niger Delta Conflict in Nigeria (2002-2022)

Context: The Niger Delta region in Nigeria has been marked by conflict over resource control and environmental degradation. A case study could focus on the impact of oil exploration, community-based peace initiatives, and the role of traditional leaders in conflict resolution.

Comparative Analysis: Peace Processes in East Africa (Sudan, Uganda, Rwanda)

Context: East Africa has witnessed diverse conflict scenarios over the past two decades. A comparative analysis could examine the varying approaches to peace processes, including international mediation, traditional conflict resolution mechanisms, and the role of regional organizations like the Intergovernmental Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

Comparative Analysis: Women's Participation in Peacebuilding Across African Conflicts

Context: Women's participation in peace processes and decision-making has gained recognition as a key element of successful conflict resolution. A comparative analysis could assess the degree to which women have been included in peace efforts in different African conflicts, exploring both successes and challenges. These case studies and comparative analyses would contribute to a deeper understanding of conflict dynamics in Africa's peace and security sphere, while also providing insights into how AfSol-oriented approaches can be applied to address complex challenges and promote sustainable peace on the continent.

Assessing Conflict Dynamics through an AfSol Lens

In the context of conflict analysis within Africa's peace and security sphere, assessing conflict dynamics through an AfSol lens represents a comprehensive and contextually sensitive approach (Adem 2004). This method aligns seamlessly with the core principles of AfSol, which emphasize the importance of local agency, context-specificity, and inclusivity in conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts (Kostelyanets 2023; Ebegbulem 2011).

Holistic Understanding of Conflict Dynamics

AfSol-oriented analysis recognizes that conflicts are multifaceted and interconnected phenomena. Assessing conflict dynamics through an AfSol lens involves moving

beyond simplistic categorizations and examining the complex web of factors contributing to conflicts. This includes exploring political, economic, social, cultural, and environmental dimensions and their interplay. It also necessitates a nuanced understanding of how these dynamics evolve, as conflicts are rarely static.

Local Agency and Ownership

Central to the AfSol lens is the recognition of local agency and ownership in conflict resolution efforts. Assessing conflict dynamics through this perspective means prioritizing the voices, experiences, and perspectives of those directly impacted by conflicts. This includes engaging with local communities, CSOs, and traditional leaders to understand their priorities, grievances, and aspirations. It also means involving them in the decision-making processes that shape peace and security initiatives.

Inclusivity and Diverse Perspectives

AfSol principles emphasize inclusivity, and assessing conflict dynamics through an AfSol lens requires taking into account diverse perspectives. This involves recognizing the role of women, youth, marginalized groups, and civil society actors in shaping conflict dynamics and contributing to peace efforts. It also entails understanding how different identity markers, such as ethnicity, religion, and gender, intersect with conflict dynamics.

Local Conflict Resolution Mechanisms:

An AfSol lens places a strong emphasis on the utilization of indigenous and traditional conflict resolution mechanisms. Assessing conflict dynamics through this perspective involves exploring how local communities address disputes and maintain social cohesion. This includes understanding the role of customary law, community elders, and local councils in managing conflicts and promoting reconciliation. It also means acknowledging the potential synergies between these local mechanisms and formal conflict resolution processes.

Challenges and Opportunities for AfSol Implementation:

Assessing conflict dynamics through an AfSol lens also involves identifying challenges and opportunities for implementing AfSol principles in practice. This includes recognizing the limitations of external interventions, the potential for neocolonial dynamics, and the complexities of navigating power imbalances. It also means identifying entry points for enhancing local ownership, building capacity at the community level, and ensuring that external actors align their strategies with local priorities.

The Role of Regional and International Actors

Finally, assessing conflict dynamics through an AfSol lens requires a critical examination of the roles played by regional and international actors (Ceesay and Asmorowati 2026). This involves assessing the impact of regional organizations, foreign governments, and international organizations on conflict dynamics. It also

entails scrutinizing the extent to which their interventions align with AfSol principles, such as supporting local agencies and context-specific solutions.

Assessing conflict dynamics through an AfSol lens offers a holistic and inclusive perspective that aligns with the principles of African-led Solutions (Fabo 2026). This approach recognizes the complexity of conflicts, prioritizes local agency and ownership, and seeks to integrate indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms into formal peace efforts. It also acknowledges the challenges and opportunities in implementing AfSol principles and the role of external actors. By adopting this lens, conflict analysis can contribute to more effective and sustainable peace and security strategies in Africa's diverse and dynamic context (Núñez 2024; Onyango Ouma 2026).

Policy implications of AfSol-oriented conflict analysis

Bridging the Gap between Theory and Practice

The pursuit of effective conflict resolution and peacebuilding in Africa's peace and security sphere relies on a successful synthesis of theoretical frameworks and practical implementation (Ujunwa, Okoyeuzu and Kalu 2019). Bridging the gap between theory and practice is a pivotal aspect of the research topic, as it addresses the challenge of translating academic insights and policy recommendations into tangible actions that can address the complex conflicts that have marked the continent.

Theoretical Foundations

In the context of AfSol-oriented conflict analysis, theoretical frameworks serve as the intellectual underpinning for understanding the root causes, dynamics, and potential solutions to conflicts (Oshota and Wahab 2022; Rasool, Chen and Kashif 2026). These frameworks may draw from various disciplines such as political science, sociology, anthropology, and international relations. They offer essential perspectives on the complexities of conflicts in Africa and provide researchers with the conceptual tools needed to analyze and interpret data (Hammed 2015).

Practical Realities

While theories provide the groundwork, practical realities on the ground shape the dynamics of conflicts in Africa. Local political, social, and economic conditions, as well as the actions of various actors, influence the trajectory of conflicts and peacebuilding efforts. These practical realities can sometimes deviate significantly from theoretical models, necessitating a pragmatic and adaptable approach.

Challenges in Bridging the Gap

Bridging the gap between theory and practice in AfSol-oriented conflict analysis involves addressing several challenges:

Contextual Specificity: Theories often provide general principles, but the specificity of each African conflict requires tailored approaches. Researchers must adapt theories to the unique historical, cultural, and political contexts of individual conflicts.

Local Ownership: AfSol principles stress the importance of local ownership and agency. Bridging the gap requires empowering local actors to take the lead in implementing conflict resolution strategies based on theoretical insights.

Inclusivity: Bridging the gap necessitates ensuring that diverse voices, including those of women, youth, and marginalized groups, are heard and included in the design and implementation of peace initiatives.

Practical Constraints: Researchers must acknowledge the practical constraints of resources, political will, and external pressures that can affect the feasibility of applying theoretical solutions.

Strategies for Bridging the Gap

Participatory Research: Engaging directly with local communities and stakeholders during the research phase ensures that theoretical insights align with practical needs and realities.

Adaptive Approaches: Flexibility is key in bridging the gap. Researchers and practitioners should be willing to adapt strategies based on changing circumstances and feedback from local actors.

Evidence-Based Policy: Researchers can play a crucial role in translating theoretical findings into actionable policy recommendations that resonate with policymakers and practitioners.

Capacity Building: Building the capacity of local actors to understand and apply theoretical concepts can promote self-reliance and enhance the sustainability of peacebuilding efforts.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Continuous monitoring and evaluation of peace initiatives allow for adjustments based on real-world outcomes, ensuring that theory and practice remain aligned.

Bridging the gap between theory and practice in AfSol-oriented conflict analysis is essential for realizing the principles of AfSol in addressing complex conflicts in Africa's peace and security sphere (Baker 2009). It involves a dynamic process of adapting theoretical frameworks to local contexts, empowering local actors, and navigating practical challenges. Successful bridging of this gap can lead to more effective, context-specific, and sustainable peace and security strategies that address the complex dynamics of African conflicts (Ceesay and Asmorowati 2026).

Lessons from AfSol-Oriented Analysis

AfSol-oriented analysis, grounded in principles of AfSol, offers a rich source of lessons that can significantly inform and enhance peace and security strategies in Africa's complex and diverse landscape. These lessons provide a roadmap for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers seeking to navigate the intricate web of conflicts that have characterized the continent over the past two decades (Fabo 2026).

Context-Specific Solutions

One of the paramount lessons from AfSol-oriented analysis is the imperative of context-specific solutions. Africa's myriad conflicts are deeply rooted in historical,

cultural, political, and socioeconomic contexts that vary greatly from one region to another. AfSol-oriented analysis underscores that effective peace and security strategies must be tailored to the unique dynamics of each conflict. Cookie-cutter approaches are inadequate; instead, solutions should emerge from an in-depth understanding of the specific challenges and opportunities presented by each context (Vhumbunu 2024).

Local Ownership and Agency

AfSol principles emphasize the central role of local ownership and agency in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Lessons from AfSol-oriented analysis stress that sustainable peace and security solutions must empower local actors, including communities, CSOs, and traditional leaders. When local stakeholders are engaged as active partners in the process, they become invested in the success of peace initiatives, which enhances the prospects of long-term stability (Adams et al. 2015).

Inclusivity and Diverse Perspectives

AfSol-oriented analysis highlights the importance of inclusivity, recognizing that peace and security efforts must incorporate diverse perspectives, including those of women, youth, and marginalized groups. These voices, often marginalized in traditional conflict resolution processes, offer unique insights and are vital to the development of comprehensive and enduring solutions (Frimpong 2025). The lesson here is that policies and strategies should be designed with a keen awareness of the gender, ethnic, religious, and generational dynamics within each context.

Indigenous Conflict Resolution Mechanisms

Many African societies have well-established indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms, which AfSol-oriented analysis champions as valuable resources for peace. Lessons drawn from such analysis underscore the need to recognize, respect, and integrate these local mechanisms into formal conflict resolution processes. Indigenous approaches, often rooted in cultural norms and traditions, can offer efficient, locally acceptable, and sustainable solutions (Vhumbunu 2024).

Balancing External and Local Actors

AfSol-oriented analysis recognizes the role of external actors, including regional organizations, international bodies, and foreign governments, in supporting peace and security efforts in Africa. Lessons from this perspective emphasize the importance of a delicate balance. External actors should provide valuable resources, expertise, and mediation when needed but must do so while respecting the autonomy and agency of local actors (Mlambo, Aniche and Masuku 2024). Overreliance on external intervention can sometimes undermine AfSol principles.

Adaptive Strategies

Lastly, AfSol-oriented analysis highlights the need for adaptive strategies. Conflict dynamics can change rapidly, and lessons from AfSol-oriented analysis stress the importance of continuous monitoring and evaluation. Policymakers and practitioners should be ready to adjust their strategies based on real-world outcomes and changing circumstances. Flexibility and openness to learning from both successes and failures are crucial.

AfSol-oriented analysis provides invaluable lessons for shaping effective peace and security strategies in Africa's dynamic landscape (Kanzian and Runggaldier SJ 2007). These lessons underscore the necessity of context-specific, locally owned, and inclusive approaches, alongside the integration of indigenous mechanisms and a balanced engagement with external actors. Embracing these lessons not only aligns with the principles of AfSol but also offers the potential for more sustainable, locally resonant, and effective peace and security initiatives on the continent (Akiba 2020; Sello 2026).

Case Studies of Successful AfSol Interventions

AfSol-oriented analysis has yielded numerous case studies that offer valuable insights into successful peace and security interventions across Africa. These case studies illuminate the practical application of AfSol principles and provide tangible evidence that locally driven solutions can yield sustainable peace outcomes. For this purpose, the following cases are important to consider: 1) The Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Sudan (2005); 2) The Arusha Accords in Burundi (2000); 3) The Transformation of Mozambique (1992); 4) The M23 Rebellion in the Democratic Republic of Congo (2013); 5) The Algiers Peace Agreement in Mali (2015); 6) The Peace Agreement in Liberia (2003); 7) The Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (2018).

1) The Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Sudan (2005)

The Sudanese Civil War, one of Africa's longest conflicts, came to an end with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005, leading to the eventual secession of South Sudan in 2011. The CPA involved a wide array of stakeholders, including rebel groups, government officials, and civil society actors. This inclusivity was instrumental in addressing the multifaceted nature of the conflict.

The CPA recognized the right to self-determination for South Sudan, exemplifying the AfSol principle of local ownership.

The CPA included mechanisms for resolving post-independence issues, demonstrating the need for adaptive strategies in peace agreements.

2) The Arusha Accords in Burundi (2000)

The Arusha Accords played a key role in ending the civil war in Burundi, a complex ethnic conflict, thereby facilitating the development of power-sharing mechanisms that included various ethnic groups. They emphasized the importance of inclusive governance structures and recognized the role of traditional dispute resolution

mechanisms, harmonizing them with formal justice systems. Importantly, international mediators facilitated the negotiations, emphasizing a balance between local ownership and external participation.

3) The Transformation of Mozambique (1992)

The civil war in Mozambique ended with the Rome General Peace Accords in 1992, and the Mozambican case highlights the effectiveness of dialogue as a means of conflict resolution, consistent with AfSol principles.

The successful reintegration of former combatants and post-conflict reconstruction efforts were crucial in preventing a relapse into violence. Crucially, local reconciliation initiatives and community-led peacebuilding played a significant role in consolidating peace.

4) The M23 Rebellion in the Democratic Republic of Congo (2013)

The M23 Rebellion in the DRC ended with a peace agreement in 2013, as the participation of regional actors, particularly the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), played a decisive role in resolving the conflict.

The peace agreement demonstrated the importance of balancing external support with local organizations to ensure long-term stability, addressing not only security issues but also the political, social, and economic aspects of the conflict.

5) The Algiers Peace Agreement in Mali (2015)

The conflict in Mali arose from a complex interplay of ethnic tensions, jihadist extremism, and governance challenges. The Algiers Peace Agreement sought to address these challenges and emphasized the importance of decentralized governance and local decision-making, consistent with AfSol's principles of local ownership.

The process involved multiple stakeholders, including armed groups, regional actors, and local communities, reflecting AfSol's commitment to inclusiveness. In this sense, recognizing the cultural and religious dimensions of the conflict was integral to the successful negotiations and implementation of the agreement.

6) The Peace Agreement in Liberia (2003)

The Liberian civil war, characterized by significant violence and instability, ended with a comprehensive peace agreement. In this context, women's participation in the peace process and the inclusion of gender-sensitive provisions in the agreement underscored the importance of gender inclusiveness.

The establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission contributed to addressing past human rights violations and fostered reconciliation. Importantly, a change in leadership and the holding of democratic elections played a significant role, both of which constituted lasting steps toward ensuring political stability.

7) The Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (2018)

The ongoing conflict in South Sudan has led to significant humanitarian crises. The 2018 peace agreement aimed to end the violence and restore stability, focusing on

power-sharing mechanisms and the importance of decentralized governance, reflecting AfSol principles. Efforts to engage local communities and traditional leaders in reconciliation processes were vital to building sustainable peace. Ensuring humanitarian access to conflict-affected areas was crucial to addressing the conflict's severe humanitarian consequences.

These examples of successful AfSol interventions highlight the viability and effectiveness of AfSol in resolving complex conflicts. They underscore the importance of inclusiveness, local ownership, adaptive strategies, and the integration of local mechanisms (Ojakorotu and Adeleke 2018). While each example has its own unique characteristics, taken together they highlight the potential of peace and security initiatives based on AfSol principles to achieve lasting stability in diverse conflict-ridden African contexts. They emphasize the importance of inclusiveness, local governance, gender sensitivity, transitional justice, and adaptive strategies as integral components of successful AfSol interventions. Taken together, these examples confirm the potential of African-led solutions to resolve complex conflicts on the continent. These examples serve as reference points for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers seeking to contribute to sustainable peace on the continent (Munyao, Manthi and Ndirangu 2025).

Challenges and Failures: Learning Opportunities

While successful AfSol interventions provide valuable insights, it is equally important to scrutinize the challenges and failures encountered in conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts. These instances offer critical learning opportunities that can shape future strategies and refine the application of AfSol principles (May et al. 2021).

Understanding the Complexity of Conflict Dynamics

Challenges and failures in AfSol-oriented interventions often highlight the intricate and evolving nature of conflict dynamics (Uzoigwe and Nwokolo 2025). Conflicts in Africa are rarely one-dimensional; they involve a complex interplay of political, economic, social, cultural, and historical factors. Failures can occur when interventions oversimplify these complexities or fail to adapt to evolving situations (Mdhluli 2025). These challenges underscore the need for conflict analysis to continuously evolve and incorporate a deeper understanding of context-specific dynamics.

External Actors and Neocolonialism

One recurrent challenge is the role of external actors, including regional organizations and international powers, in African conflicts. Failures in AfSol interventions often point to instances where external actors exert undue influence or prioritize their interests over those of local populations. Learning from these experiences underscores the importance of ensuring that external engagement aligns with AfSol principles, emphasizing local agency, ownership, and the prevention of neocolonial dynamics.

Fragmentation and Spoilers

Challenges can arise due to the fragmentation of armed groups and the presence of spoilers who seek to undermine peace processes. Failures can occur when mediators and policymakers underestimate the complexity of intra-group dynamics or do not adequately address the interests of spoilers. These challenges emphasize the need for nuanced approaches that engage with all relevant stakeholders and anticipate potential spoilers' actions.

Economic and Resource Factors

Resource-driven conflicts often pose significant challenges in Africa. Failures can result from inadequate management of resource-related grievances or the inability to address the economic drivers of conflicts effectively. Learning from these challenges underscores the importance of incorporating economic dimensions into conflict analysis and addressing resource-related grievances in peacebuilding strategies.

Ethnic and Identity Dynamics

Ethnic and identity-based conflicts remain prevalent on the continent. Challenges and failures may occur when interventions do not adequately consider the complexities of these dynamics. Understanding the intersections of ethnicity, religion, and culture in conflicts is vital to developing effective AfSol-oriented strategies that promote inclusivity and reconciliation.

Conflict Transformation vs. Resolution

In some cases, conflicts may not be fully resolved but rather transformed into less violent forms. While this can be seen as a success in reducing violence, it may not address the underlying causes. Learning opportunities arise from recognizing that some conflicts may require long-term, adaptive approaches rather than immediate resolution. Conflict transformation may be a more realistic goal in certain contexts.

Sustainability and Local Capacity Building

The sustainability of peace remains a significant challenge in AfSol-oriented interventions. Failures often highlight the need for a stronger focus on building local capacity, including strengthening institutions, governance, and security structures. Long-term success hinges on empowering local actors to take ownership of peace processes and maintain stability.

Challenges and failures in AfSol-oriented conflict analysis are not obstacles to progress but rather opportunities for learning and improvement. They illuminate the complexities of African conflicts and emphasize the need for adaptable, context-specific, and inclusive approaches (Sauti and Makaripe 2024). By recognizing these challenges and actively addressing them, policymakers, practitioners, and researchers can refine AfSol principles and contribute to more effective, sustainable, and locally resonant peace and security strategies in Africa's diverse and dynamic context (Abrahamsen 2013).

Recommendations for Policymakers and Practitioners

1) What: Developing AfSol-Centric Policy Frameworks

The development of AfSol-centric policy frameworks represents a critical step towards aligning peace and security efforts in Africa with the principles of AfSol. Such frameworks are instrumental in translating AfSol-oriented analysis and lessons into actionable policies and strategies (Fabo 2026). In this analysis, we explore the significance of developing AfSol-centric policy frameworks and the key elements involved.

Local Ownership and Agency. AfSol-centric policy frameworks prioritize the principle of local ownership and agency. They recognize that sustainable peace can only be achieved when local actors are actively engaged in shaping policies and strategies. These frameworks emphasize the need to empower communities, civil society organizations, and traditional leaders to participate in decision-making processes. Local ownership fosters a sense of responsibility and ensures that policies are rooted in the realities and priorities of affected populations.

Contextual Sensitivity. One of the fundamental aspects of AfSol-centric policy frameworks is contextual sensitivity. They acknowledge that each conflict in Africa is unique, and shaped by historical, cultural, and socioeconomic factors. These frameworks require policymakers to conduct thorough conflict analysis to understand the specific dynamics of a given context. Contextual sensitivity ensures that policies are tailored to address the root causes and drivers of conflict in a way that resonates with local communities.

Inclusivity. Inclusivity is another cornerstone of AfSol-centric policy frameworks. These frameworks emphasize the importance of including diverse voices in peace and security processes. They highlight the roles of women, youth, and marginalized groups and strive to ensure their meaningful participation. Inclusivity goes beyond token representation; it entails creating spaces for these voices to influence policy decisions and strategies.

Integration of Indigenous Mechanisms. AfSol-centric policy frameworks recognize the value of integrating indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms into formal strategies. They acknowledge that many African societies possess well-established traditional practices for resolving disputes and maintaining peace. Policymakers are encouraged to work in tandem with local leaders and customary institutions to incorporate these mechanisms. This not only respects local traditions but also leverages existing resources for peace.

Balanced External Engagement. External actors, including regional organizations and international partners, play a role in AfSol-centric policy frameworks, but in a balanced manner. These frameworks emphasize that external engagement should complement local efforts rather than overshadow them. Policymakers are tasked with aligning external support with the priorities and strategies identified by local actors. This approach prevents the imposition of external agendas and promotes a more harmonious partnership.

Adaptive Strategies. AfSol-centric policy frameworks recognize the dynamic nature of conflicts in Africa. They emphasize the need for policies and strategies that

are adaptable and responsive to changing circumstances. Policymakers are encouraged to continually assess the effectiveness of interventions and make adjustments based on real-world outcomes. This adaptive approach allows policies to evolve alongside conflict dynamics.

Long-term Sustainability. Sustainability is a core focus of AfSol-centric policy frameworks. They emphasize the importance of policies that go beyond short-term peace agreements and address the long-term structural issues that contribute to conflicts. Policymakers are tasked with building the capacity of local institutions, promoting good governance, and investing in development initiatives that underpin lasting stability.

The development of AfSol-centric policy frameworks represents a pivotal shift in how peace and security are approached in Africa (Addison 2001). These frameworks prioritize local ownership, contextual sensitivity, inclusivity, and the integration of indigenous mechanisms. They promote balanced external engagement, adaptive strategies, and long-term sustainability. By adopting these principles and actively developing AfSol-centric policies, policymakers can contribute to more effective, sustainable, and locally resonant peace and security strategies in Africa's diverse and dynamic context (Dube and Chisale 2023).

2) Why: Advantages and Benefits of AfSol Approaches

AfSol approaches, grounded in principles of AfSol, offer several distinct advantages and benefits that make them crucial in addressing conflicts and promoting peace and security in Africa's diverse landscape (Hofisi, Moroe and Eramah 2025). These approaches prioritize local agency, inclusivity, and context-specificity, yielding tangible benefits that contribute to sustainable peace.

One of the primary advantages of AfSol's approach is the emphasis on local ownership and empowerment. By actively involving local communities, civil society organizations, and traditional leaders in conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts, AfSol approaches ensure that policies and strategies are designed and implemented by those who understand the nuances of the conflict's context. This local ownership not only fosters a sense of responsibility but also bolsters the legitimacy of peace processes.

AfSol approaches prioritize contextual sensitivity, recognizing that each conflict in Africa is unique, and shaped by its historical, cultural, and socioeconomic context. By tailoring strategies to specific contexts, AfSol approaches increase their relevance and effectiveness. This adaptability allows policymakers and practitioners to address the root causes and drivers of conflict more precisely (Kadende-Kaiser and Kaiser 2003).

AfSol approaches champion inclusivity, ensuring that a wide range of voices is heard and considered in peace and security processes. This inclusivity extends to women, youth, and marginalized groups, who are often disproportionately affected by conflicts. The benefit is twofold: it provides a more comprehensive understanding of the conflict's dynamics and fosters social cohesion by addressing grievances and promoting reconciliation among diverse communities.

One of the strengths of AfSol's approaches is the integration of indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms. These mechanisms, deeply rooted in African traditions and

culture, offer efficient and locally acceptable ways to manage disputes and maintain peace. By incorporating indigenous practices into formal strategies, AfSol approaches harness the wisdom and resources of local communities.

AfSol approaches advocate for a balanced external engagement. While recognizing the value of international support, they stress that external actors should complement, not overshadow, local efforts. This balanced approach ensures that external interventions align with local priorities and strategies, preventing the imposition of external agendas and neocolonial dynamics.

AfSol approaches promote adaptive strategies that can evolve alongside changing conflict dynamics. This flexibility allows policymakers and practitioners to respond effectively to unforeseen challenges and seize emerging opportunities. The ability to adjust strategies based on real-world outcomes enhances their relevance and impact.

Ultimately, the central benefit of AfSol's approaches is their potential to foster sustainable peace and development. By prioritizing local ownership, context-specificity, inclusivity, and the integration of indigenous mechanisms, AfSol approaches contribute to long-term stability (Ojakorotu and Adeleke 2018). They empower local actors to address the structural issues that underlie conflicts, promote good governance, and invest in development initiatives that create the conditions for lasting peace.

AfSol approaches offer distinct advantages and benefits that position them as a vital framework for addressing conflicts and advancing peace and security in Africa. These approaches prioritize local agency, context-specificity, inclusivity, and the integration of indigenous mechanisms (Adem 2004). They promote balanced external engagement, adaptive strategies, and, ultimately, sustainable peace and development. By embracing AfSol principles, policymakers, practitioners, and researchers can contribute to more effective, locally resonant, and enduring peace and security strategies in Africa's diverse and dynamic context (Brewer 2011).

3) How: Implementing AfSol-Oriented Strategies

The successful implementation of AfSol-oriented strategies is essential for translating the principles of AfSol into tangible actions that can effectively address conflicts and promote peace and security in Africa (Kuperman 2015). Here, we explore the 'how' aspect of implementing AfSol-oriented strategies, focusing on key steps and considerations.

At the heart of implementing AfSol-oriented strategies is the active engagement of local stakeholders. This involves local communities, civil society organizations, traditional leaders, and grassroots movements. The first step is to create spaces for meaningful participation where these stakeholders can contribute to decision-making processes. Policymakers and practitioners must listen to the voices of those directly affected by the conflict and respect their agency in shaping solutions.

Implementing AfSol-oriented strategies begins with a comprehensive understanding of the conflict's context. Policymakers and practitioners must conduct thorough conflict analysis that delves into the historical, cultural, political, and socioeconomic factors driving the conflict. This analysis informs the development of tailored strategies that address the specific root causes and dynamics of the conflict.

AfSol-oriented strategies prioritize inclusivity. This means involving a diverse range of actors, including women, youth, and marginalized groups, in the development of policies and strategies. Inclusive policy development ensures that the perspectives and needs of all segments of society are considered, leading to more comprehensive and effective solutions.

Implementing AfSol-oriented strategies involves integrating indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms into formal approaches. This requires collaboration with local leaders and customary institutions to ensure that traditional practices are respected and harmonized with formal justice systems. Indigenous mechanisms offer efficient and locally accepted ways to manage disputes and maintain peace.

While external support can be valuable, it must be balanced in AfSol-oriented strategies. Policymakers and practitioners should ensure that external engagement complements local efforts rather than overshadowing them. This involves aligning external support with local priorities and strategies and avoiding the imposition of external agendas.

AfSol-oriented strategies should be adaptive and flexible. Conflict dynamics can change rapidly, requiring adjustments to strategies. Continuous monitoring and evaluation are essential to track progress and make informed decisions about adapting interventions. Flexibility allows strategies to remain relevant and responsive to emerging challenges.

Implementing AfSol-oriented strategies involves building the capacity of local actors, institutions, and communities. This includes training local leaders in conflict resolution, governance, and peacebuilding. Capacity building empowers local actors to take ownership of peace processes and ensures the sustainability of interventions.

AfSol-oriented strategies prioritize long-term sustainability. Policymakers and practitioners should focus on addressing the underlying structural issues that fuel conflicts, promoting good governance, and investing in development initiatives that create the conditions for lasting peace. Short-term gains must be aligned with a broader, sustainable vision.

A crucial aspect of implementing AfSol-oriented strategies is a robust system of monitoring, evaluation, and learning. This involves regularly assessing the impact of interventions and using data-driven insights to make informed decisions. Learning from both successes and failures is essential for refining strategies and adapting to evolving conflict dynamics.

Implementing AfSol-oriented strategies requires a holistic and participatory approach that engages local stakeholders, prioritizes context-specific analysis, and integrates indigenous mechanisms (Ceesay and Asmorowati 2026). It emphasizes inclusive policy development, balanced external support, adaptive implementation, capacity building, and a long-term focus on sustainability. By following these steps and considerations, policymakers, practitioners, and researchers can effectively translate AfSol principles into practical actions that contribute to sustainable peace and security in Africa's dynamic and diverse context (Oshota and Wahab 2022; Rasool, Chen and Kashif 2026).

The successful implementation of AfSol-oriented approaches in conflict analysis, peace, and security efforts in Africa is not without its challenges (Dygas 2025).

Overcoming these obstacles and building partnerships is crucial to advancing the principles of AfSol and realizing sustainable peace. In this analysis, we explore the key obstacles and strategies for overcoming them.

Sustaining AfSol-oriented initiatives, which prioritize AfSol in conflict analysis and peace and security efforts, hinges significantly on securing adequate funding and mobilizing essential resources. This critical aspect of AfSol-oriented strategies ensures that initiatives have the financial means and resources necessary for effective implementation (May et al. 2021). In this analysis, we explore the challenges and strategies associated with funding and resource mobilization in AfSol-oriented approaches.

Challenges in Funding and Resource Mobilization

One of the key challenges in funding AfSol-oriented initiatives is the competition for resources within Africa. Governments and organizations often allocate resources to a wide range of development and security priorities, making it challenging to secure dedicated funding for AfSol projects (Abrahamsen 2013).

Many African countries face limitations in their domestic resource mobilization capacities. Economic constraints, low revenue collection, and other financial challenges can restrict the availability of resources for peace and security initiatives.

Some AfSol-oriented initiatives heavily rely on international donors for funding. Overreliance on external funding can lead to a lack of sustainability and autonomy, as external donors may impose their agendas and priorities.

Conflict analysis and peacebuilding efforts in Africa often involve complex and protracted conflict dynamics. This complexity can make it challenging to accurately estimate the resources required and secure long-term funding commitments.

Resource allocation within countries or organizations may not always align with AfSol principles. Bureaucratic processes and decision-making structures can hinder the prioritization of AfSol-oriented strategies.

Advocacy efforts aimed at policymakers, donors, and the public can raise awareness about the importance of AfSol-oriented initiatives. Highlighting the potential for sustainable peace and security can garner support and secure funding commitments (Amaglo-Mensah and Nesterova 2025).

Encouraging African governments to prioritize funding for peace and security initiatives is crucial. This can be achieved through fiscal reforms, improved revenue collection, and the allocation of a portion of national budgets to AfSol projects.

Reducing dependence on a single funding source, such as external donors, is essential. AfSol initiatives should explore diverse funding sources, including partnerships with private sector entities, philanthropic organizations, and regional financing mechanisms.

Seeking grants from international donors and forging partnerships with organizations and institutions that share AfSol's objectives can provide the necessary financial resources. Grants can be used to kick-start initiatives and leverage further funding.

Enhancing the financial management and grant-writing skills of local organizations and institutions involved in AfSol initiatives can improve their ability to secure funding and manage resources effectively.

Transparent and accountable budgeting practices are essential. Clear and well-documented budgets can instill confidence in donors and funders, making them more likely to commit resources.

Conflict Analysis for Resource Estimation: Conducting in-depth conflict analysis to estimate resource needs accurately is critical. Accurate resource estimation helps in securing the right amount of funding and resources for AfSol-oriented projects.

Demonstrating the impact and effectiveness of AfSol initiatives through monitoring and evaluation is crucial for maintaining donor trust and securing ongoing funding.

Funding and resource mobilization represent pivotal components in sustaining AfSol-oriented initiatives for conflict analysis, peace, and security in Africa. Challenges such as competing priorities, limited domestic resources, and donor dependence must be addressed through strategic advocacy, diversified funding sources, and improved financial management. By employing these strategies, policymakers, practitioners, and researchers can ensure the continuity and success of AfSol-oriented approaches, contributing to lasting peace and security on the continent (Munyao, Manthi and Ndirangu 2025).

Benefits, Importance of Building Trust and Cooperation

Strengthening trust and collaboration among stakeholders is a cornerstone of successful AfSol-oriented approaches in conflict analysis, peacebuilding, and security efforts in Africa. These approaches prioritize AfSol and local ownership, making trust and collaboration essential for achieving sustainable peace. In this analysis, we explore the challenges, benefits, and strategies associated with building trust and fostering collaboration in AfSol-oriented initiatives (Smith and Mabera 2024).

Historical legacies of conflict, colonialism, and power imbalances can lead to deep-seated mistrust among different actors involved in peace and security efforts. Overcoming historical mistrust requires time, patience, and dialogue (Fisher et al. 2013). Stakeholders often have varying interests and priorities in conflict-affected regions. Competition for resources, influence, and control can hinder collaboration and trust-building efforts.

Failure to include all stakeholders, including marginalized groups, in peace processes can undermine trust and cooperation. Exclusion can perpetuate grievances and deepen divisions.

Effective communication is essential for building trust and cooperation. Language barriers, poor information sharing, and misunderstandings can hinder cooperation and understanding.

Conflict zones can be fraught with security risks that can discourage participants from joint efforts due to concerns for their own safety and the safety of their citizens. In this sense, building trust and cooperation ensures that a wide range of voices and perspectives are included in peace and security processes. Such inclusiveness promotes representation and fosters a sense of ownership among stakeholders (Brewer 2011).

This is why trust is a fundamental component of successful conflict resolution, and joint efforts based on trust are more likely to lead to mutually acceptable solutions and long-term peace. On the one hand, trust between partners enhances resource mobilization, with donors and sponsors more likely to support initiatives that demonstrate close cooperation and a unified approach. On the other hand, trust and cooperation contribute to the sustainability of peace and security efforts. When local actors, civil society, and international partners collaborate effectively, initiatives are more likely to be sustainable and adapt to changing circumstances.

Strengthening trust and cooperation can also play a significant role in preventing conflicts before they escalate, and early warning systems and joint conflict prevention strategies are based on trust and cooperation among participants (Kabia 2009).

Engage in inclusive dialogue that brings together all relevant stakeholders, including marginalized groups. Create spaces for open and honest discussions to address grievances and build understanding.

Promote conflict transformation rather than mere resolution. Collaborative efforts should focus on addressing the underlying causes and drivers of conflict to foster sustainable peace.

Utilize impartial mediators and facilitators who can bridge divides and help build trust among conflicting parties. These mediators should be trusted by all sides and have a deep understanding of local dynamics.

Build the capacity of local organizations and institutions to actively participate in peace and security efforts. This empowerment fosters a sense of ownership and strengthens collaboration.

Maintain transparency in decision-making processes, resource allocation, and the implementation of initiatives. Transparency builds trust and confidence among partners.

Conduct comprehensive conflict analysis to understand the root causes and dynamics of conflicts. This analysis forms the basis for collaborative strategies that address specific context-related challenges.

Implement security measures to mitigate risks associated with collaborative efforts in conflict zones. Ensure the safety and protection of participants and partners.

Building trust and collaboration is an ongoing process. Continuously engage with stakeholders, communicate progress, and adapt strategies based on feedback and changing circumstances.

Building trust and fostering collaboration among diverse stakeholders is integral to the success of AfSol-oriented approaches in conflict analysis, peacebuilding, and security efforts in Africa (Akinola et al. 2017). While challenges such as historical mistrust and competing interests may exist, the benefits of inclusivity, conflict resolution, resource mobilization, sustainability, and conflict prevention make these efforts indispensable (Chekol and Beshi 2026; Engel 2023). By employing strategies that promote dialogue, transparency, capacity building, and security measures, policymakers, practitioners, and researchers can strengthen AfSol-oriented partnerships and contribute to lasting peace and security on the continent.

Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) mechanisms serve as the backbone of AfSol-oriented approaches in addressing conflicts and promoting peace and security in Africa. These mechanisms play a pivotal role in assessing the impact, effectiveness, and sustainability of initiatives that prioritize AfSol. In essence, they are the eyes and ears of the implementation process, helping stakeholders navigate the complex terrain of conflict analysis and peacebuilding (Kostelyanets 2023; Ebegbulem 2011). One of the primary reasons for the importance of M&E mechanisms is their role in accountability. By establishing clear benchmarks and indicators, M&E mechanisms ensure transparency in the implementation of AfSol-oriented initiatives (Cho 2025). They serve as a means of tracking progress and ensuring that stakeholders, including governments, international organizations, civil society, and local communities, uphold their commitments and responsibilities. This accountability fosters trust and confidence among stakeholders, as they can see tangible evidence of the impact of their efforts.

Another crucial aspect of M&E mechanisms is their capacity for adaptive management. Conflict dynamics are often fluid and unpredictable, requiring flexibility in strategies and interventions. M&E mechanisms provide a continuous feedback loop, offering insights into what works and what doesn't. When inefficiencies or challenges are identified, stakeholders can make informed, data-driven decisions to adjust their approaches in real time. This adaptability is essential for staying relevant and effective in dynamic conflict environments (Apuuli 2020). Moreover, M&E mechanisms facilitate a culture of learning and improvement. AfSol-oriented initiatives, like any complex endeavor, will experience both successes and setbacks. M&E allows stakeholders to analyze these experiences systematically, learning from their mistakes and building on their achievements. Over time, this iterative process leads to more effective strategies and a deeper understanding of the intricacies of conflict dynamics.

Data generated by M&E mechanisms also play a critical role in evidence-based decision-making. Policymakers and practitioners can rely on empirical data and facts rather than assumptions or intuition when shaping their strategies. This evidence-based approach enhances the precision and effectiveness of interventions, ensuring that resources are allocated where they will have the most significant impact. While the benefits of M&E mechanisms in AfSol-oriented approaches are evident, challenges do exist (Kostelyanets 2023; Ebegbulem 2011). Resource constraints, such as limited funding and human resources, can hinder the establishment and operation of robust M&E systems. In conflict-affected areas, data collection may be particularly challenging due to security risks and restricted access. Complex conflict dynamics further complicate the design of M&E frameworks, as they must capture the ever-evolving nature of conflicts. Additionally, cultural sensitivity is paramount in data collection to navigate local customs and traditions respectfully (Adams et al. 2015).

Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are indispensable components of AfSol-oriented approaches in conflict analysis, peacebuilding, and security efforts in Africa (Vhumbunu 2024). Their significance lies in ensuring accountability, enabling adaptive management, promoting a culture of learning, facilitating evidence-based decision-making, and enhancing the overall effectiveness of initiatives. While challenges may persist, strategies that prioritize clear indicators, diverse data collection methods,

capacity building, cultural sensitivity, regular reporting, and adaptive management can help stakeholders overcome these hurdles and contribute to lasting peace and security on the continent (Chekol and Beshi 2026).

Conclusion and discussion

In this article, I have examined in detail the multifaceted AfSol landscape and its implications for the analysis of conflict, peacebuilding, and security efforts in Africa. To conclude this comprehensive analysis, it is necessary to summarize the key findings of this important topic.

One fundamental finding is the evolution of the term “African-led Solutions” and its significance within the African context. We traced its historical origins, conceptual development, and its emergence as a unique approach to addressing conflicts on the continent. AfSol represents a departure from traditional top-down approaches and places local ownership, inclusivity, and indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms at the forefront of peace and security efforts (Abegunrin 2009). Additionally, our analysis revealed the critical role of AfSol in bridging the gap between theory and practice. AfSol-oriented approaches align closely with existing theoretical frameworks while emphasizing the need for context-specific analysis and the inclusion of local actors (Fabo 2026). This convergence with existing theories and frameworks highlights the complementarity of AfSol with established peacebuilding paradigms. Moreover, our examination of AfSol’s synergies with regional initiatives underscored the importance of collaboration among African states and regional organizations. AfSol aligns with the AU’s Agenda 2063 and other regional strategies, emphasizing the need for cohesive and coordinated efforts to address conflicts on the continent effectively. However, it is essential to acknowledge that AfSol-oriented approaches are not without their critiques and challenges. We identified some of the primary concerns, including the potential for external interference, resistance to change within existing power structures, and the need for robust conflict analysis to inform AfSol strategies (Ujunwa, Okoyeuzu and Kalu 2019). These critiques and challenges offer valuable insights into the complexities of implementing AfSol-oriented approaches. In the realm of policy development, our analysis revealed the importance of defining key variables in AfSol-oriented analysis. Local agency and ownership emerged as key variables that drive the effectiveness of AfSol’s approaches. The active engagement of local stakeholders and their empowerment in decision-making processes are pivotal for sustainable peace and security outcomes (Vhumbunu 2024).

Contextual dynamics also play a significant role in AfSol-oriented analysis. The unique social, political, cultural, and economic factors of each conflict context necessitate context-specific strategies that address the root causes and dynamics of conflicts effectively. Furthermore, regional and international involvement should be approached with caution, ensuring that external actors align their agendas with local priorities and strategies. In the domain of case studies and comparative analysis, our findings highlighted the importance of leveraging both approaches to gain a comprehensive understanding of conflict dynamics and the effectiveness of AfSol interventions (Dube and Chisale 2023). Comparative analysis allows for the identification of best practices and lessons learned that can inform future initiatives.

Finally, our examination of AfSol-oriented policy frameworks and lessons learned underscored the need for practical recommendations that policymakers and practitioners can readily implement. Successful AfSol interventions were identified through case studies, highlighting the importance of adaptive management, local ownership, and inclusive processes (Amaglo-Mensah and Nesterova 2025).

This paper has shed light on the evolution, theoretical foundations, policy implications, and practical applications of AfSol-oriented approaches to conflict analysis in Africa's peace and security sphere. By recapping these key findings, we offer a comprehensive overview of the insights gained from our exploration of this vital topic, with the hope that they will inform and contribute to more effective and locally resonant peace and security strategies on the African continent. As we look to the future of conflict resolution in Africa, it becomes increasingly clear that embracing AfSol is not merely an option but a necessity. Our analysis of AfSol-oriented approaches throughout this working paper has highlighted their potential to transform conflict resolution on the continent. To move forward effectively, it is essential to consider how AfSol can be integrated into African conflict resolution strategies, policies, and practices (Jeong 2008).

First and foremost, the way forward involves a deep commitment to AfSol principles. Local ownership, inclusivity, and the empowerment of local actors should be at the core of all conflict resolution efforts (Munyao, Manthi and Ndirangu 2025). This means recognizing the value of indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms, traditional leadership structures, and community-based initiatives. Policymakers, international organizations, and practitioners must actively engage with and support these local actors, valuing their insights and contributions. Moreover, the integration of AfSol should be reflected in the development of policy frameworks and guidelines. African governments and regional organizations need to formulate and implement policies that prioritize AfSol-oriented approaches. This includes allocating resources for capacity-building, conflict analysis, and peacebuilding initiatives that actively involve local communities. These policies should also emphasize transparency, accountability, and the protection of human rights.

Collaboration is another key aspect of the way forward (Abrahamsen 2013). African states, regional organizations, civil society, and international partners should work in harmony to implement AfSol approaches effectively. Regional initiatives should align with the AU's Agenda 2063, ensuring that efforts are coordinated and coherent. This collaboration also extends to partnerships with international actors, where external support should complement and not override AfSol strategies.

Incorporating AfSol into conflict resolution practices requires a shift in mindset. Practitioners, researchers, and policymakers should be open to learning from local communities and adapting strategies accordingly. This may involve unconventional approaches, such as incorporating traditional conflict resolution mechanisms into formal processes or leveraging local knowledge and expertise to inform intervention strategies. Openness to innovation and a willingness to break from traditional top-down models is vital.

Education and awareness are essential components of the way forward. Building an understanding of AfSol principles and their effectiveness among both local

communities and international actors is crucial. Educational programs and awareness campaigns can help dispel misconceptions, promote cultural sensitivity, and foster support for AfSol-oriented approaches (Núñez 2024; Onyango Ouma 2026).

Finally, the way forward demands a commitment to continuous monitoring and evaluation. M&E mechanisms should be integrated into every stage of conflict resolution initiatives, ensuring that interventions remain adaptive, effective, and accountable. Regular assessments should be conducted to measure the impact of AfSol strategies and guide necessary adjustments.

In conclusion, embracing AfSol in African conflict resolution is a path that holds great promise for lasting peace and security on the continent (Cho 2025). The way forward involves a comprehensive commitment to AfSol principles, the development of supportive policies, collaboration among stakeholders, a shift in mindset towards inclusivity and innovation, educational efforts, and a dedication to monitoring and evaluation. By collectively working towards these objectives, Africa can harness the potential of AfSol and pave the way for more sustainable and locally resonant conflict resolution practices.

In closing, this working paper has provided a comprehensive analysis of “Toward an AfSol-Oriented Approach to Conflict Analysis in Africa’s Peace and Security Sphere (2002-2022).” Throughout our exploration, we have delved into the evolution of the term ‘AfSol’, its theoretical and practical implications, policy recommendations, and the way forward for integrating AfSol into African conflict resolution efforts (Mdhluli 2025). As we conclude, it is imperative to reflect on the significance of this research and consider the future directions it points toward.

First and foremost, our analysis underscores the critical importance of embracing AfSol in addressing conflicts on the African continent. AfSol-oriented approaches represent a paradigm shift that prioritizes local ownership, inclusivity, and indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms. This shift has the potential to transform the landscape of conflict resolution by ensuring that solutions are contextually relevant, sustainable, and reflective of the aspirations and needs of local communities (Adams et al. 2015).

The future directions that emerge from this research are multifaceted. They require concerted efforts from African governments, regional organizations, international partners, civil society, researchers, and practitioners. These directions encompass:

- **Policy Implementation:** African states and regional organizations should take concrete steps to implement policies and frameworks that promote AfSol-oriented approaches. This involves allocating resources, building capacity, and fostering an environment conducive to local agency and ownership.
- **Capacity Building:** Investing in capacity building at the local level is essential. Empowering communities, civil society organizations, and local leaders to actively engage in conflict resolution processes is a cornerstone of AfSol’s success.
- **Research and Knowledge Sharing:** Researchers and academics have a crucial role in furthering our understanding of AfSol. Future research should focus on documenting best practices, conducting in-depth case studies, and sharing knowledge to inform evidence-based decision-making.
- **Advocacy and Awareness:** Advocacy efforts should continue to raise awareness

about the merits of AfSol and its potential to transform conflict resolution in Africa. Advocates can engage with policymakers, international partners, and local communities to garner support.

- **Collaboration and Partnerships:** Building strong collaborations among African states, regional organizations, civil society, and international actors is vital. Partnerships should be grounded in mutual respect, shared objectives, and a commitment to AfSol principles.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** The integration of robust M&E mechanisms into conflict resolution initiatives should be a priority. These mechanisms ensure that interventions remain adaptive, effective, and accountable.
- **Education and Training:** Educational programs and training initiatives should be developed to equip practitioners and policymakers with the knowledge and skills needed to implement AfSol-oriented approaches effectively.
- **Innovation and Experimentation:** Embracing innovation and experimentation in conflict resolution is essential. This may involve piloting new approaches, incorporating traditional conflict resolution mechanisms, and adapting strategies to fit the specific context of each conflict.

In the years to come, the successful integration of AfSol into African conflict resolution practices has the potential to yield transformative results. It holds the promise of not only mitigating conflicts but also building resilient societies, fostering social cohesion, and promoting sustainable development. The road ahead may be challenging, but the principles of AfSol offer a beacon of hope for a more peaceful and prosperous Africa.

In conclusion, I would like to add that this article is a scholarly call to action. The future of conflict resolution in Africa lies in adopting AfSol-oriented approaches, learning from the experiences of local communities, and working together to build a continent where peace and security reign. This is a future where the voices of Africa's diverse peoples are heard, valued, and empowered to support their quest for lasting peace.

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Ethics Statement

The author confirms that this study was conducted in accordance with the Journal's Research Ethics and Integrity Statement and that all ethical requirements applicable to the study have been fulfilled.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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